4-20-2017

The Five Hundred and Fortieth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee: Creation of Creative Writing Option for the English major.

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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TO: President David Dooley  
FROM: W. Michael Sullivan, Chairperson of the Faculty Senate  

1. The attached BILL titled, The Five Hundred and Fortieth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee: Creation of Creative Writing Option for the English major, is forwarded for your consideration.

2. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on April 20, 2017.

3. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

4. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate’s By-Laws, this bill will become effective May 11, 2017 three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; or (3) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum.

   W. Michael Sullivan  
   Chairperson of the Faculty Senate  
   April 20, 2017

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

a. Approved ___.

b. Approved subject to Notice of the Council on Postsecondary Education ___. Noticed - 6/21/17

c. Disapproved ___.

   Signature of the President  
   5/10/17  
   (date)
MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, Commissioner of Postsecondary Education
   RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

FROM: David M. Dooley
      President

DATE: May 10, 2017

SUBJECT: University of Rhode Island Academic Program Changes

Enclosed you will find the following academic changes approved by the Faculty Senate on April 20, and by me on May 9, 2017.

16-17-27 C - Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia
16-17-38 C - Creation of Data Science Program-BA, BS and Minor
16-17-28 D - Creation of Creative Writing Option for the English major
16-17-38 E - Creation of a Business of Digital Media (BDM) Minor
16-17-28 F - Creation of a Minor in Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship

I look forward to a positive review and positive actions on the above item. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, will serve as the University’s contact. Please feel free to directly contact the Office of the Provost if you have any questions.

enclosures

c: Donald H. DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
   Laura Beauvais, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Global Initiatives
   Dean Libutti, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
   Nancy Neff, Faculty Senate Coordinator
At the March 27, 2017 meeting of the Curricular Affairs Committee and by electronic communication, the following matters were considered and are now presented to the Faculty Senate.

SECTION II
Curricular Matters Which Require Confirmation by the Faculty Senate

PROGRAM CHANGES

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES:

Creation of Creative Writing Option for the English major:  (See Appendix F)
The Creative Writing Option will be a program within the framework of the English Major, designed to provide English majors with an interest in creative writing an opportunity to concentrate, develop and sequence their creative writing coursework over a series of semesters. A centralized Option will create stronger student recruitment opportunities than isolated elective courses do currently. Currently, English majors can take our department’s creative writing courses as electives within the Major, but the Creative Writing Option will establish a sequence of required courses intended to realize the goals for the English Department’s Creative Writing activities and our students.
A Proposal for: Creative Writing Option for the English Major

Date: 1/29/2017

A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

A1. Name of institution
   University of Rhode Island

A2. Name of department, division, school or college
   English Department
   College of Arts and Sciences

A3. Title of proposed program and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code
   Creative Writing Option
   CIP 23.1302 Creative Writing

A4. Intended initiation date of program change. Include anticipated date for granting first degrees or certificates, if appropriate.
   Initiation date: Fall 2017
   First degree date: Spring 2018

A5. Intended location of the program
   English Department, Kingston and Providence Campuses

A6. Description of institutional review and approval process

   Department
   College
   CAC/Graduate Council
   Faculty Senate
   President of the University

   Approval Date
   2/8/2017

A7. Summary description of proposed program (not to exceed 2 pages)

   The Creative Writing Option will be a program within the framework of the English Major, designed to provide English majors with an interest in creative writing an
opportunity to concentrate, develop and sequence their creative writing coursework over a series of semesters. A centralized Option will create stronger student recruitment opportunities than isolated elective courses do currently. Currently, English majors can take our department’s creative writing courses as electives within the Major, but the Creative Writing Option will establish a sequence of required courses intended to realize the following goals for the English Department’s Creative Writing activities and our students:

(1) to codify disparate electives into a sequenced discipline, (2) to emphasize creative writing as an artistic practice and prepare students for graduate study and/or careers in creative writing, (3) to create a stronger sense of a creative writing community on campus, (4) to integrate this community with, and concretize the curricular component of, our already robust paracurricular creative writing activities (Read/Write Series, the Ocean State Writing Conference, the Ocean State Review, Barrow Street), (5) and to increase the visibility of creative writing classes across campus.

The Creative Writing Option will be an option for English majors. Majors who choose the Option would continue to complete the same thirty-six-credit major, including the ENG 201 core course and courses within the five established historical periods. The only Creative Writing Option modification to the general English major requirements will be as follows: general English majors will continue to take three elective English courses (twelve credits) as part of their overall thirty-six credit major requirements, while English majors who choose the Creative Writing Option will be required to complete (instead of electives) a sequence of three Creative Writing courses (twelve credits). In essence, we will replace the traditional electives with required courses.

All English majors completing the Creative Writing Option will take ENG 405: Creative Writing Capstone, a course designed to integrate and synthesize the skills and knowledge students have gained in their 205 and 305 courses. For example, in 405 students will complete a senior portfolio, research and prepare for careers and/or graduate education in creative writing, and gain experiential knowledge working for a literary magazine or a similar project. The ENG 405 capstone will complete the proposed sequence and help realize the goals of the Creative Writing Option as outlined in the first paragraph above.

Students who choose the Creative Writing Option will also have the freedom to choose two courses from among a wide variety of Creative Writing courses: ENG 205 (A: Poetry, B: Fiction, C: Creative Nonfiction, and D: Screenwriting) and ENG 305 (A: Advanced Poetry, B: Advanced Fiction, C: Advanced Creative Nonfiction and D: Advanced Screenwriting).
To recap, in place of the traditional three elective courses (twelve credits) allowed for the English Major, English majors who choose the Creative Writing Option will complete a sequence of three Creative Writing courses: two ENG 205 and/or ENG 305 courses (at least one of which must be an ENG 305 course) and the ENG 405 Capstone course.

A8. Signature of the President

David M. Dooley

A9. Person to contact during the proposal review
Name: Derek Nikitas
Title: Assistant Professor of English
Phone: 401-874-5692
Email: nikitas@uri.edu

A10. List and attach any signed agreements for any cooperative arrangements made with other institutions/agencies or private companies in support of the program.

n/a

B. RATIONAL: There should be a demonstrable need for the program.

B1. Why is the new program being developed?

(1) to codify our currently disparate Creative Writing elective courses into a sequenced discipline and establish program-level curricular goals for our English majors who choose multiple Creative Writing courses throughout their undergraduate academic career, (2) to emphasize creative writing as an artistic practice and prepare students for graduate study and/or careers in creative writing, (3) to create a stronger sense of a creative writing community on campus, (4) to integrate this community with, and concretize the curricular component of, our already robust paracurricular creative writing activities (Read/Write Series, the Ocean State Writing Conference, the Ocean State Review, Barrow Street), (5) and to increase the visibility of creative writing classes across campus.

B2. What is the economic need and workforce data related to the program?
a. Provide information on jobs available as a result of successfully completing the certificate or degree: job titles, job outlook/growth, and salaries.

The Creative Writing Option will provide the same job availability and outlook that the more general English Major currently offers—including a flexible array of careers in secondary and higher education, freelance writing, editing, publishing, advertising, law, technical writing, and any field that prizes accuracy, innovation, creativity, and rhetorical ability in written communication. The specific function of a Creative Writing Option would be to develop our students as critical-creative thinkers whose knowledge and abilities uniquely integrate literary history, critical analysis, and creative writing. As a “soft skill,” creative writing delivers a highly flexible and sought-after skill set for many employers in business, government, etc.

However, because of the flexibility of creative writing as a “soft skill,” specific numbers on job placement can be difficult to access. We anticipate that a “Creative Writing Option” designation on the diploma, as well as a completed capstone portfolio, would offer these students a more tangible means of marketing their skills, either for job placement or for graduate education.

We would also like to emphasize the role of creative writing mastery in matters of personal enrichment that transcend the boundaries of job placement, as many practitioners of creative writing make valuable contributions to their communities through volunteerism, cultural contribution and exchange, etc.

B3. What entities are advocating for this program? Was an advisory board used to develop the curriculum?

No formal advisory board was used to develop the curriculum; however, the Option was developed and approved by three full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty members who specialize in Creative Writing (Cappello, Covino, Nikitas). It was also reviewed and unanimously approved by the department faculty during a faculty meeting on 2/8/2017. In developing this curriculum we consulted the best practices advocated by the most prominent self-governing organization in our discipline, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. In particular, the AWP, in their published “Recommendations on the Teaching of Creative Writing to Undergraduates,” advocates that students in the discipline of Creative Writing should take a sequenced series of courses culminating in a senior portfolio of substantial, multi-genre work. Although we already have courses in place at various tiers, including an ENG 405 course which requires a portfolio, there is currently no apparatus in place to ensure that creative writing students sequence
their study, nor are they necessarily required to complete a portfolio. The Creative Writing Option would codify all these expectations.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ROLE: The program should be clearly related to the published role, scope, and mission of the institution and be compatible with other programs and activities of the institution.

C1. Explain how the program is consistent with the published role, scope, and mission of the institution and how it is related to the institution’s Academic Plan.

The following outlines the key points of contact between the Creative Writing Option and the University of Rhode Island Academic Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

*Goal One: Enhance Student Success*. The courses within the Creative Writing Option offer significant opportunities for innovative pedagogical approaches, including peer assessment through workshopping, a focused and intensive instructor-student feedback cycle, student self-customization of the Option through selection from a wide range of genre-based classes and projects, direct engagement with working writers in the field through the Read/Write Series and the Ocean State Writers Conference, and direct opportunities for experiential learning projects in the Capstone course (literary magazine editing, internships with the *Barrow Street* press, civic engagement through creative nonfiction writing projects, etc.) The Option will also provide more opportunities for Graduate Teaching Assistants to mentor undergraduates in 200 and 300 level courses, and co-mentor undergraduates through their course sequences alongside full-time faculty. A more systematized delivery of Creative Writing courses, culminating in a portfolio, will also enhance the efficacy of departmental assessment strategies for Creative Writing. Finally, the discipline of Creative Writing has always encouraged lifelong learning and personal fulfillment through the use of creative writing as a means of self and community discovery and engagement.

*Goal Two: Expand Research, Scholarship and Creative Work*. As the PhD in English with a creative dissertation becomes ever more prominent throughout the United States, we believe that the viability and attractiveness of such a degree program depends on a strong foundation of undergraduate study. Already we are seeing a marked increase among PhD applicants in our creative dissertation option (at least 30% of all PhD applicants this year). To help solidify this foundation, we believe the Creative Writing Option can only help increase the presence and prestige of our Creative Writing activities overall, thus offering greater opportunities for graduate student recruitment and engagement. In short, a robust undergraduate Option will attract high-quality MA and PhD applicants in creative writing. As we further seek to integrate the Option with
opportunities already offered through Creative Writing—the Ocean State Writers Conference, the Read/Write Series, Barrow Street, etc.—we see substantial opportunities to engage our undergraduate students with the local community and to build public support for our program. We also believe a codified Option will help organize our currently disparate Creative Writing courses and students in such a way that we can much more effectively deploy support services and advance opportunities in creative work, experiential learning, mentorship, extracurricular engagement, external funding, and more.

**Goal Three: Grow a Global Presence / Goal Four: Embrace Diversity and Social Justice.** The discipline of Creative Writing has long been a site for direct engagement with diversity and global perspectives because our classrooms are largely student-centered, because we continually strive for a diverse curriculum, and because we actively pursue an itinerary of extracurricular engagement that focuses on diversity and underrepresented perspectives. Here again, we prescribe to the best practices outlined in the Association of Writers and Writing Programs’ “**Recommendations on the Teaching of Creative Writing to Undergraduates**,” which state that “…the study of literature is the study of humanity. In creative writing classes students study points of view other than their own. This makes them more effective not only as writers but as collaborators, coworkers, managers, and citizens in an increasingly diverse nation.” Once again, a formalized Creative Writing Option would establish a foundational community among our Majors interested in creative writing, thus offering stronger points of contact with diversity and global perspectives. Finally, the Option would provide more organized and pointed opportunities for possible credit-bearing international experiences (in Italy or Portugal, for example) previously discussed only informally.

**D. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

D1. What are the similar programs in the state and region?

   a. If similar programs exist, how is this program different or why is duplication necessary?

   The English Department at Rhode Island College offers an undergraduate BA in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing. Roger Williams College offers a full Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing though the Department of English and Creative Writing, while Brown University offers a Creative Writing Concentration through their Literary Arts Program. URI’s English Department offers unique opportunities in creative writing that set our program apart from others in the region, like the Ocean State Review, Barrow Street Press our Read/Write Program, and our Ocean State Writers Conference (starting this year, we’ll be
holding the conference during the Fall 2017 semester, in part to more fully integrate
the conference with our undergraduate and graduate programs during the
semester).

That said, the goal of this proposed Creative Writing Option is not, ultimately, to
set ourselves apart from regional institutions. Rather, we seek to duplicate some
aspects of established programs at regional institutions as a matter of best practices
in the discipline (see the AWP “best practices” recommendations outlined in
section B3 above). We make the argument that these programs already exist at other
regional institutions because codifying and sequencing creative writing education is
the most effective way to serve English majors who wish to study creative writing
as a discipline. Our goal is not to draw students away from these regional
institutions, but rather to better serve the students already in our care. We feel such
duplication is a matter of ethical and pedagogical necessity, previously prevented
only because of staffing deficiencies within the department, but now overcome with
recent hires.

b. **Have you communicated with other institutions about the development of this
program and have any concerns been raised related to role, scope, and mission or
duplication?**

No concerns have been raised relating to role, scope, and mission or duplication.
Because the proposed Option is mainly a codification of already-established courses
and resources (for better centralized management, and systematization and
recognition of student learning), the Option is unlikely to have any new effects on
other institutions.

D2. **How do courses in this program transfer to other schools?**

The courses in this program would transfer in the same way that English Courses from
the University of Rhode Island have traditionally transferred.

D3. **How does this program align to academic programs at other institutions?**

This program aligns with the “best practices” in undergraduate creative writing
education (see section B3) exercised by many hundreds of institutions throughout the
country. In fact, for Creative Writing programs housed within English Departments, the
Creative Writing Program at the University of Rhode Island has been, until now,
uniquely deficient in offering Creative Writing only as a disconnected series of elective
courses. We seek to rectify that deficiency.
D4. Are recipients of this credential accepted into programs at the next degree level without issue?

Here again, our effort to codify the study of Creative Writing into an undergraduate Option as part of the English Major can only help our majors better prepare and situate themselves for the next degree—traditionally, the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing or Master’s/Doctoral degrees in English. The goals of the Option bear a direct relationship to the types of study and extracurricular activities that graduate MFA programs seek among their applicants—namely, a sequenced series of undergraduate courses, a senior portfolio, and engagement with conferences, literary magazines and visiting writers’ series. While many of these opportunities are already available to our students, the Option will provide them with the recognition, encouragement, continuous mentorship, and sense of community that reinforces their engagement.

D5. How does this program of study interface with degree programs at the level below them?

n/a

D6. Are cooperative agreements or affiliations established? If so, what?

n/a

E. PROGRAM:

E1. Are there pre-requisite courses? If so, please explain/list?

No prerequisite courses for the Option itself, though the final course in the Option sequence, ENG 405: Creative Writing Capstone has the following prerequisite: “ENG 205 and 305, or two ENG 305 courses in different genres (A, B, C, or D)”

E2. Curriculum

a. How many credit hours are required to graduate (include all general education and pre-requisites)?

120 credit hours (no change from the traditional English degree)

b. What courses are required for the program?
Students who choose the Creative Writing Option will still complete the traditional English Major, consisting of 36 credits (including 4 credits of ENG 201 and 20 credits in five historical areas). For English majors who choose the Option, the traditional 12 credits of English electives will be replaced with the following: two ENG 205 and/or ENG 305 courses (at least one of which must be an ENG 305 course) and the ENG 405 Capstone course.

Please note that ENG 205 and 305 are designated as A,B,C,D according to the focus genres (poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, screenwriting) and students are permitted to take different lettered sections of the same number course for credit (for example, a student could take both ENG 305A and 305B for credit, as they are courses in different writing genres).

c. **What are the new courses and descriptions that will go into the course catalog?**

   No new courses will need to be developed; all courses for the Option are already in the catalog.

d. **Are there specializations and options? If so, please describe.**

   The Creative Writing Option would be an option within the English major. There are no further proposed sub-specializations or options within the Creative Writing Option.

e. **Is the program content guided by program-specific accreditation standards or other outside guidance?**

   The program content will be guided by the same standards that govern the English Major as a whole. Additionally, the Creative Writing Option and its individual courses would follow the “best practices” outlined by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (see section B3 above).

f. **What are the learning goals (what students are expected to gain, achieve, know, or demonstrate by completion of the program)?**

   Students complete the Creative Writing Option upon completion of ENG 405, Creative Writing Capstone. Therefore, the final learning goals of the Option are identical to the learning goals of ENG 405:

   1. Students will demonstrate mastery of one creative genre, and competency in another, by producing a portfolio of creative work that has been revised based on
feedback.
2. Students will demonstrate mastery of critical approaches to creative writing by engaging in peer criticism and producing a major written critical response to course texts.
3. Students will synthesize the study of creative writing and reflect critically on their own work by producing a written statement of personal aesthetic.
4. Students will engage with experiential opportunities in the field of creative writing (such as publication, editing, graduate study, and creative writing-based careers) through work with in-house literary journals and presses, research into graduate programs, community writing projects, or other experiential opportunities.

F. FACULTY AND STAFF: The faculty and support staff for the program should be sufficient in number and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to the success of the program.

F1. What are the number of each needed?

Currently, Creative Writing courses in the English Department (105, 205, 305, 405) are staffed by our three tenured/tenure-track creative writing professors and by PTF, instructors and graduate teaching assistants. Since all courses are already in the catalog and regularly taught, there are no projected new staffing needs at this time.

F2. Are these new positions or reassignments?

They are neither new positions nor reassignments. Since the courses that comprise the Option are already in the catalog and regularly taught, there are no projected new staffing needs at this time.

F3. What are the minimal degree level and academic/technical field requirements and certifications required for teaching in this program?

Minimal degree requirement is a Master’s Degree in English or a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing or a closely related field, or enrollment as a student in either the URI English MA or the URI English PhD programs.

G. STUDENTS:

G1. How are students selected for the program?

Students would self-select the Option from within their English Major.
G2. Are there admission requirements?

None, other than that students must be English majors.

G3. What is the primary source of students?

a. New students or drawn from other programs?

We anticipate that most of the students who choose the Creative Writing Option will already be English majors, though we do also anticipate that the Option may draw some students to the English Major. The Option is being proposed in part as a means of attracting incoming students and double-majors to English.

b. Industry sponsored students/employees? Describe.

n/a

G4. What is the estimated number of students in the program?

It is difficult to determine at this time how many of our English Majors would choose the Creative Writing Option. If most Majors choose the Option in their Junior year, we can roughly anticipate 30-45 students enrolled in the Option at any given time.

G5. What is the estimated number of annual graduates?

Because completion of the Option is tied to successful completion of ENG 405: Creative Writing Capstone, and because one section of ENG 405 will be taught per year, we can estimate that 15-20 students will graduate with the Option each year.

H. EVALUATION:

H1. How will the program be evaluated?

a. Performance measures to evaluate the program.

The Creative Writing Option will be evaluated as part of the overall English Major.

b. Will the program be accredited? If so, when? How?

The Creative Writing Option will carry the same NEASC accreditation as the
English Major as a whole. There are no official accrediting bodies for the field of Creative Writing, though we endeavor to follow the best practices of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (a self-governing body).

I. WHAT SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR RESOURCES ARE NEEDED?

I1. Special instructional resources and services needed? (Clinical space, internships, proctors)

No special resources will be necessary beyond what is already available and in use by the English Department.

I2. Facilities and capital equipment?

No special resources will be necessary beyond what is already available and in use by the English Department.

J. IS THE PROGRAM FINANCIALLY Viable?

J1. ALL PROPOSALS: Complete the Rhode Island Office of Postsecondary Commissioner Budget Form demonstrating either

a. the need for additional resources or

b. that existing funds are sufficient for carrying out the program.

The completed proposal with Budget Form requires review by the URI Budget and Financial Planning Office. If no new funds are requested, proposers shall request a Statement of No Financial Impact from the URI Budget and Financial Planning Office.

J1b.
The Creative Writing Option in the English Major will require no additional resources. Existing funds are sufficient for the Option.

Travis D. Williams, Chair of English, 3/23/17
DATE: April 6, 2017

TO: Nancy F. Neff
Coordinator, Faculty Senate

FROM: Linda Barrett
Director, Budget and Financial Planning

SUBJECT: Proposal for a Creative Writing Option for English Majors

As requested in an email from Travis Williams, Associate Professor and Chairperson of the Department of English, dated March 19, 2017, the Budget and Financial Planning Office has reviewed the submitted documents related to the proposal for a new Creative Writing Option in the English Major.

According to the proposal, a new Creative Writing Option in the English Major will be offered through the College of Arts and Sciences, and will provide URI students with English Majors and an interest in Creative Writing an opportunity to concentrate, develop, and sequence their Creative Writing coursework over a series of semesters. Mr. Williams referenced in the submission that this new program will emphasize Creative Writing as an artistic practice and prepare students for graduate studies and/or careers in Creative Writing, create a stronger sense of a Creative Writing campus community, and increase the visibility of Creative Writing across campus.

The Budget and Financial Planning Office, after conferring with Enrollment Services, concurs that the Proposal for a Creative Writing Option for English Majors will have no impact on the Fund 100 unrestricted budget as it has been presented.

Please let us know if you require any further information.

cc: Donald DeHayes Dean Libutti
Laura Beauvais Winifred Brownell
Travis Williams Cheryl Hinkson
Colleen Robillard Joanne Lawrence

Office/BudgetImpactStatements/CreativeWritingOptionforEnglishMajors/BudgetImpactStatementLetterdraft

The University of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity employer committed to community, equity, and diversity and to the principles of affirmative action.
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NOTE: All of the above figures are estimates based on projections made by the institution submitting the proposal.
## EXPENDITURE ESTIMATES

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**NOTE:** All of the above figures are estimates based on projections made by the institution submitting the proposal.
# ACADEMIC PROGRAM BUDGET FORM

Use this form for programs that can be pursued on a full-time basis, part-time basis, or through a combination of full-time and part-time attendance. **Page 3 of 3**

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