ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL FORM

DIRECTIONS: *Use this form when proposing a new major or primary field of study, new emphasis, new degree program, or new certificate of achievement.*

DATE SUBMITTED: 2/24/14

INSTITUTION: University of Nevada, Reno

REQUEST TYPE:
☒ New Degree
☐ New Major or Primary Field of Study
☐ New Emphasis
☐ New Certificate of Achievement (AAC approval only)

Date of AAC Approval:
March 5, 2014

Date of Board Approval:

DEGREE (i.e. Bachelor of Science): Master of Fine Arts

MAJOR (i.e. Animal Science): English

EMPHASIS (i.e. Equine Studies): Creative Writing

CREDITS TO DEGREE: 60

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT: N/A

PROPOSED SEMESTER OF IMPLEMENTATION: Fall 2015

Action requested:
Approval of New Program

A. Brief description and purpose of proposed program

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree is a professional degree that establishes emphases, in its curriculum, on both students' writing and graduate-level scholarship in English. The proposed degree, to be offered through the Department of English, would offer a three-year course of study, incorporating coursework in literary history, critical theory, and literary craft, as well as requiring a core series of rigorous workshops centered on the development of the students' creative work. Students will have the opportunity not only to develop a significant body of publishable creative work, but will also be able to do so with an understanding of, and the ability to communicate effectively, the work's historical / literary context.

The MFA degree is the terminal degree in the field of creative writing, and thus is equivalent to terminal degrees, such as the PhD and EdD, granted in other fields. The MFA degree in creative writing is considered the national standard for student writers expecting to teach at the collegiate

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level. It is also widely considered of benefit not only to writers seeking to publish at the highest levels, but also to writers seeking employment in the fields of publishing, literary agenting, and editing.

The MFA will initially offer courses of study in the major specializations of fiction and poetry. Given the faculty's current strengths and interests, the program will in particular welcome fiction writers wishing to work with high quality genre fiction (i.e., young adult, science fiction, fantasy, mystery, horror, etc.), as well as those wishing to focus on contemporary literary fiction. Over time (reflecting the interests/publications of faculty in the Department of English and in the Reynolds School of Journalism - see attached letter of support) the program will consider incorporating creative nonfiction as an additional course of study. Students will be required to take at least one class in a specialization other than their primary choice. In addition to classes taught by creative writing faculty, the curriculum will require credits in courses already offered by English department faculty in all emphases, as well as from interdepartmental elective courses chosen to fit students' individual interests. The MFA will require 60 credits.

B. Statement of degree or program objectives

The objectives of the proposed MFA degree will be to provide top-level training and experience to writers of promise, in order to best prepare them to be publishing creative writers and / or to pursue careers in college-level teaching. In addition, the program will allow apprentice writers to develop their gifts amidst a community of artists in a university setting; the program will also provide a link between student writers and the wider professional community of published writers, editors, agents, etc. Students will produce bodies of original work, based on an understanding and study of historic, contemporary, and avant-garde literatures, culminating in a book-length thesis. Students will be expected not only to produce creative work, but to develop traditional scholarly and pedagogical skills, so as to better articulate their knowledge--to a potential audience including readers, colleagues, and students--as befits the recipient of a terminal degree in English.

Specific MFA degree objectives:

Objectives for Students

   • To provide students the required experiences, education, and consequential terminal degree for a career as a publishing creative writer and/or college-level teacher.
   • To provide a sustained, professional-level studio / workshop experience based on an advanced understanding of / practice with craft, creative thinking, and critical analysis of both the student's and others' original work.
   • To provide students with graduate-level scholarly competence in the research, organization, and argument of ideas, and especially current trends and ideas in contemporary English studies.
   • To provide students access to a community of highly skilled individuals of similar interests, both within the program and in the larger professional world.
   • To provide students with professional mentoring and guidance by a faculty of accomplished, publishing creative writers.
   • To familiarize students with practices and strategies for publishing their work, with a goal of placing their writing in nationally-recognized journals and / or in stand-alone volumes from prominent presses.
   • To provide students the opportunity to compete for teaching assistantships on the same footing as other English graduate students, with an ultimate goal of offering all student writers

financial and / or creative support while they complete terminal degrees and gain teaching experience in their field.

• To establish both a physical space and intellectual atmosphere in which students will not only acquire knowledge, but also an awareness of the importance of freedom of inquiry and expression, both as a cornerstone of their current environment and as a value to be fostered in their professional lives to come.

• To develop in our students the professional ability to communicate knowledge of creative craft and aesthetics clearly and skillfully, whether in creative pursuit, teaching practice, or other contexts, via opportunities and practice in teaching within the Department of English.

• To recruit students consistently and competitively, on a national and global scale, in order to provide the best possible environment to students within the program, while at the same time reserving special attention for qualified applicants locally and within the region.

Objectives for Department

• To serve the program and the department of English as a whole by exposing students of various emphases to alternate perspectives to their current courses of study.

• To present student writers, the English department, and the university as a whole with a series of visiting writers of diverse backgrounds and divergent aesthetics, and at a high level of professional accomplishment.

• To offer a degree program that economically utilizes the existing resources and faculty expertise within the Department of English, while at the same time acknowledging and planning for the likelihood of future program growth / development.

C. **Plan for assessment of degree or program objectives**

The MFA program will require candidates to complete the following benchmarks, under advisement of a four-member committee (two faculty members from creative writing--one of whom will serve as the committee's director--one from within the English department, and one outside member): in the third year of study, the candidate will undergo a 4-hour comprehensive written examination with multiple essay questions covering the candidate's 30-volume reading list and annotated bibliography, to be followed closely by a rigorous 1.5-hour oral examination conducted by the full committee. During the orals the candidate will also submit a brief prospectus of his or her thesis project, one which not only details the work itself, but places it into a literary context. At the end of 60 credit hours of study, the candidate will submit to the full committee a creative thesis of book-length and publishable quality.   The candidate will thereupon be required to defend the work before the full committee before being granted a degree.

In addition to meeting formal degree requirements, the department will consider recognition of student work from off-campus sources (ie, grants, awards, and especially publications) as indicators both of student and programmatic success.

D. **Plan for assessment of student learning outcomes and the use of this data for program improvement**

 The regular assessment plan for this degree program, like those for the department's other graduate programs, will assess the following Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of their degree program, MFA candidates should be able to:

• Demonstrate mastery of manipulation of elements of craft/technique within their chosen area of emphasis. (In fiction, this is defined as: form (the novel, novella, and short story); generic tropes; narrative structure; point of view; tone; and voice. In poetry this is defined as: traditional forms; line/enjambment; imagery and metaphor; meter; rhyme and free verse);

• Demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary publishing landscape for fiction (both genre and literary) and/or poetry, for book-length works as well as for individual stories/poems;

• Demonstrate the ability to curate/edit the creative work of others for publication;

• Create a book-length of work of publishable creative writing, as well as identify its audience/market;

• Analyze and describe their creative work within the context of historical trends/ movements and genres in literature;

• Compile a professional portfolio demonstrating an understanding of future career options and approaches to same.

Assessment of SLOs will be conducted not only on a student-by-student basis via grades in appropriate seminars and the process of thesis/bibliography/portfolio creation and defense, but also at a programmatic level by the English Graduate Committee, which will periodically review submitted theses, annotated bibliographies, and comprehensive exams for evidence of SLO achievement. The Graduate Committee will report these findings to the department and to the (at present ad hoc) MFA Committee, which will be tasked with reviewing/adjusting pedagogy and curriculum accordingly. In particular the program will be assessed at the end of Year 3 (at which point the first full class of students will graduate) and 5, and then every 3 years thereafter. The department/MFA Committee will conduct one-on-one exit interviews at the time of graduation and closely track student publications and related professional placements (academic positions, publishing jobs, etc.). We will conduct an external review of this new degree program as part of the department's next program review.

E. **Contribution and relationship of program objectives to**

i. **NSHE Master Plan**

The MFA in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing will, through the use of existing departmental and institutional strengths and resources; through the expenditure of minimal new resources; and via an interdisciplinary curriculum and cooperation with other NSHE institutions, offer exceptional, selectively-admitted students from both the state and the nation access to education and professionalization by prominent specialists; opportunities to enrich, via readings and outreach programs, the lives of Nevada citizens; and, via ongoing success in publishing creative work, the chance to bolster UNR's and NSHE's already-established reputation for excellence.

ii. **Institutional mission**

The MFA Program in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing, in providing terminal degrees to carefully-selected advanced students in writing, will help fulfill UNR's institutional goal of offering the highest quality degree programs. In keeping with both university and College of Liberal Arts mission statements, the proposed program will foster an environment committed to creativity, critical inquiry, academic rigor, and the linked goals of intellectual discovery and community involvement. Writing students and faculty already participate in outreach to local K-12 programs and offer writing programs for audiences ranging from homeless families to senior citizens. The MFA will reinforce and broaden these existing activities.

The MFA Program in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing will join other prominent programs in the university and college (such as the MFA Program in Art) in acting as a conduit between UNR and Reno's vibrant and ever-growing arts and literary community. Our proposed degree, through its emphasis not only on creativity but also on literary history both local and global, as well as on community involvement and outreach, will therefore serve our institutional responsibility to the community and society at large to foster an understanding of cultural heritage, artistic and scholarly freedom of expression, and the dissemination of knowledge.

The goal of the MFA program is to recruit and admit--as do other advanced degree programs in the university and college--a student body both as skilled and as diverse as possible. An MFA program in creative writing cannot function effectively without admitting students from a wide variety of ethnic and/or international backgrounds; our proposed program will thus seek aggressively to support the institution's goals of greater diversity and internationalization.

The proposed program's curriculum will require MFA candidates in creative writing to take electives outside of the English department, as befits the candidates' individual interests; this characteristic--as well as the ongoing efforts of faculty and students to make intellectual and creative connections with other disciplines across campus--will contribute to the institution's goal of offering the widest range of interdisciplinary programs.

iii. Campus strategic plan and/or academic master plan

The proposed MFA Program in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing complies with the objectives of the Master Plan for the University of Nevada, Reno, in that it calls for a utilization of existing resources and facilities while seeking to expand the offerings and improve the quality of the Department of English and College of Liberal Arts. The proposed degree will also speak to Master Plan goals -- and to strategic planning goals identified by the college and the university -- by: improving the quality of teaching at both graduate and undergraduate levels; by strengthening the level and diversity of graduate research programs; by stressing interdisciplinary approaches to writing and scholarship; by fostering outreach programs to underserved populations (in K-12 settings, homeless shelters, and senior-citizen programs, for instance); by contributing positively to the overall quality of university life and university-community relations; by recruiting and admitting a diverse and engaged student cohort; and via an ongoing series of public readings, seminars, and presentations, by prominent visiting writers, students and faculty alike, utilizing funding from departmental, university, and outside sources.

iv. Department and college plan

The proposed MFA Program in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing will help fulfill the objectives of the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of English by providing yet another opportunity for students to receive a liberal education of the highest caliber at the

University of Nevada, Reno. MFA students will become fluent in the interrelation between the practice and honing of intellectual curiosity and the rigorous production and analysis of creative work. The program will in addition produce students able not only to enter a number of professional settings--such as tenure-track positions in creative writing at the university and college levels--but will also enable them to be successful in those positions, and in so doing, raise the profile of the English Department. The interdisciplinary nature of the degree will also ensure well-rounded graduates with interests and abilities in a number of different fields--in particular writers who are able to use the research / scholarly skills they have learned in English to interrogate other bodies of knowledge. The program will have distinct learning outcomes, and a plan for assessment (and response to assessment) of those outcomes.

The proposed program will specifically address multiple aspects of the College of Liberal Arts' Strategic Plan, particularly the performance targets of sustaining and developing graduate programs, extending the outreach of college programs, increasing the centrality of the arts on campus and in the community, and increasing interdisciplinary collaboration.

The College of Liberal Arts' Strategic Plan, presented in the fall of 2012, specifically calls for the implementation of the MFA: "Develop and submit for Board of Regents approval the M.F.A. proposal in Creative Writing (English), which received 'pre-proposal' approval in 2008" (CLA Strategic Plan 12).

v. Other programs in the institution

The proposed degree would provide a complement to other arts-based programs on campus, especially the MFA Program in Art (the program proposal for which was consulted in the preparation for this one); we envision future MFA candidates as members of a larger arts-minded university community that includes students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The proposed program will also reach outside of the department and college by requiring candidates to take at least three credits of research electives in courses beyond the department. Great literature converses with many other fields of knowledge; any strong creative writing degree must allow students to investigate these other fields, in order to apply the skills they have learned in English in general -- and creative writing specifically -- to these other experiences. We envision MFA candidates taking courses not only in other artistic disciplines, but also in fields as various as journalism, anthropology, psychology, women's studies, ethnic studies, environmental studies, geography, criminology, history, etc. (In particular, faculty in the Reynolds School of Journalism have expressed an interest in both teaching MFA candidates and sending high-achieving journalism students to take MFA-listed classes.) Students in creative writing will thus be able to personalize their course of study by making use of the full range of the university's interdisciplinary resources; we feel that in so doing, our MFA students will help strengthen bonds between departments on campus, contributing to the vision of a college and university unified in its goals.

vi. Other related programs in the System

The only other MFA in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing offered in the NSHE is through the Department of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The UNLV program is also a studio / research program, as articulated by Associated Writing Programs; it offers a three-year program requiring 54 credit hours. UNLV has chosen to differentiate itself from

traditional MFA programs by emphasizing international literatures and opportunities to study abroad, up to and including offering credit to students who concurrently enroll in the Peace Corps. UNLV also offers a PhD Fellowship in creative writing, allowing candidates to complete a creative dissertation.

The proposed MFA at UNR will differ in significant ways from UNLV's. Our proposal calls for 60 credit hours of study to UNLV's 54; 60 hours was necessary to accommodate the proposed program's planned curriculum, is in keeping with the requirements of several prominent national programs, and matches the number of credit hours required by UNR's MFA Program in Art.

The proposed curriculum at UNR calls for students to take one more graduate workshop than UNLV's--five to UNLV's four; one workshop will be required outside a student's primary genre of study. (For the first few years, until we make a new hire, one or more creative writing faculty may need to teach a workshop in place of another standard course assignment.) A rigorous, committed schedule of workshops is an essential component of an MFA candidate's graduate experience, one that contributes at all stages of the degree to the student's eventual thesis work; the longest possible sequence of workshops also helps integrate advanced students with entering students, thus fostering a greater and more close-knit sense of community, as well as allowing for essential student-to-student mentoring and modeling of work ethic and collegiality.

The proposed curriculum also differs from UNLV's in that it allows students to take at least 3 credits in interdisciplinary electives, as befits an individual student's interests and subject of writing. This is, again, in keeping with a number of prominent MFA programs, and allows students to individualize a course of study by making use of the resources of our entire university; it also allows us to further emphasize our institutional and departmental commitment to interdisciplinary study.

In addition, our proposed program will differentiate itself from UNLV's by making use of existing, unique strengths of the Department of English: the current fiction faculty's interest in mainstream/genre literature; the current poetry faculty's aesthetic emphases; and our departmental strengths in ecocriticism and environmental literature.

Creative writing faculty Susan Palwick and Christopher Coake have both studied and published genre fiction, and will be eager to recruit and work with potential MFA students interested in producing genre work (young adult, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, horror, etc.,) at a high level of originality and literary accomplishment. Despite elements of genre writing informing some of the finest literary works in the national and global canons, and despite genre fiction's enormous popularity and influence among the reading public, genre fiction is not widely valued in MFA programs nationally; our research has found that only three low-residency MFA programs, and no extant residential program, advertises for students interested in writing this fiction, and/or faculty who specialize in it. Our proposed program would be distinguished not only from UNLV's, but also nationally, because of this emphasis.

Poetry faculty Steve Gehrke, Ann Keniston and Gailmarie Pahmeier write and publish poetry of a markedly different aesthetic than the poetry faculty at UNLV; whereas UNLV's faculty is more specifically avant-garde in approach, UNR's poets are concerned with a broader range of poetic styles, especially the relation of experimental to traditional poetics.

Few national MFA programs emphasize creative work with environmental concerns; our departmental strengths in eco-criticism and literature of place will allow interested students to join a community of students, literary scholars and creative writing faculty who are versed in, and sympathetic to, environmental issues. Our program will thus be especially appealing to

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prospective MFA students interested in writing that emphasizes place, nature writing, travel writing, and issues of social justice.

Please note that while we seek to differentiate our program from UNLV's, UNR's creative writing faculty enjoy a collegial relationship with UNLV's, and have discussed our program proposal with them. (See attached letter of support by UNLV Professor of English Douglas Unger.) In fact, we have begun exploring possible ways that our programs might complement and communicate with one another. At present UNLV's Black Mountain Institute's New and Emerging Writers Series sends its writers to speak with students at UNR as well as UNLV; the proposed MFA program will seek to reciprocate with visiting writers in the future. Perhaps interested students in each program could petition to take a workshop at the other campus. Faculty from both programs might seek to hold a yearly conference of our students, alternating between Reno and Las Vegas. We absolutely recognize that each program can offer much to the other, while still pursuing distinct curricular and aesthetic goals.

F. Evaluation of need for the program

i. Intrinsic academic value of program within the discipline

The MFA is recognized as the terminal degree in creative writing by governing body The Associated Writers and Writing Programs, and is therefore of value to many writers of exceptional talent and promise who seek to publish their work at the highest level, and / or to teach at the college level.

ii. Evidence of existing or projected local, state, regional, national and/or international need for program

Locally:

Reno is home to a thriving arts and literary tradition, and the implementation of an MFA program in creative writing will, we feel, be mutually beneficial to both the local and university communities. MFA students will be encouraged to organize and hold readings in the public sphere, and will, as arts-minded individuals, add to the audience for existing arts programs in Reno. Our proposed program--in keeping with the ethos of existing programs in English--will encourage MFA students to take part in community outreach programs. For instance, with permission of local schools and writing organizations, advanced MFA students with teaching experience could conduct workshops in schools, for groups such as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, or in settings such as nursing homes, hospitals, and homeless shelters. In addition, the MFA program, in conjunction with the English department (and other sources such as Nevada Humanities and the Hilliard Endowment) will bring to the campus and community an ongoing series of visiting writers; these writers would in all cases hold public readings and signings. The effect of such a series would surely serve to raise Reno's profile among the greater literary community, as well as to provide Renoites ever-more-diverse access to preeminent literary artists and/or popular writers. The MFA program will also partner with the extant UNR Creative Writing Club, in order to continue hosting/directing the club's successful, three-year-old Young Writers' Workshop, a weeklong program held every June on UNR's campus, which draws 30+ Washoe County High School students.

Statewide/Regionwide:

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While the proposed degree will draw students from across the country, the creative writing faculty are eager to work with qualified writers from the state and the region. The program's instruction, both from creative writing faculty and from across the English department, will naturally include a focus on the strong tradition of Nevada and Western writing; the program will be eager to foster Nevada-native students within it.

There are few options for writers in our immediate area. Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village offers a two-year low-residency MFA, but that program cannot offer the physical writing community or academic rigor of a three-year residential program (low-residency programs do not offer financial support to students, and usually attract students who, for varying reasons, are constrained geographically or financially; the applicant pool for low-res programs therefore has little overlap with the applicant pool for residential degree programs). UC Davis offers an MA in Creative Writing, but unlike an MFA, this is not a terminal degree. The nearest program to the east is offered at the University of Utah (though we have been informed by the program director there that Utah is slowly scaling down their MFA program in favor of a PhD). Local writing conferences, such as the Squaw Valley Writers' Conference, Truckee Meadows Community College Writers' Conference, the Napa Valley Writers' Conference, and the Surprise Valley Writers' Conference, all of which operate at full capacity, draw their attendees from the Northern California and Northern Nevada regions; students at these conferences regularly inquire about the possibility of an MFA degree in Reno. These inquiries, as well as regular inquiries from the student body at UNR and from residents of Reno, suggest a steady stream of applicants for a proposed program.

Between 2-5 students a year currently receive an MA in Writing degree from UNR with a specialization in creative writing; these students—many of whom live in Reno or nearby, and who would be competitive for admission to the proposed MFA program—complete theses of often-publishable quality, and often proceed to MFA programs in other states. We anticipate continued strong local interest in high-quality graduate creative writing instruction, especially if we can offer an MFA. (Writing faculty in the department of English are currently considering ways to refocus the MA in Writing; see H.ii. below for more details.)

Nationally:

According to POETS & WRITERS' MFA Programs Database, there are currently 148 residential Master of Fine Arts degree-granting programs in place in American universities. (In addition, 28 universities offer Master of Arts degrees in creative writing, and 21 universities offer Ph.D. degrees.) Another 50 offer low-residency programs. This results in a total of (roughly and conservatively, since some schools offer multiple degree options, and accounting for variance in the way these institutions report) 250+ universities offering graduate degree programs in creative writing.

UNR is one of only a handful of comparable universities in the West that does not offer a Master of Fine Arts degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing. The program would make us more competitive with comparable state institutions while offering a resource not available to students in this immediate area. (Multiple branch campuses within the California system offer the MFA.) The institution of a rigorous, highly selective MFA program, employing nationally-recognized writing faculty and attracting top-notch students both from the region and nationally, would be a substantive step toward the stated goal of UNR's administration to compete with high profile state-funded universities in America and abroad.

In addition, application statistics demonstrate an as-yet unquenched desire for MFA degrees among the populace. (See Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of national application figures.) It has been estimated by the respected magazine POETS & WRITERS that the national applicant pool for MFA programs in creative writing is between 3400-4000 people annually. Programs regarded among the nation's top 50 (as ranked by POETS & WRITERS) see applicant numbers ranging from 100/year to over 1000/year; we contacted a sampling of other national and regional programs and found only two that receive fewer than 100 applicants/year (one of those schools suffered the recent retirements of two very prominent writing faculty; the other admits to phasing out its MFA in favor of a thriving PhD). UNR's proposed MFA also seeks to advertise to writers of high-quality genre fiction as well as contemporary literary fiction; thus, we anticipate tapping not only into the extant applicant pool, but also reaching out to writers who may not at present consider an MFA, or who are traditionally dissuaded from applying to MFAs. We have found no other residential MFA program that offers a focus on the writing of genre fiction; we therefore anticipate appealing to an even wider applicant pool than a more traditional MFA program might. In summary, while UNR's program would certainly be a draw for students locally and within the region, it is not unreasonable to anticipate an immediate interest from a large number of potential students nationally, if not globally.

iii. If this or a similar program already exists within the System, what is the justification for this addition

The proposed degree would provide an alternative to the MFA offered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which emphasizes international literatures and overseas study. While both programs would offer excellent instruction and experience in the specializations of fiction and poetry, UNR is uniquely positioned to supplement interested students' education by entirely different areas of emphasis, as described in VI. e. above. The proposed program will be distinguished from UNLV's (and most other national programs) by its emphasis (in fiction) on working with writers interested in producing high-quality genre fiction, as well as contemporary literary fiction. UNR's poetry faculty practices an entirely different and more broad-based aesthetic than the poetry faculty at UNLV. And, finally, our extant lit faculty's emphasis on green literature would be ideal for students interested in writing about environmental themes or interested in literature of place, particularly in the West.

Apart from curricular offerings, the physical distance (400+ miles) between the two University of Nevada campuses suggests a need for a separate program, in order to meet the needs of talented writers locally and within the region for whom a move or long commute is impossible.

As mentioned above, the faculty at UNLV have expressed strong support for this program proposal. (See attached letter by UNLV Professor Douglas Unger.)

iv. Evidence of employment opportunities for graduates (state and national)

The MFA differs from the PhD in that it is a much more practical degree. MFA graduates with a substantial record of publication (helping students obtain such publications is a primary goal of an excellent MFA program) are indeed eligible to teach at all collegiate levels, including tenure-track university positions, and often pursue such jobs. However, MFA recipients are also positioned for employment within a number of writing and arts-related fields. The MFA is widely recognized as suitable preparation for jobs within the fields of editing, publishing and

literary agenting. MFA degree-holders are often valued as well in any number of fields requiring well-written documents such as grant proposals, annual reports, and speeches.

It should be noted here that the majority of students pursuing MFA degrees do so without further professional aspiration; they seek instead something akin to an apprenticeship period under the supervision of professional, published writers, and in the company of other like-minded individuals. To these students, the degree is successful if it provides them experience and skill that leads to publication. Successful MFA programs are therefore best judged as much by the number of significant publications their students and graduates achieve as by the number of graduates holding professional positions.

UNR's proposed degree will provide its recipients with even more opportunity for publication and income, especially given its focus, in fiction, on genre writing (including young adult). Traditional MFA programs focus on literary writing only; while literary publishing will indeed be a focus of our proposed program, we will be especially interested in helping train and prepare writers of popular fiction who will leave UNR better-poised to take advantage of a number of opportunities via both traditional avenues and via the frontier of electronic publishing:

• In 2013, even though total book revenues were down 3%, the Association of American Publishers reports that adult fiction/nonfiction hardcover revenues were up 7.6%, and young adult trade sales were up 7.7%--a trend in particular that has pointed steadily upward for several years now, even as the publishing industry has undergone recession-related turmoil. (http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/book-revenues-down-3-in-first-10-months-of-2013-aap_b81604)

• Another AAP report from 2013 indicated that genre sales in fiction were "strong," and reiterated the ongoing growth in young adult fiction. (http://publishers.org/press/111/)

• In addition, a 2012 study found that 55% of books classified as young adult have been purchased by adults. (http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/53937-new-study-55-of-ya-books-bought-by-adults.html)

• Within the last two years, HarperCollins and Random House have begun digital-format-only genre publishing imprints, in order to take advantage of reader demand. (http://www.wired.com/underwire/2013/06/digital-publishing-genre-fiction/)

• Simon and Schuster has recently announced plans to expand into science fiction and fantasy publication in a new print imprint. (http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/59674-simon-schuster-to-launch-science-fiction-fantasy-imprint.html)

• Over 20% of ebooks sold in the UK in 2012 were self-published genre works. (http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/jun/11/self-published-ebooks-20-per-cent-genre)

• A monumental and widely-reported investigation initiated this year by bestselling sci-fi author Hugh Howey revealed that in 2012-2013, 70% of the top 100 bestselling titles on Amazon were written within the genres of mystery, science fiction/fantasy, and romance, as well as 50% of the top 1000. 69% of all daily sales on Amazon are comprised of works of genre fiction. Howey's report also shows that a significant number of writers make 10,000 dollars or more per year self-publishing genre writing. A great many report engaging the services of freelance editors; an MFA and its training might very well be of service to writers who choose to self-publish in this new marketplace. (http://authorearnings.com/the-report/)

• Over 150 authors publishing electronically through Kindle Direct sold more than 100,000 copies of their books in 2013. (http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=176060&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1886961&highlight=)

• The median pay of writers with at least a BA, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is $59,940 per year. In 2012, the USBL tallied 129,100 writing-related positions in the US. (http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm)

In short, our proposed program is not only unique, but forward-thinking, and would be poised to help many of our degree recipients find opportunities for employment and income that other MFA programs do not, in addition to providing traditional preparation for literary publication and pursuit of academic positions.

v. **Student clientele to be served (Explain how the student clientele is identified)**
Gifted, highly motivated creative writers who demonstrate the ability to produce technically- and aesthetically-advanced work; who have completed a Bachelor's degree at a high level of achievement; and who possess a capacity to contribute productively to a community of diverse individuals.

G. **Detailed curriculum proposal**

i. **Representative course of study by year (options, courses to be used with/without modification; new courses to be developed)**

The proposed MFA degree will follow the guidelines drafted by the Associated Writers and Writing Programs for a Studio / Research Degree Program:

"Studio / Research writing programs usually place equal emphasis, in their curricula, on the student's writing and literary scholarship, with the belief that the study of literature is crucial to one's development as a writer. Seeking a balance between literary scholarship and literary artistic practice, these programs vary in the structure and amount of literature requirements, but they frequently rely on the regular English department faculty, noted for scholarly achievement, for many of the literature course offerings, while writers on the program faculty offer form, craft, and theory courses, workshops, and thesis direction. Studio / Research programs often require some kinds of comprehensive examinations, and candidates are expected to be equally well-prepared in literature and in writing. Admission is determined primarily by the quality of the original manuscript."

Though we find these guidelines to be apt, we offer one addendum: that potential MFA students might also benefit from the study of courses already offered by the UNR Department of English in disciplines other than literary study, such as composition and rhetoric and linguistics, as well as elective courses from other university departments. Thus the elective requirements listed below have not been restricted to literature courses.

New courses:

Three new courses -- Eng 707, 708 and 710 -- have already gone through the Courses & Curriculum approval process and are listed in the university catalog. English 793, the pedagogy practicum, is currently being prepared for submission to the CLA C&C Committee for approval.

The course name change proposals detailed below will be submitted for approval this academic year as well.

ENG 707: Craft and Forms of Creative Writing (4 credit hours)

To be offered once per year in alternating genres. This seminar will provide writers with a grounding in terminology, formal history, and innovation within their chosen genre. Topics that may be discussed within the genre of fiction include: traditional storytelling forms (the fairy tale, the myth, the yarn, etc.); the essential divisions within contemporary fiction (the short story, the novella, the novel, the novel-in-stories) and / or a craft-based focus on one of same; historical modes of fiction (modernism, postmodernism, psychological realism, etc.); genre studies (horror fiction, science fiction, western fiction), etc. Topics that may be discussed within the genre of poetry include: traditional / historic poetic forms (sonnets, villanelles, free verse, blank verse, etc.); the essentials of meter and scansion; different poetic schools (such as the New York school, imagists, language poetics, New Formalism), etc. Students will be expected to produce both scholarly and creative work, and to read and discuss a significant number of exemplary published texts. Maximum 8 credits. Prerequisite: graduate standing in English, with first preference given to MFA candidates.

ENG 708: Topics and Problems in Creative Writing (4 credit hours)

To be offered once every other year in alternating genres. This course is intended to accommodate the research / aesthetic interests of individual faculty members and / or the needs of a particularly-inclined student body. Topics in fiction may include examinations of: the establishment and manipulation of point of view; fiction and place; the examination of moral / political issues in fictional works; avant-garde / experimental fiction, etc. Topics in poetry might include examinations such as: voice; narrative poetry; the avante-garde; the Beats, etc. The course might also periodically focus on individual author studies in either genre. Students will be expected to produce both scholarly and creative work, and to read and discuss a significant number of exemplary published texts. Maximum 8 credits. Prerequisite: graduate standing in English, with first preference given to MFA candidates.

ENG 710: Literary Editing and Publishing (4 credit hours)

Intended for students in both genres, and to be taught once per year by alternating faculty members. Students will study the several aspects of the world of literary publishing. The ideal course will a) teach editorial notation and line-editing, in theory and practice; b) require students to subscribe to and study in-depth the editorial practices of a particular contemporary journal of literature, and to present findings to the class as a whole; c) allow students to talk to distinguished guests, either in person or through teleconference--ie, published authors, working agents, working editors of journals and/or publishing houses; d) allow students practice in editorial decision-making, preferably by assisting on Nevada's in-house journal-to-come; and e) teach students the proper way to approach journals and agents with their own creative work. Note: While we also offer an undergraduate class on this subject, this one will be more rigorous (although it may occasionally involve undergraduates when the two are taught the same semester). Among other things, the students in this class will be largely responsible for planning, and then producing and maintaining, the department's literary journal. Maximum 4 credits. Prerequisite: graduate standing in English, with first preference given to MFA candidates.

ENG 793: Pedagogical Practicum (2 credit hours)

Graduate students of exceptional promise would be allowed to assist creative writing faculty in teaching the 300-level workshop courses, in preparation and as a prerequisite for their eventual teaching of ENG 205 in their second or third years of study. Students would engage in independent study with faculty members, and would also provide critiques and in-class assistance, culminating with the student teaching a 300/400 course period under observation. Maximum 2 credits. Prerequisite: Advisor / instructor permission.

Existing Courses to be modified for graduate level study

The Department of English faculty will submit a name-change proposal for the following courses:

Existing Course:

ENG 705: Graduate Seminar in Creative Writing
change to:
ENG 705 / 709: Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry

This course, to be offered every semester in both fiction and poetry, will be conducted as a workshop in which students and professor critique student-originated manuscripts. Students must take five workshops; this sequence is considered the cornerstone of their MFA degree. Students will be required to take one workshop outside of their primary genre of study (though with advisor approval, a student may substitute another course within the Creative Writing Curriculum, provided it remains outside the student's primary genre). Enrollment in these workshops would ideally be capped at 12, allowing for each student to present for critique 2-3 original works of fiction or at least 6 original works of poetry per semester. In addition to composing these original pieces, students will be expected as well as to critique, in workshop and in writing, their classmates' works. Semester-end revisions will be required; at the professor's option a scholarly paper may be required as well. Students will read works by published authors as well. Minimum credits: 20. Prerequisite: Admission to the MFA program in creative writing or prior enrollment in ENG 707, Craft and Forms of Creative Writing.

Electives

Students will be required to take at least 15 elective credits, 12 of which must be taken within the Department of English at the 700-level. As stated above, students will not be confined to literature courses; rather, in consultation with their advisors, they will be encouraged to plan elective courses around faculty offerings and topics that best reflect their individual interests and the ongoing aesthetic concerns of their creative work. 3 (or more, at the student's option, and with advisor approval) credits must be taken outside the Department of English, and may be taken at the 300 or 400 level. These credits reflect recognition that creative writers may draw on any topic or discipline as a subject or inspiration. (For instance, a student writing crime fiction might opt to enroll in a criminology course.)

MFA students, when enrolling in departmental and/or interdepartmental electives, will understand that they will be beholden to the same standards of achievement as students in those other programs/departments, and graded accordingly. Students who take a seminar requiring knowledge of literary theory, in other words, will be responsible for learning that theory, either in class, and / or as background, as required. MFA students may not petition to produce creative assignments in these courses, unless the faculty member's syllabus already allows for such work. Minimum credits: 15, 3 outside English department. Prerequisite: Advisor approval, and per individual course's standing requirements.

Degree Requirements (minimum):

      20 credit hours Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry*
      12 credit hours Creative Writing Curriculum
      15 credit hours Electives†
       9 credit hours Thesis Study
       3 credit hours Introduction to Graduate Study
       1 credit hour Comprehensive Examination

Total: 60 credit hours

Notes:
* Four credit hours of Graduate Workshop must be taken outside the student's primary genre. With advisor approval, these hours may be taken instead in another Creative Writing curriculum course (provided it is also outside the student's primary genre.)
† At least three elective hours must be taken outside the Department of English, according to student interests and in consultation with an advisor. These courses may be taken at the 300/400 level, with advisor's approval. Students are not limited to three elective hours outside the department, so long as twelve elective credits are taken within the department.

Recommended Course of Study: (for student holding TA)

First Year: FALL SEMESTER (10 credits)
                    Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry (4)
                    Introduction to Graduate Study (3)
                    College Teaching in Language and Literature (3)†

                    SPRING SEMESTER (12 credits)
                    Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry (4 credits)
                    Forms of Fiction/Poetry (4 credits)
                    Departmental Elective (4 credits)

Second Year: FALL SEMESTER (14 credits)
                    Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry (4 credits)
                    Literary Editing and Publishing (4 credits)
                    Pedagogical Practicum (2 credits)†

* (establish thesis advisor / committee)

                    SPRING SEMESTER (11 credits)
                    Graduate Workshop in Fiction / Poetry (4 credits)
                    Problems in Fiction/Poetry (4 credits)
                    Interdepartmental Elective (3 credits)

* (establish reading list for comprehensive examination in consultation with advisor)

Third Year: FALL SEMESTER (13 credits)
                    Thesis Study (4 credits)
                    Graduate Workshop in Fiction/Poetry (4 credits)

Departmental Elective (4 credits)
Comprehensive Examination (1 credit)

* (student turns in thesis prospectus for committee approval)

SPRING SEMESTER (5 credits)
Thesis Study (5 credits)

Notes
† These courses will be required of MFA students holding teaching assistantships, but are not listed under general degree requirements; their combined five credits cause this course of study to equal 65 credits instead of the listed 60.

ii. Program entrance requirements

MFA candidates must present a Bachelor's degree or Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a minimum 3.0 grade-point average from an accredited university, school, or college. Applicants need not have received their previous degree in English. Applicants are required to submit for Department of English Graduate Committee approval a) a creative writing sample of 30 pages in fiction or 10 pages in length of poetry, demonstrating the student's strongest work in the genre of application; b) a scholarly writing sample of ca. 15 pages in length, demonstrating readiness for graduate study in English; c) a 2-3 page statement of intent, including declaration of genre of study; d) official transcripts; e) three letters of recommendation; and f) GRE scores. Entrance to the program is based on the level of professionalism and promise as evident through the submitted materials. Candidates will be accepted or denied entrance to the program based on vote of the Department of English Graduate Committee, according to the rules of order as noted in the Department of English bylaws.

iii. Program completion requirements (credit hours, grade point average; subject matter distribution, preprogram requirements)

The degree requires 60 credit hours. MFA candidates must be enrolled full-time (minimum 9 credits per semester), except during the last semester of study, when they will be expected to finalize / finish their theses. Candidates must maintain a minimum 3.5 grade-point average. During the second year of study, candidates must choose one Department of English creative writing faculty member to serve as the MFA committee chair and advisor; two additional department faculty (one from creative writing, and one outside the student's declared course of study) to serve as committee members; and a fourth committee member from outside the Department of English, chosen in consultation with the committee chair. During the student's third year of study the MFA program requires the candidate to take a comprehensive written examination, on topics of the committee chair's choosing, over the candidate's knowledge of a 30 book reading list and annotated bibliography; this will be followed closely thereupon by an oral examination, conducted by the student's full committee, during which the student will defend written exam answers, annotated bibliography, and professional portfolio. At this time the candidate will also present to the committee a prospectus for the thesis for committee approval. At the end of the third year of study, students will complete and present to the full committee a written book-length thesis or original fiction /poetry, of publishable quality. At the conclusion of 60 credit hours the student will defend the completed thesis before the full committee; the committee must then vote according to Department of English bylaws whether to confer the MFA degree.

iv. **Accreditation consideration (organization (if any) which accredits program, requirements for accreditation, plan for attaining accreditation - include costs and time frame)**

The Associated Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) is the governing body for creative writing programs nationwide, but does not accredit programs at this time.

v. **Evidence of approval by appropriate committees of the institution**

The Department of English will follow the normal and appropriate channels to obtain approval for this program proposal. This proposal has already been approved (unanimously) within the department by the Writing Committee, the Graduate Committee, and a vote of the full faculty, in accordance with our bylaws.

The MFA Program has already been approved by the Provost's Pre-Approval Committee, the CLA Courses and Curriculum Committee, and the University Courses and Curriculum Committee.

Should it be approved, it will continue to the NSHE Academic Affairs Council and the Board of Regents.

H. **Readiness to begin program**

i. **Faculty strengths (specializations, teaching, research, and creative accomplishments**
The Department of English currently employs 36 full-time faculty with exceptional teaching, service, and research recognition in the following areas of specialization: creative writing, composition and rhetoric, literature, and linguistics. The following five faculty regularly teach creative writing classes at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and would be the primary teachers and advisors of MFA candidates:

Associate Professor Christopher Coake (MA, Miami University of Ohio; MFA, Ohio State University): Professor Coake is the author of WE'RE IN TROUBLE (Harcourt, 2005) and YOU CAME BACK (Grand Central, 2012). In 2006 he won the PEN/Robert Bingham Fellowship, and in 2007 he was named one of the Best Young American Novelists by GRANTA. His stories have appeared in numerous literary journals, including THE GETTYSBURG REVIEW, EPOCH, FIVE POINTS, and THE SOUTHERN REVIEW, and have been anthologized in THE BEST AMERICAN MYSTERY STORIES 2004 and THE BEST AMERICAN NOIR OF THE CENTURY. In 2012 he was the recipient of the UNR College of Liberal Arts' Mousel-Feltner Award for Excellence in Creative Activity. He has taught fiction workshops and special topics classes in creative writing at both the graduate and undergraduate levels since 2005, and has twice been a finalist for the Alan Bible Award.

Assistant Professor Steve Gehrke (MFA, University of Texas, Ph.D, University of Missouri, Columbia): Author of three books of poetry, most recently MICHELANGELO'S SEIZURE, which was selected for the National Poetry Series and published by the University of Illinois Press; THE PYRAMIDS OF MALPIGHI (Anhinga 2004), selected by Philip Levine for the Philip Levine Prize for Poetry; and THE RESURRECTION MACHINE (BkMk Press, 2000), winner of the John Ciardi Prize. He has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Nevada State Arts Board Grant. Individual poems have been published in dozens of journals, including POETRY, THE YALE REVIEW, THE KENYON REVIEW, SLATE, and THE IOWA REVIEW. Professor Gehrke teaches workshops in multiple genres (including

screenwriting) at the graduate and undergraduate levels, in addition to occasional literature courses (such as Romanticism).

Associate Professor Ann Keniston (MA, New York University; Ph.D, Boston University): Professor Keniston's is the author of the poetry collection THE CAUTION OF HUMAN GESTURES (David Robert Books, 2005) and the forthcoming chapbook NOVEMBER WASPS: ELEGIES (Finishing Line). She is completing a new full-length manuscript entitled LAMENT/PRAISE. Recent poems from this manuscript have appeared in MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, INTERIM, SOUTHWEST REVIEW, NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, and elsewhere. Twice a recipient of the Academy of American Poets Prize, she has received grants from the Somerville (MA) Arts Council, the Sierra Arts Foundation (NV), and the Nevada Arts Council. She teaches courses and workshops in contemporary American poetry.

Continuing Lecturer Gailmarie Pahmeier (MFA, University of Arkansas): Pahmeier is the author of the poetry collections THE HOUSE ON BREAKAHEART ROAD (University of Nevada Press); WITH RESPECT FOR DISTANCE (Black Rock Press); WHAT EMMA LOVES (Black Rock Press); SHAKE IT AND IT SNOWS (Autumn House Press, winner of 2009 national chapbook competition); and has published numerous poems in diverse journals and anthologies. She has taught numerous workshops at the graduate and undergraduate levels, in both poetry and memoir.

Associate Professor Susan Palwick (AB, Princeton; Ph.D, Yale).: Professor Palwick is the author of four novels, all from Tor Books: MENDING THE MOON (2013); SHELTER (2007); THE NECESSARY BEGGAR (2005); and FLYING IN PLACE (1992). Her story collection THE FATE OF MICE appeared In 2007 from Tachyon Publications; a poetry chapbook, BRIEF VISITS, was published by Texas Review Press in 2012. Her fiction has been honored with a Crawford Award from the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, an Alex Award from the American Library Association, and a Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, and has also been nominated for the World Fantasy Award and the Mythopoeic Award. She regularly teaches the introductory fiction workshop at UNR, and has also taught graduate writing seminars focusing on the short story, the personal essay, and science fiction and fantasy.

Nearly all other English faculty offer courses and / or specialties that would be of primary interest and benefit to MFA candidates.

ii. **Contribution of new program to department's existing programs (both graduate and undergraduate) and contribution to existing programs throughout the college or university**

The proposed MFA program will contribute to the department of English specifically and to the university as a whole by attracting and involving students of tremendous talent and potential. MFA students will, by virtue of the program's requirements, mingle and study with students of other emphases and disciplines, providing different perspectives and greater diversity to the already broad pool of knowledge present in the department and on campus. MFA students will be encouraged to contribute, as other graduate students in English already do, to the community, in general terms such as outreach and community involvement, but also in program-specific terms, such as by giving public readings, becoming a viable and ever-growing audience for other disciplines' performances and exhibitions, and supporting the local arts community at large.

The English writing faculty plan to redefine the MA in Writing as the MA in Rhetoric and Composition, so as to better define the ongoing roles of these related degree programs. At present, the MA in Writing accommodates a number of writing-related interests--catering to the

types of students outlined in the description above, as well as to those who pursue the department's existing creative writing graduate courses, and who write creative theses. The development of the MFA in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing and a redefined MA in Writing will seek to distinguish the curricula pursued by these students, and also to better develop and strengthen these curricula and the degrees our various students may receive.

It should be noted that future students in the MA in Writing program (not to mention students in other departmental programs) will be able to take courses offered within the MFA curriculum; see course descriptions above for details of prerequisites and allowances. It is not the intent of the creative writing faculty or the larger department to isolate one group of students from any other, especially since experience has shown that many of our best creative writers have been students working in these other emphases.

As noted above, MFA students will contribute to undergraduate education by teaching courses in Core Writing and ENG 205; as the MFA program grows, potential new faculty members will also bring their specializations to bear in undergraduate classrooms (as Steve Gehrke has, by teaching screenwriting courses to our undergrads since his hire).

iii. **Completed prior planning for the development of the program (recent hires, plans for future hires, securing of space, curricular changes, and reallocation of faculty lines)**

The department of English has been moving toward the establishment of an MFA program in Creative Writing for some time, most recently with the conversion of a .5 fiction position (Brown) to a 1.0 position (Coake) and with the hiring of poet Steve Gehrke (using a replacement line, and specifically as preparation for an MFA program). Twenty-five years into offering an MA in writing, it is clear that both our existing and potential students have an interest in an MFA degree at UNR. While we offer a creative option to our MA students, our department still does not offer an extensive creative writing curriculum on par with that offered by most other English programs at comparable institutions; our extant programs are flexible by design, but still have not drawn applicants in significant numbers (see Appendix B for a breakdown of applicants to the Department of English over the previous 5 years).

In 2012, the Department of English agreed to begin formally discontinuing offering MA and PhD degrees in Literature and the Environment, after the unexpected departures of Professors Scott Slovic and Erin James cut the number of core L&E faculty in half. While the MFA was originally designed to co-exist with L&E, L&E's discontinuation was agreed upon with the potential new MFA in mind. L&E was a successful and popular program, and received the highest percentage of graduate applications among emphases in English (see Appendix B). While the faculty felt rebuilding L&E to its previous levels was unfeasible, they also agreed that a potentially popular program like the MFA could fill the gap the L&E program will leave behind, as well as make use of some of the departmental resources to be freed up by that program's imminent closure. (The department still continues to admit literature students interested in focusing on ecocritical approaches.) The L&E program will be fully discontinued well before the proposed start date of the MFA.

While the proposed curriculum can be offered initially at current staffing levels, the program will, by its third year of existence, require a new tenure-track hire (most likely specializing in fiction, memoir, or both) to bring the faculty up to an acceptable level, coinciding with the program accepting students to capacity (see resource analysis, below). Later hires would be need-based, in response to retirements within the department, program growth, and/or a

perceived programmatic need to offer more extensive curriculum in a third specialization (such as creative nonfiction or new media).

The MFA will be able to launch with its students competing for TAs from the extant English pool. The department's Graduate Committee will reserve 20% of the yearly available TA pool (which fluctuates from year to year; TAs are awarded competitively to both PhDs and MAs, which results in a varying number of 2- and 5- year commitments) for incoming MFA students in the first years of the program's existence. The remaining TAs will be available, as per usual, on a competitive basis to incoming students in all degrees and emphases. This practice will ensure that the MFA program is immediately competitive for top students, and will ensure as well that other English emphases remain competitive as the MFA rolls out. This 20% commitment will fund, on average, 3-5 MFA students per year. (See Appendix B.) In Year 5 of the program, the Department of English will (if program enrollment and interest grows as expected) apply for 2 additional TAs from CLA, to be reallocated from salary savings. These TAs would be made available on a competitive basis to incoming students in all degrees and emphases. The Department will continue to be alert for additional sources of funding for assistantships.

iv. **Recommendations from prior program review and/or accreditation review teams**

Prior university accreditation reviews did not mention the need for the MFA; the 2007-08 departmental self-study, however, did mention plans to propose such a program, and the self-study's external reviewers affirmed these plans : "The proposed MFA in creative writing will attract many strong students" (External Review of Department of English, 2). In 2012-13 the department voted to begin discontinuing its MA and PhD programs in Literature and Environment; though this proposal was initially written to allow for the programs to coincide and share resources, the impending closure of L&E has provided even more impetus for new program growth.

v. **Organizational arrangements that must be made within the institution to accommodate the program**

None recognized at this time.

I. **Resource Analysis**

i. **Proposed source of funds (enrollment-generated state funds, reallocation of existing funds, grants, other state funds)**

Reallocation of existing departmental resources, new state instructional funding in year 5 (for teaching assistantships). See budget projection for details.

ii. **Each new program approved must be reviewed for adequate full-time equivalent (FTE) to support the program in the fifth year. Indicate if enrollments represent 1) students formally admitted to the program, 2) declared majors in the program, or 3) course enrollments in the program.**

a. **(1) Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in the Fall semester of the first, third, and fifth year.**

1st Fall semester 10

3rd Fall semester 24.5

5th Fall semester 35

(2) Explain the methodology/assumptions used in determining projected FTE figures.

We assume a gradual rollout of the program, with an increasing number of admissions per year (see chart in Appendix C). We also assume that while the majority of students will complete their degree requirements in three years, a small number (1/4 - 1/3 of each admitted class) will take an additional year to complete the thesis (this figure is consistent with holdover figures from other degree programs in English). Thus each year will see an additional FTE total of .5 - 1.5 under headcount.

b. (1) Unduplicated headcount in the Fall semester of the first, third, and fifth year.

1st Fall semester 10

3rd Fall semester 25

5th Fall semester 36

(2) Explain the methodology/assumptions used in determining projected headcount figures.

As above: we plan admitting an increasing number of students over the program's first five years, from 6 (ideally, 3 per genre) in 2015, to 8 in 2016, 10 in 2017, and 12 in each year thereafter. A detailed chart is printed in Appendix C, attached.

Rollout Plan

The English department is well-positioned to begin advertising for, and accepting, MFA candidates during the 2014-15 admissions cycle, in preparation for a rollout of the proposed degree at the beginning of academic year 2015-16. Below is a breakdown of programmatic resource needs, in which the rollout of the program is divided into three phases.

Phase I: 2015-16

Prior to the initial admissions season, the program will begin advertising for admissions from prospective MFA students in inexpensive but wide-reaching publications such as POETS & WRITERS, and the AWP WRITER'S CHRONICLE. While in Phases II and III we will seek to admit 4-6 students per genre (fiction and poetry) per year, in this initial phase we will seek to admit no more than 3-4 students per genre. In addition, we will seek to identify 3-4 MA students already enrolled within the department whose interests tend toward creative writing, and / or who have announced an intent to write a creative thesis, and approach them about becoming a de facto first class; as these students will likely have already taken credits appropriate to the degree, and as our department has traditionally graduated strong creative writing MA's, we anticipate being able to fill this class. Thus, at the beginning of the initial year, 2015-16, we will have a body of 9-12 candidates comprising the program.

Resources Required for Phase I:

Phase I can be completed with current faculty/staffing levels. Departmental funds would be available for initial advertising and related mailings. Incoming MFA students would compete for TAs as detailed in H.iii. above. The English department will be alert to additional funding sources for these assistantships as well, with an eventual and ongoing goal of funding as many students as possible. (See Appendices D and E for budget and detailed breakdown of resources, including library materials and classified staff.)

Phase II: 2016-17

Beginning in 2016, the program will begin admitting at least 8 students, ideally 4 per genre.

Phase III: 2018-on

 In 2018 the program will have begun to approach full capacity. By this time, however, fiction faculty members Christopher Coake and Susan Palwick will be approaching the limits of students they can advise to the best of their abilities. The department has expressed willingness to commit to a creative writing hire at or around Year 3 if enrollment and applications meet projections, in order to guarantee further growth (as of this writing, English has an open line, vacated by Burton upon her promotion to the Provost's office; by 2017, based on departmental history and faculty demographics, we anticipate at least one other line opening up, because of faculty departures and/or retirements). The department would search for a tenure-track faculty member who is a practicing writer in a field yet to be determined by student interest (likely specializing in fiction, memoir, or both). We would prefer this writer to have graduated from an MFA or PhD program in creative writing, so as to be best equipped to help immediately with program development. Though this might result in a disparity in the number of faculty who can direct theses (fiction: 3; poetry: 2), we envision the program achieving stability, until such time as future retirements necessitate revisiting programmatic and departmental needs; Gailmarie Pahmeier, although she cannot chair graduate committees because she is a continuing lecturer, will still be able to carry on a strong advisory and instructional role in the development of graduate poets.

By 2018 the program will have reached capacity. Our extant creative writing faculty are already supervising numerous graduate students in the department, and while some of these students would certainly be MFA candidates, were that degree available to them, we are committed to continue working with students of all emphases, and have done so on numerous occasions in the past and present.

In 2018 and in each year thereafter the program will be graduating roughly 12 students: 6 per genre per year. Each faculty member will be guaranteed to direct at least 2 graduating students' creative theses per year, as well as taking on the role of director / advisor for 2 second-year students, as well as serving as a second reader on 2-3 other graduating students' theses, as well as advising incoming students. This is the commitment required only within the program; creative writing faculty members will also continue to direct and serve on committees outside of the creative writing program, and across campus, as they do at present.

In Year 5 of the program (2020-21) we will likely request two new TA lines from CLA (via re-allocation of salary savings) to support the growth of the MFA program specifically and the English department generally. These TAs would be part of the general pool in English, and would be awarded competitively to incoming students of all emphases. English will also seek whenever possible to compete for available TA lines within the institution, and will continue aggressively to seek sources of TA funding from outside the institution.

Growth Plan:

See Appendix C

iii. Budget Projections – Complete and attach the Five-Year Budget Projection Table.
See Attachment 2

J. Facilities and equipment required

i. Existing facilities: type of space required, number of assignable square feet, space utilization assumptions, special requirements, modifications, effect on present programs

The department does not anticipate that implementing this program will lead to a need for more space above and beyond what is currently allotted to English. By year 5 of the program's existence, depending upon growth of the MFA program and of the English department more generally, the department may seek office space for faculty and/or graduate students in Thompson Hall.

ii. Additional facilities required: number of assignable square feet, description of space required, special requirements, time sequence assumed for securing required space
N/A

iii. Existing and additional equipment required
N/A

K. Student services required – Plans to provide student services, including advisement, to accommodate the program, including its implications for services to the rest of the student body

Graduate creative writing faculty will each advise a number of MFA students, and they will also be served by the existing Director of Graduate Studies in English. One creative writing faculty member will serve as Program Director on a rotating basis, and will coordinate program information and advising concerns with the Director of Graduate Studies.

L. Consultant Reports – If a consultant was hired to assist in the development of the program, please complete subsections A through C. A copy of the consultant's final report must be on record at the requesting institution.

i. Names, qualifications and affiliations of consultant(s) used
N/A

ii. Consultant's summary comments and recommendations
N/A

iii. Summary of proposer's response to consultants
N/A

M. Articulation Agreements

i. Articulation agreements were successfully completed with the following NSHE institutions. (Attach copies of agreements)
To come, pending further approval.

ii. Articulation agreements have not yet been established with the following NSHE institutions. (Indicate status)
To come, pending further approval.

iii. Articulation agreements are not applicable for the following institutions. (Indicate reasons)
To come, pending further approval.

N. Summary Statement

The Department of English has been planning this program for many years, and has endeavored to lay groundwork for it. Our hire of Dr. Steve Gehrke was made with a future MFA program in mind; over the past years the Writing Committee has seen to it that MFA-specific classes have been successfully proposed and added to the Course Catalog, in preparation for the program to come. The English department faculty have reached out to faculty within our institution (specifically in the School of Journalism) and at UNLV both to articulate the program's goals and to foster a spirit of cooperation and excitement. We believe we are proposing a new degree program which will provide benefit to the department, to UNR, to Reno, the state of Nevada, and the region, which will serve the missions of our institution and NSHE, and which can be begun with minimal expenditure of resources.

UNR's Department of English has had great success in offering creative writing education at both the undergraduate and graduate level; in the past ten years we have sent twenty-plus students on to further study in creative writing, and have seen past graduates such as Willy Vlautin (author of THE MOTEL LIFE and LEAN ON PETE) and Claire Vaye Watkins (author of BATTLEBORN, and winner of the Story Prize—the nation's most prestigious award for short fiction—and the New York Public Library Young Lions Award, among others) achieve extraordinary success with their writing. Our faculty have published widely and to great distinction, both here and abroad. We are eager to expand our commitment to excellence through the establishment of a graduate program devoted to rigor, accomplishment, public engagement, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation, and further national recognition.

Appendix A:

MFA Program Admissions Numbers: A Sampling

Estimated Applicants in 2011 to Selected Programs from *Poets & Writers'* Top 50 Rankings[1]

(Estimated National Applicant Pool: 3250-4000)

Iowa: 1530, accepts ca. 50 per year (25 fiction, 25 poetry)

Michigan: 1072, accepts. ca. 22 per year in all emphases

Oregon: 720, accepts 12 per year (6 fiction, 6 poetry)

Cornell: 643, accepts 8 per year (4 fiction, 4 poetry)

Cal-Irvine: 600, accepts 12 per year (6 fiction, 6 poetry)

Virginia: 466, accepts 10 per year (5 fiction, 5 poetry)

Indiana: 409, accepts 10 per year (5 fiction, 5 poetry)

Arizona State: 305, no data for admittances

Mississippi: 235, accepts 6-8 per year across both emphases

Colorado: 184, no data for acceptances

Reported Application Figures for Selected National MFA Programs

Figures Made Publicly Available:

Oregon State: 2012: 370; accepted 6 fiction, 4 CNF, 4 poetry

Washington: 300 per year; accepts <10%

Wyoming: 2013: "just under 300 applications"; accepted 7

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[1] All data compiled by Seth Abramson for *Poets and Writers*; we contacted Abramson and asked for applicant figures to these schools; while he could not share that data directly, he did share his formula for estimating applicant numbers, and all figures in this category were calculated thusly. For a full explanation of methodology, see: Abramson, Seth: "2012 MFA Rankings: The Methodology." *Poets & Writers Online.* Poets & Writers Magazine. 1 September 2011. Web. 20 October 2013. Acceptance figures appear as reported on school websites.

South Carolina: 2013: 170 applications, accepted 18%.

Figures Reported Directly[2]:

Minnesota: 2012: 482, accepts 12 (4 fiction, 4 poetry, 4 CNF)

Montana: 350 per year, accepts 50 (20 fiction, 10 CNF, 20 poetry)

Arizona: 250-400 per year, accepts 25 (no breakdown reported or listed)

San Francisco State: 2013: 227, accepts ca. 55 (25-30 fiction, 25 poetry, 3-5 playwriting)

UNC-Greensboro: 2013: 210[3], accepts 10-14 (5-7 fiction, 5-7 poetry)

UC-San Diego: 2013: 176, accepted 6 total (no breakdown reported)

Bowling Green: 2012: 175, no acceptance figures reported or listed

Purdue: 175 per year, accepts 8 (no breakdown reported)

Ohio State: 2010-13: 192 per year, accepts 12-15, breakdown variable

Cal State-San Bernadino: 150 per year, accepts 10 (5 fiction, 5 poetry)

Boise State: 150-200 per year, accepts 4-6 (2-3 in fiction, 2-3 in poetry)

Idaho: 2012: 110 per year, accepts 9-16, breakdown variable

Cal State-Long Beach: 100 per year, accepts 12 (6 fiction, 6 poetry)

Northern Michigan: 100 per year, no acceptance figures reported or listed

Western Michigan: 100 per year, accepts 4-6 per year, numbers variable[4]

New Mexico State: 50-70,[5] accepts 4-5 in fiction (no poetry figures provided)

Utah: 2012: 45[6], accepts ca. 6 per year (no breakdown reported or listed)

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[2] We wrote numerous faculty members directly, and their figures are listed here as reported to us.
[3] "Longer average" is 250/year.
[4] WMU also offers a PhD; the numbers quoted were specifically for the MFA.
[5] NMSU notes their numbers were 150+ annually a few years ago, but considerable turnover in faculty—including the retirements of prominent writers Robert Boswell and Antonya Nelson—have left the program hurting.
[6] Utah's PhD program in creative writing received 100+ applicants each of the last two years. The program director told us they've been de-emphasizing their MFA program in favor of the PhD; no MFA students are admitted there with funding.

Appendix B:

Applicant Figures for Department of English, All Degree Programs, Last 5 Years

Year	Total Apps	Admitted	Total TAs Awarded
2009	66	25	16
2010	70	22	20
2011	40	17	09
2012	43	14	12
2013	40	20	13

Applicant Figures for Literature and Environment Only, Last 5 Years

Year	Apps	Admitted	TAs Awarded
2009	28	6	5
2010	33	8	8
2011	24	7	2
2012	19	7	7
2013	*No students admitted in advance of program termination*		

Appendix C:

Growth Plan for Proposed MFA in Creative Writing

	Phase I	Phase II		Phase III	
Year:	**1 (2015-16)**	**2 (2016-17)**	**3 (2017-18)**	**4 (2018-19)**	**5 (2019-20)**
Admit:	6	8	10	12	12
Graduate∫:	0	0	-3	-5	-8
4th Year§:	0	0	1 (.5)	2 (1)	2 (1)
Headcount:	10*	18	25	33	36
			24 + (.5) =	30 + (1)=	34 + (1)=
FTE:	**10**	**18**	**24.5**	**31**	**35**

"Total" refers to students in program at the beginning of the fall semester of listed academic year.

The number in the "Admit" line assumes that in each year we will admit an equal number of fiction writers and poets.

* indicates estimated 4 students recruited from existing MA programs to form de facto first class; these students would then be on track to graduate at the end of academic year 2016.

§ indicates number of students, due to graduate in prior year, who opt for fourth year to complete thesis. Ongoing FTE count of these students (who will be part-time in the fourth year) listed in parentheses.

∫ indicates students graduating at end of prior academic year.

New Academic Program Proposal
Five-Year Budget Projection

Institution: __UNR__   Program: __English -- MFA__   Semester of Implementation: __Fall 2015__

DIRECTIONS: Complete the following cost estimates for the first, third, and fifth year budget projections for the proposed new program in Section A. Costs for the third and fifth year are cumulative. If the total budget for the program is not reflected in the "Existing" or "New" Categories, please provide further explanation in the space provided below (EXPLANATION). Any "new" costs must be noted by source in Section B.

STUDENT FTE   Year 1: __10__   Year 3: __24.5__   Year 5: __35__

Section A.

	Year 1/Start-up				Year 3				Year 5			
	Existing[1]	New[2]	Total	FTE	Existing[1]	New[2]	Total	FTE	Existing[1]	New[2]	Total	FTE
PERSONNEL												
Faculty (*salaries/benefits*)	171,718	0	171,718	1.8	249,718	0	249,718	2.8	249,718	0	249,718	2.8
Graduate Assistants	58,525	0	58,525	1.5	58,525	0	58,525	1.5	58,525	0	58,525	1.5
Support Staff	17,138	0	17,138	0.4	17,138	0	17,138	0.4	17,138	0	17,138	0.4
Fellowships/Scholarships	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Personnel Total	$247,381	$0	$247,381	3.7	$325,381	$0	$325,381	4.7	$325,381	$0	$325,381	4.7
OTHER RESOURCES												
Library Materials (*printed*)	500	0	500		500	0	500		500	0	500	
Library Materials (*electronic*)	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Supplies/Operating Expenses	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Equipment	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Other Expenses	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Other Resources Total	$500	$0	$500		$500	$0	$500		$500	$0	$500	
PHYSICAL FACILITIES												
Construction	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Major Renovation	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Other Facility-Related Expenses	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0	
Physical Facilities Total	$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0		$0	$0	$0	
TOTAL	$247,881	$0	$247,881		$325,881	$0	$325,881		$325,881	$0	$325,881	

Section B.

	Amount	%			Amount	%			Amount	%	
EXPLANATION OF "NEW" SOURCES[2]											
State Support	0				0				0		
Federal Grants/Contracts	0				0				0		
State Grants/Contracts	0				0				0		
Private Grants/Contracts	0				0				0		
Private Gifts	0				0				0		
Other (*please specify*)					0				0		
TOTAL	$0	0.0%			$0	0.0%			$0	0.0%	

[1] Resources re-allocated from existing programs in Year 1 should be noted in the "Existing" column. In addition, "New" costs from Year 1 that will continue in the third and fifth year should also be noted in the third and fifth year as "Exisitng."

[2] Any "New" resource utilized to fund a new program must include the source to be provided in the "Explanation of New Sources" section. Total "New" sources for each year must equal the total for each year under "Explanation of New Sources."

EXPLANATION (*Please provide any additional information pertinent to the budget projection, including for example, explain for any new funding sources that are not guarnateed receipt by the institutions how the program will make-up for the potential loss in expected new funding.*)**:**

SEE APPENDIX E FOR NOTES/EXPLANATION OF FIGURES

Appendix E:

Notes/Explanation of Budget (Appendix D)

Faculty, Year 1
--This figure represents a 36% investment of instructional time, as figured from salary and benefits of existing creative writing faculty (Coake, Gehrke, Keniston, Palwick, Pahmeier), based on reallocation of existing faculty investment in L&E MA and PhD emphases (these emphases in literary studies are being eliminated).

Faculty, Years 3 and 5
--These figures represent the 36% in faculty investment from Year 1, plus a potential hire in Year 3, based on projected student interest and enrollment, that would come from reallocation of English replacement position. The average starting salary + benefits of a starting assistant professor in English is $78,000.

Graduate Assistants, Year 1 - 3
--The Department of English has agreed to commit 20% of English's available TA pool to incoming MFA students in years 1-5 of the program. This will equal, on average, 3-5 TAs per year. We have used the low end of that average in this budget (3 TA positions at 20 hours per week or .5 FTE each), as it is the more certain and defensible figure based on the department's traditional practice of allocating TA positions. (Owing to past 2- and 5-year commitments, allocation of English's 36 TAs is dependent upon a variable number of open TAs per year, from a historical low of 8 to an historical high of 18. On average this means we award 15 TAs per year. The department is committing to a percentage rather than a fixed number in order to allow for flexibility in years when few TAs come open, and to allow for merit-based decisions across the entire remaining applicant pool. MFA applicants not receiving one of the guaranteed assistantships may still compete with PhDs and MAs in other emphases for remaining TAs.

In Year 5, 2 additional TAs may be requested (via re-allocation of salary savings in the college) from CLA, depending on enrollments in program and on enrollments more broadly in English, to be determined by periodic review of all programs/emphases. They would be positions for which PhD, MFA, and MA students could compete. These positions would provide instruction in English/ Core Writing (though some qualified MFA students may apply to teach a section of ENG 205 in their second year).

Classified Staff
--New classified staff not needed, as AA III position for undergrad/grad program is 1.0. Figures entered under Support Staff for all years represent a percentage of effort to be dedicated to support of the MFA program; these existing resources will be reallocated from percentage of effort formerly dedicated to support of L&E emphases.

Supplies
--Basic supplies covered by English operating budget.

Facilities
--Depending on growth in department over first five years of MFA, English may request space in Thompson Hall for graduate students/faculty, if available, starting in year 5. No new space needed for MFA students/faculty at present.

Library Materials

--The English is typically allocated ca. $2000.00 in books, media, etc. (excludes subscriptions and databases); the MFA program will require only ca. 500.00 per year of this existing funding. The department has agreed that all resources formerly allocated to the L&E emphases will be allocated in future to the MFA.

General
--English would also work with CLA to seek donor support of student fellowships and, eventually, a visiting writer position.

Appendix F:

THE GREAT GENRE DEBATE
By Mark Todd

(Note: Todd teaches at Western State College of Colorado, which offers a low-res MFA specializing in genre writing.)

From *Writer's Digest Online*; Jan 4, 2011. Site visited Oct. 28, 2013.

Several months before our new Master of Fine Arts program launched, a writer e-mailed me to inquire about teaching opportunities. But when I explained that our fiction track focused on mainstream and popular genres, she responded, "Oh! I wouldn't be interested in teaching *that*!" (The italics are mine, but I could hear the connotation loud and clear.) Her comment served as a reminder of just how wide the gap remains between the so-called "literary" fiction offered by almost all MFA programs, and writing intended for more mainstream audiences.

Not that I was surprised. I'd researched the range of established creative writing programs when we decided to put together our own offerings at Western State College of Colorado, and had found that formal training in writing popular fiction wasn't just underrepresented, it was rare. Given my personal passion for genre writing, the prospect of helping to fill this gap was an exciting one. Of close to 200 MFA programs encamped across the country, a mere handful offers programs dedicated to popular fiction: Stonecoast in Maine, Seton Hill in Pennsylvania, and now our program, launching just this year. That's less than 2 percent.

So why the divide—and when did this academic trend of shunning forms of writing that target larger audiences begin? As far as I can tell, it goes back as far as the 1940s' ascendancy of the "New Critics," a scholarly group determined to champion writing that placed a premium on intellectuality. About this time, the trend toward free-verse poetry found allies among these same intellectuals—
outspoken critics, writers and poets like Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and Ford Madox Ford. The movement also had tremendous effect in shaping perceptions for a growing new cottage industry during the 1960s: the creative writing program.

The result both for poetry and for MFAs was to push studies toward the insular intellectuality of the academic world. In a scathing essay called "Can Poetry Matter?" Dana Gioia, who recently stepped down as chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, drops the blame for the popular decline of poetry squarely in the laps of institutions of higher learning: "Over the past half-century, as American poetry's specialist audience has steadily expanded, its general readership has declined. … [N]one of it matters very much to readers, publishers and advertisers—to anyone, that is, except other poets."

The reason? Many poets simply turned their backs to audiences and began writing for one another.

I see this as a cautionary tale for fiction-focused MFA programs, many perplexingly determined to follow the same path academic poets trampled down over the past five decades. Writers should be able to attend graduate programs to improve their work without abandoning hope of succeeding in popular markets. With this in mind, our program took Gioia's advice in framing our poetry concentration to reassert elements that make verse appeal to the ear as well as the eye. We did the same for our screenwriting track by emphasizing production values, and we certainly took the implications for fiction just as seriously.

Of course, that's not to say you can't pursue dreams of writing pop fiction in other programs. It just takes determination. It's not unheard of for aspiring writers to earn MFAs while staying true to genre writing goals. Aspiring science-fiction author Tristan Palmgren writes of his Midwest MFA experience, "My program was friendlier than I could have expected." He says his professors were supportive of his writing objectives.

My research reveals that a number of MFA professors write and publish in mainstream markets and, yes, even in popular genre categories. Yet few programs where these same professors teach seem to offer more than an occasional class in such areas.

For Palmgren, the biggest "road bumps" came from other students in his workshops who didn't intimately understand the form. "Every once in a while," he says, "someone would spot science-fictional ideas that they'd also seen in a popular movie and assume I'd taken the idea from that movie, rather than the movie taking the idea from the broad and deep well of already-existing SF literature."

Another MFA grad, John Steele, reports a similar tale from his Spalding University experience, during which he wrote almost exclusively genre short stories (Westerns and horror) as well as a Western novel. "These genre stories were sometimes treated with less seriousness," he says, "because they weren't perceived as being important or weighty, even if they dealt with important or weighty issues. It was as if by writing a Western or horror story, it somehow didn't 'matter' as much as a story that was a so-called literary story."

Steele's next comment hits the mark even closer: "It's as if some writers in MFA programs are only writing to impress other MFA writers."

If such a mindset is indeed endemic, it risks turning into the sort of literary arrogance that has reduced the audience for poetry. Such a narrowing of focus amounts to training fiction writers for an ever-narrowing reception.

Russell Davis, currently completing his MFA at National University in San Diego, is no newcomer to writing—he's just finished his term as president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and has sold numerous books. Yet his desire to continue to improve his craft prompted him to seek more formal education in writing. His experience at his program has been mixed, though he sees promise for the future: "People are willing to consider genre fiction as more legitimate than they were even back in the mid-'90s," he says. "There is, however, still a sense and a perception that unless you're writing 'literary' fiction, you're somehow writing lesser work. I think because money is generally

better writing for genres, the perception comes off that you're a sellout or you aren't concerned with the art and craft of it."

His final comment resonates with what I hope to communicate: "In their days, Dickens and Poe were sellouts, writing what was popular and trying to make a living."

Davis could have just as easily cited contemporary authors who write popular work that is also well crafted: Hugo-winner Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* comes immediately to mind for fantasy, as does Dan Simmons' *Drood* for historical mystery. Fill in the blanks with your own examples; it's an easy list to expand.

I believe in the craft that MFA programs offer students who want to become better writers. In fact, attention to craft can't fail to make a difference to any serious agent or acquisitions editor in the publishing industry today.

Still, the gap between the genre fiction crowd and the MFA community hasn't narrowed as much as it should. It's not unwarranted that one passionate blogger I uncovered during my Internet research dubbed graduate creative programs the "MaFiA." MFAs have to shoulder some responsibility for that moniker. But good writing is good writing, regardless of the intended market, and MFAs should be raising the bar—not just for the literary elite but also for expectations by the larger reading public.

At Western State, we've tried to encourage the trend by offering low-residency concentrations in mainstream and genre fiction, poetry for wider audiences, and screenwriting for the independent film. The good news for writers who want formal training in their chosen field is that the success of such programs won't go unnoticed by other schools across the country. Aspiring writers can expect to see more varied offerings in coming years. It's a sea change whose time has come, and forward-thinking institutions need to read the market barometers and adjust their tacks.

Heather K. Hardy
Dean

Jane Detweiler
Associate Dean

February 19, 2014

TO: **Kevin Carman, Provost**

FROM: **Heather K. Hardy, Dean**

           College of Liberal Arts

RE: **Support for Master of Fine Arts in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing**

Since the proposal for the new Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in English has been reviewed and unanimously approved in both the College of Liberal Arts and the University Courses and Curriculum committees, I write to affirm my support of this proposal and the allocations or re-allocations of resources it contains.
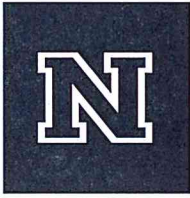
February 7, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to express my strong support of Professor Christopher Coake's proposal for a Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing. I believe that this new degree program would offer outstanding synergies and opportunities for collaboration between the English/Creative Writing program and the Reynolds School of Journalism (where our current offerings in long-form creative nonfiction writing include my own course, "Narrative: The Art of Storytelling," as well as upper-level courses on travel writing and literary journalism). I would be interested in teaching and advising students in the MFA program, and I would be very pleased if Professor Coake and other faculty members from English could play greater roles in teaching and advising our journalism students who are interested in creative nonfiction.

The Reynolds School is currently finishing a search for an endowed chair professorship in media entrepreneurship, and this new hire could also be a great benefit to writing students in the new MFA program as well as in journalism.

I have talked with Al Stavitsky, the dean of the Reynolds School of Journalism, and he shares my strong interest in close collaboration with the new MFA program.

Yours,

Alan Deutschman / PJ, PP

Professor Alan Deutschman

UNLV | Department *of* ENGLISH

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

November 2, 2013

TO: Graduate Council, Graduate College
    Sub-committee on Curriculum &
    Other New Program Evaluators
    University of Nevada, Reno

FROM: Douglas A. Unger, Professor of English & Creative Writing,
    Department of English; affiliated faculty, Black Mountain Institute;
    co-founder, M.F.A. in Creative Writing International Program
    & Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation Program
    University of Nevada, Las Vegas

RE: Inter-institutional support letter for new M.F.A. in Creative Writing at UNR

Dear Committee Members and Evaluators:

I am writing to express my own very enthusiastic support for the new program proposal for an M.F.A. in Creative Writing at the University of Nevada, Reno. After some informal consultation, I believe this letter may also serve with others already on file or yet to be received of the very strong endorsement by all on our UNLV Creative Writing faculty of a new M.F.A. in Creative Writing at UNR. There are many sound justifications for this new program, and we would welcome its approval and implementation for the following reasons:

- The proposed M.F.A. will offer an emphasis in the writing of mainstream and genre fiction, which is a field not emphasized in the M.F.A. program at UNLV, thus UNR's program will provide much-needed additional sudio-arts opportunities for students.
- Our poetry component at UNLV emphasizes more experimental and postmodern modes and poetics, with a strong emphasis on literary translation. The M.F.A. at UNR would offer creative opportunities for different approaches to writing for developing poets.
- The great geographical distance between UNR and UNLV tends to discourage writers from northern Nevada applying to UNLV, thus the new M.F.A. at UNR will serve a long-standing regional need in our state for the literary arts.
- Outreach initiatives are already in place between UNLV's Black Mountain Institute, which is a supporter and major funding organization for Creative Writing programs at UNLV, and the literary community at UNR. With the establishment of a new M.F.A., we believe opportunities for exchanges and collaborative study between the two programs will greatly increase, fulfilling a stated goal of the Chancellor of the NSHE system and the Nevada Board of Regents for increased collaboration between our state's premier universities. The new M.F.A. at UNR will be a welcome complement to our M.F.A. and Ph.D. programs, and we will collaborate with its faculty and students all the better to develop and encourage the practice and study of the literary arts.

- The new M.F.A. at UNR promises to make best use of the current teaching faculty with specialties in Creative Writing, all of whom are recognized nationally and internationally for their excellence. The high-quality graduate students that this talented faculty are sure to draw can only increase the prestige and national profile of the English Department and of the university.
- A new M.F.A. in the Department of English at UNR will draw increasing numbers of unusually talented students also to English and literary studies, so will help greatly to grow graduate programs more generally for the Department of English and the College of Liberal Arts.
- This new program has been in the planning stages for more than five years, and the timing seems optimal. Our state has grown steadily in national and international recognition for its writers and artists, and northern Nevada writers deserve a terminal degree program that provides a solid, enduring foundation for the practice of their art and their teaching talents.

Of course, there are many other good reasons to support a new M.F.A. program at UNR, but I believe I've listed the main ones. As the co-founder and previous director of Creative Writing, also the author of its curriculum, and as its next director, (we rotate the directorship among our program faculty every three years), I admire the rigorous design of this program, the three-year timeline for its students, its emphasis on literary and interdisciplinary studies, and think that it will be a very fine one, and will become nationally recognized as such in a very few years after it admits its first students. Please know that our Creative Writing faculty at UNLV mean to be as helpful as possible so that the new program at UNR grows and thrives. If a member of any evaluating committee or other evaluator would like a further endorsement or to ask any questions, please do let me know. Mainly, we know that UNR has a writing faculty who are counted among the best artists anywhere, and this new program to which they dedicate their talents will be a tremendous asset and treasure for all in our state.

Sincerely,

Douglas Unger

Ph: 702-895-3405
E-mail: douglas.unger@unlv.edu