

Creative Writing MFA Program Review

Data Page

Table 1:

Number of inquiries for graduate program
(Most of any master's level UW Program)

Year	Number of Inquiries
AY16-17	245
AY17-18	231
AY18-19	206
AY19-20	184
AY20-21	143
<i>Average</i>	<i>202</i>

Table 2:

Number of declared majors

Year	Declared Majors
AY16-17	18
AY17-18	18
AY18-19	18
AY19-20	13
AY20-21	14
<i>Average</i>	<i>16.2</i>

Table 3:

Number of students completing degrees
(Significantly higher than UW claims)

Year	Completed
AY15-16	11
AY16-17	9
AY17-18	10
AY18-19	4
AY19-20	9
<i>Average</i>	<i>8.6</i>

Table 4:

FTE Faculty (3.0 FTE, yet a total of 17 core and affiliate faculty members)

<u>Tenured Faculty</u>	<u>Creative Writing Courses Per Year</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Andy Fitch	5	1
Alyson Hagy	2.5	0.5
Harvey Hix	1	0.25
Jeff Lockwood	0.5	0.125
Kate Northrop	5	1
<u>Visiting Faculty</u>		
Joy Williams	1	0.125
	TOTAL	3

Table 5:

Student Credit Hours

Year	Credit Hours
AY17-18	188
AY18-19	184
AY19-20	195

Table 6

Student Credit Hours per FTE

Year	Credit Hours
AY17-18	62.66
AY18-19	61.33
AY19-20	65

Report Overview: This report will show that the Creative Writing MFA is exactly the kind of forward-looking program that advances UW's priorities. The MFA program is already playing an important role leading UW to a more secure future. The MFA exemplifies UW's four pillars. It ranks as the most inclusive master's program in A&S (#2 in percentage of women students, and #3 in percentage of students of color). The program's faculty roster of 17 high performers from across the entire university, brought together on the funding of just 3.0 FTEs, makes us undoubtedly one of UW's most interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial programs. And Creative Writing's implementation of an all-online undergrad curriculum, combined with its five-year plan to launch a low-residency MFA (for which Gray's analysis forecasts strong demand), will bring in a projected annual revenue increase of \$210 thousand, while making us one of the university's most digital programs.

Creative Writing's MFA program also exemplifies UW's pursuit of Grand Challenges, as our attached documentation of faculty's and students' internationally renowned "Writing for public audiences" research profiles suggest (including podcasting, filming, hosting public forums, and leading K-12 programming). And Creative Writing's foundational role in the (\$25+ million) Neltje bequest will allow the MFA program to showcase the Neltje Center for Visual and Literary Arts as a key state focal point for pursuing such challenges, and as a hub for fostering dynamic public/private partnerships.

I. Number of inquiries for graduate program:

Table 1 (Data Page) documents our average of 202 inquiries per year, and tally of 143 inquiries for 2020. 143 inquiries places us as the master's-level program with the highest number of inquiries in the entire university (with the Geology MS, ranked second, receiving 94 inquiries). Of all UW grad programs, only the PhD in Psychology receives more inquiries. We clearly have a healthy number of inquiries. But two key factors have contributed to a decline in inquiry numbers, and both speak to long-term sustainability measures that our program has undertaken.

In 2016, with the suspension of our state Excellence funds, we lost the ability to retain Rattawut Lapcharoensap as a writer in residence. Lapcharoensap was then our only faculty member of color. For foundational reasons of equity and of effective pedagogy, we would have hoped to avoid becoming an all-white faculty at any time. But we became an all-white faculty precisely when questions of institutional diversity began to dominate the national discussion in our field. As of 2020, we have significantly revamped and diversified (in a variety of strategic ways, rather than by tokenizing) our faculty roster, bringing in a broad range of new talented transdisciplinary professors.

In 2018, we voluntarily eliminated one of our program's three genre tracks (poetry), to become a program with two genre tracks (fiction, nonfiction). With the enthusiastic endorsement of Dean Paula Lutz, this strategic change further honed our "Writing for public audiences" program mission, and our national entrepreneurial niche. We became one of the nation's only prose-focused MFA programs, which helped us to further highlight other nationally distinct program aspects: opportunities for Wyoming Public Media internships (9 students since 2016), joint ENR degrees (6 students since 2016, the second-highest tally in A&S), and affiliate faculty from across the university. We lost our poetry applicants, but we made ourselves even stronger along the way, as recent student achievements (detailed later in this report) will attest.

II. Number of declared majors:

Table 2 (Data Page) documents our average of 16.2 declared MFA majors per year, and tally of 14 MFA majors in 2020.

According to OIA numbers, our rate of 71% women students gives us the second-highest percentage for master's programs (with a minimum of five students) in A&S. Our 21% rate of students of color ranks third.

We are a two-year program, thus have an average class size of 8.1. Our enrollment numbers historically have been determined by available GA funding, since we have been a fully funded program. High-quality graduate students seek full funding. But as of this report, the MFA Program has decided to begin admitting high-quality non-funded students as well. Our selectivity rate of 4% in the past five years leaves room to admit additional well-qualified candidates, while serving a broader range of state and regional applicants. We envision admitting roughly 3 non-funded students each year, giving us an average of 11 students in a given class.

As of this report, we also have begun preparation for establishing a low-residency MFA program, primarily operating online, with compressed in-person sessions coordinated through key UW assets and associations, such as the AMK Ranch and the Neltje Center for Visual and Literary Arts—as the strategic plans for both of these sites are finalized. This low-res MFA program will offer new forms of inclusivity, serving students unable to live in Laramie throughout the year. It will also provide significant new revenue streams to UW. UW's Office of Distance Education projects that moving both

Creative Writing's undergrad and grad programs online will generate \$209,244 if all students are Wyoming residents, and additional funds for each student who is not a Wyoming resident. Currently, 14.3% of MFA students are Wyoming residents.

III. Number of students who complete majors or degrees in unit:

Table 3 (Data Page) documents our 43 MFA degree recipients since 2016 (for an average of 8.6 recipients per year), and our tally of 9 recipients in 2020. Appendix 1 documents our #4 ranking in A&S for granting master's-level degrees since 2016. It also lists many, many A&S master's degrees with fewer recipients than ours, currently not subject to program review due to "low enrollment."

There's no getting around the fact that faulty university data seems to have played a significant role in getting the MFA program placed on the list for potential elimination. Provost Alexander has been quoted in the press explaining that the MFA program is subject to program review due to having only graduated 26 students in the past 5 years. This tally of 26 comes from an administrative accounting error of a significant magnitude. Acknowledging this error directly undercuts the most prominent justification for potential elimination.

During the years under review, 98% of admitted students completed their degree on a preestablished timeline of 2 years (or 2.5 years for joint ENR-degree recipients).

IV. Student credit hours generated in graduate level courses in program, per FTE faculty:

Table 4 (Data Page) documents our MFA-level FTE Faculty (MFA faculty who have percentages of their job description in Creative Writing) of 3.0. Table 5 (Data Page) documents our average of 189 MFA student credit hours over the past 3 years, for an average of 63 student credit hours per FTE.

In addition to these 3.0 FTE teaching MFA-level courses, the program currently has 11 MFA students on GTAs, each with a 0.475 FTE assignment (for a total of 5.7 FTEs). Thus our program's total teaching capacity at present is 8.7 FTEs.

MFA students teach roughly 20 sections of English 1010 each year, to roughly 450 freshman. They teach additional COM, English, and ENR courses, and have often taught for SER. They routinely win UW teaching awards (seven Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Awards, for example, since 2005). MFA program alums now have full-time positions at UW in Creative Writing, English, the Haub School, Honors, Philosophy & Religious Studies, the Writing Center, and WySCI.

Historically, MFA students, in their final semester, have fulfilled their GTAs by taking on a teaching-apprenticeship role in an undergrad Creative Writing course. We've considered this a valuable professionalizing opportunity. As of this report, however, the MFA program has decided to end these apprenticeship GTA assignments, starting in 2022. Innovations in Creative Writing's undergrad curriculum (designing new COM courses, moving all courses online, offering expanded course opportunities for community-college students) all will increase demand for undergrad CW instructors. Our MFA students can take on many of these new teaching assignments, providing UW with, on average, 8 additional teaching assignments each year, furthering our program's "low cost/high value" profile.

Creative Writing's partnership with the AMK Ranch will open additional instructional opportunities for MFA students. Our working proposal for AMK collaboration prioritizes developing a transdisciplinary partnership with EPSCoR-funded graduate students—building on our past support of the Science Posse, and on the Science Initiative's current work via the Science Roadshow. Our faculty and STEM partners will lead workshops at AMK and in Laramie that prime graduate students to facilitate writing activities in communities and schools across the state (including K-12 programs). This will bolster the science communication and teaching profiles of STEM students and MFA students who graduate from UW, and connect Wyomingites in all communities to the art-science practices of UW's top faculty. This cutting-edge transdisciplinary effort is exactly what UW will need to effectively pursue its Grand Challenges. MFA faculty and students are uniquely equipped to deliver it.

V. Market demand for graduates of unit's programs (using Gray's data or other relevant data)

Appendix 2 provides two Gray's data scorecards, one detailing strong demand for a low-residency MFA program, and one detailing strong demand for a niche program focus on nonprofit advocacy/writing.

As with many interdisciplinary programs (as well as many programs in the arts and humanities), Gray's data tend to under-represent the breadth of market demand for MFA graduates. Appendix 3 lists 17 distinct occupational categories in which our alums currently thrive. Given that, at present, at least 3 MFA alums work as professional novelists, as journalists, as editors, as university professors, as secondary-education instructors, as nonprofit advocates, as public-radio broadcasters, and as government consultants, the most useful Gray's data metric for MFA-grad employment demand is the "generalist" category, in which we score well, suggesting a wide variety of employment opportunities for graduates. Though even these measurements don't fully capture the diversity of our students' employment successes.

Gray's data does help us to refine our plans for directing our "Writing for public audiences" program mission, and our interdisciplinary methodologies, to the development of a low-residency MFA program geared towards nonprofit writing (perhaps in partnership with UW's MPA program). Again, however, Gray's employment-demand data do not capture the full breadth of such post-grad placement possibilities. Current alums, for instance, have nonprofit careers in resource conservation/biodiversity, community development, and social-justice advocacy.

VI. Number of tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, and fixed-term track faculty:

The MFA program currently has 7 core MFA faculty (those who teach courses and serve as thesis-committee members). Our core faculty are Fitch, Hagy, Hix, Lockwood and Northrop, as well as Frieda Knobloch and Nina McConigley (both of whom have no job-description percentage in Creative Writing). Core MFA faculty teach roughly 75% of their courses outside the MFA program. These core faculty, valued across campus, also teach courses in African American and Diaspora Studies, American Studies, Art, English, ENR, Honors, and Philosophy—as well as in our undergrad Creative Writing minor.

Over the past year, we also have welcomed into our program 9 affiliate MFA faculty (those who serve as thesis-committee members, and play an advisory role for our highly interdisciplinary students), from African American and Diaspora Studies, American Studies, Communications and Journalism, English, Latina/o Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, History, Law, International Studies, and Political Science. We also currently have one writer in residence. Thus, with a program FTE of 3.0, and with no Creative Writing hires since 2009, we nonetheless have managed to become a multigenerational, diverse, extremely interdisciplinary group of 17 faculty. We are a sustainable program because we get enthusiastic buy-in from faculty across campus, who appreciate the opportunity to work with our high-performing students. We have provided an entrepreneurial template for the entire university on how to assemble a dynamic, inclusive, wide-ranging faculty roster—with only a few core faculty required to ensure broader program functioning. We consider this fused core/affiliate template crucial to our planned development of a complementary low-residency digital MFA program.

VII. Level of demand for courses provided

Appendix 4 details our 85% fill rates in CW 4000-5000 courses from 2018-2021. Gray's data suggests strong demand, both in Laramie 360 and in national markets, as we develop an online MFA component.

VIII. In case of research-focused programs, quality and quantity of research produced

Core MFA faculty have published 55 books since our founding in 2005, and 20 since 2016. Faculty have a remarkably transdisciplinary output in various creative-writing fields, as well as in opera, philosophy, religious studies, science writing for public audiences, public dialogues with national officeholders. One individual faculty member has over 200 national publications since 2016. Another has given 97 presentations (55 invited) and 69 media interviews over the past five years. Appendix 5 summarizes how our prolific faculty directly take on UW's Grand Challenges (multiple MFA faculty have played pioneering roles addressing every single Grand Challenge, in dynamic collaboration with global leaders). **We ask you to please consult this appendix. You will like what you see.**

Recognition of faculty research for quality stands out just as prominently. Each of our core faculty has had work translated into other languages (including Dutch, Estonian, French, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu). UW Creative Writing faculty have received an American Academy of Arts and Letters appointment, a Fulbright Distinguished Lectureship, a Guggenheim fellowship, the High Plains Award in Fiction, NEA Fellowships, a National Magazine Award, the PEN/Malamud Award, the PEN/O. Henry Prize in Fiction, the PEN/Open Book Award, the Strauss Living Award, and the Sue Kaufmann Prize. They have been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. They have published in *The Best American Short Stories*, *The Best American Science and Nature*

Writing, and *The Best American Experimental Writing*. They possess the credentials that make our MFA one of the nation's top programs.

MFA students and alums likewise regularly publish in America's most prestigious literary venues, including the *Atlantic*, *Harpers*, the *New Yorker*, and *Orion*. They have published more than a dozen books, winning numerous state and national awards. A recent grad was among the five finalists for the National Book Award—one of the world's most prestigious literary awards. She was one of the first women of color ever to receive such recognition. She did her undergrad degree at Metro State in Denver, and has praised our program to global audiences for discovering her, and for guiding her in the personal transformation from work as a cosmetics-counter salesperson to a thriving career as a professional novelist.

IX. In case of research-focused programs, level of external funding relative to availability of funding in the field

Given our faculty's interdisciplinarity, it is hard to assess a relative level of available external funding. Jeff Lockwood, our faculty member with the strongest science background, has received 20 external grants since 2016, totaling \$146,805. Harvey Hix was co-PI on a \$750,000 NSF grant.

At the program level, Creative Writing is one of three UW partners (along with Art and the UW Art Museum) designated as future recipients of the Neltje bequest. While it is hard to give definitive numbers on the size of this bequest, Deputy Vice President for Finance David Jewell considers a total value of over \$25 million as a conservative estimate. Jewell describes this gift as one of the largest that UW ever has received. Most concretely, the Neltje gift will make us a one-of-a-kind MFA program, in terms of being able to provide students with a pedagogically integrated writer's residency at Neltje's world-class estate. We foresee much of our longer-term program development (both on-campus and low-residency components) as foundationally connected to the Neltje Center for Visual and Literary Arts—which will be positioned to become one of the most remarkable writing/arts hubs in the nation when it opens.

X. In case of research-focused programs, total grants and grants/FTE faculty members

Grant-funded research is not a driving force in many of our fields (which is part of what makes us, dollar-for-dollar, by far one of UW's most cost-effective programs). No labs. No research assistants. Nonetheless, our FTE faculty have received 22 grants (for \$901,805) since 2016, or 7.3 grants (\$300,602) per FTE.

XI. UW Investment in Program:

We were founded in 2004, as UW's only terminal degree in the arts or humanities, and with a distinctly interdisciplinary mission. After a thorough institutional analysis of where UW possessed a competitive advantage in recruiting excellent faculty and students, UW singled out the MFA program for investment in Academic Plans II and III. We were awarded an Excellence chair in 2007. Through Excellence funds, UW has invested almost \$3 million in our program to date. Our Excellence funds were suspended amid UW budgetary shortfalls in 2016. Our annual operating budget shrank from roughly \$320 thousand to roughly \$60 thousand, and is scheduled to drop to roughly \$10 thousand (a 97% total reduction) with the end of Joy Williams' long-term writer-in-residence appointment, in spring 2021. Yet we have continued to thrive, and we can do so in the future.

XII. Elimination Results in Loss of Revenue:

The Neltje Center for Visual and Literary Arts defines its mission as "to provide time, space and quietude for visual arts and creative writing students and professors of the University of Wyoming to be creative in their field and to advance the cultural life of Wyoming's citizens and visitors to northeast Wyoming." Neltje, heir to the Doubleday publishing fortune, and published author herself, has singled out both UW's undergrad-level Creative Writing program (in terms of serving Wyoming state populations) and UW's grad-level Creative Writing program (in terms of projecting excellence into national and international spheres) as foundational to her \$25+ million bequest.

Revenue from roughly 1,920 annual student-credit hours, in courses taught by MFA students, would be lost.

Projected annual revenues of \$210 thousand from launching online degree programs would be lost.

XIII. Campus Impact (essential to UW)

MFA faculty teach the majority of courses in UW's undergrad CW curriculum, offering 14 distinct courses, and providing an average of 546 student credit hours over the last three years. The minor, with an average of 45 students, is the fourth largest on campus, attracting students from many disciplines and colleges. It cannot function without MFA faculty.

UW's efforts to develop and sustain transdisciplinary teams to tackle the Grand Challenges will be hindered by the elimination of the MFA. The MFA Program attracts accomplished scientists, journalists, filmmakers, and community-development experts from around the country. The Haub School's publication *Western Confluences* depends on MFA fellows for its production. WPM's award-winning podcasts rely on MFA interns for writing and editing. The joint MFA/MA with the Haub School, one of the first of its kind, is a compelling, financially efficient degree that can provide a model for other joint-degree programs. These are thriving partnerships that can be invested in, rather than eliminated.

The program's visiting writers have been co-funded through partnerships with the Libraries and many other units, most particularly the School of Gender, Culture & Social Justice. Those visitors have exposed students and faculty alike to writers of color and queer/nonconforming writers whose voices are not always foremost in American culture. These visitors have traveled the state. The MFA program is also a consistent participant in the Native American Summer Institute, and other inclusive initiatives.

Eliminating the MFA would mean eliminating one of the most demographically inclusive student bodies on campus.

XIV. Wyoming Community Colleges Engagement

MFA faculty began teaching online undergrad courses in 2019, and have been pleased to welcome students from across the state. Our success in filling online courses has factored into our decision to move our entire undergrad curriculum online by 2022. With a limited range of creative-writing courses offered by Wyoming community colleges, we look forward to partnering with the colleges, to figure out how best to serve their students, and to complement (rather than interfering with) their own course offerings. These renewed partnerships will build upon long-standing connections with the literary festival at Casper College, and our developing work with AMK Ranch and faculty from Central Wyoming College.

XV. State and Regional Impact:

We proudly collaborate with the Jackson Hole Writers Conference, the Jentel Foundation, public libraries (Casper, Cheyenne, Jackson, Laramie, Sheridan), the state and national forest system, the Ucross Foundation, the Wyoming Arts Council, the Wyoming Humanities Council, the Wyoming Community Colleges, Wyoming Writers, Inc., the Wyoming Department of Corrections Women's Center, the Wyoming Girls School, WIHR, WPM, and many Laramie businesses and civic organizations.

The Neltje Center for Visual & Literary Arts will be positioned to become one of the nation's most innovative arts hubs. It will inevitably foster partnerships with Sheridan College, Gillette College, Ucross, the Brinton Museum, the K-12 school districts, and the more than 80 nonprofit foundations registered in northern Wyoming. It will also inspire the kind of public-private partnerships President Seidel and UW aim to nurture. The MFA Program possesses the skilled faculty, and mature professional students, to support these partnerships. And Neltje Center programming need not be limited to one part of the state. Programs and events nurtured by Neltje's vision could be hosted in communities across Wyoming, providing an economic/cultural multiplier effect appropriate to the state's growing reputation as an arts haven.

By recently joining the 5x5 Writing Series (which arranges campus exchanges for our students and the CSU, CU-Boulder, DU, and Naropa Creative Writing programs), we also have significantly expanded our own students' writing communities—and have taken an important step to introduce undergrads on these Colorado campuses to our MFA program. And by helping to launch the annual CrossBorders literary exchange bringing writers from Mexico to the Front Range (again bringing our students down to Denver for multilingual engagements with a very diverse writing community), we have continued to build new diverse intellectual and cultural networks.

XV. Conclusion:

We have continued to thrive since 2016, and we can do so in the future. However, Appendix 6 makes the case that our program should receive \$125 thousand of annual reinvestment funding for the next four years, as we build out an extraordinarily diverse and interdisciplinary "digital faculty," and continue to provide an exemplary entrepreneurial model for the entire university. **We ask you to please consult this appendix. You will like what you see.**

Appendix 1

Ranking of UW Master's Degrees Granted (2016-2020)

Applied filters: Degree Type is Masters

U.W.

College Desc	Major Desc	Avg Degree: *	Rankings'[Avg Degrees Rank]
College of Education	Education	63.4	1
College of Business	Master of Bus Admin- Exi	28.9	2
College of Health Sciences	Health Services Administ	28.3	3
College of Education	Counseling	21.4	4
College of Health Sciences	Social Work - MSW	21.4	4
College of Health Sciences	Speech-Language Pathol	19.6	6
College of Arts and Sciences	Public Administration	17.3	7
College of Health Sciences	Nursing	16.8	8
College of Engineering	Civil Engineering	14.0	9
College of Engineering	Electrical Engineering	14.0	9
College of Business	Accounting	13.2	11
College of Education	Natural Science	13.2	11
Engineering and Applied Sci	Civil Engineering	12.6	13
College of Health Sciences	Kinesiology and Health	10.9	14
College of Business	Business Administration	10.8	15
College of Arts and Sciences	Communication	9.9	16
Engineering and Applied Sci	Electrical Engineering	9.5	17
College of Arts and Sciences	English	9.4	18
Engineering and Applied Sci	Mechanical Engineering	9.3	19
College of Arts and Sciences	Creative Writing	9.3	20
College of Arts and Sciences	Zoology and Physiology	8.1	21
College of Arts and Sciences	Environment & Natural I	7.1	22
College of Arts and Sciences	Geology	7.0	23
College of Arts and Sciences	International Studies	6.6	24
College of Arts and Sciences	Music	6.6	24
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Agricultural and Applied	6.1	26
College of Arts and Sciences	American Studies	6.1	26
College of Engineering	Computer Science	6.0	28
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Rangeland Ecol & Water	5.9	29
College of Arts and Sciences	History	5.8	30
College of Arts and Sciences	Physics	5.8	31
Engineering and Applied Sci	Chemical Engineering	5.6	32
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Animal & Veterinary Scie	5.5	33
College of Arts and Sciences	Spanish	5.4	34
College of Arts and Sciences	Anthropology	5.3	35
Engineering and Applied Sci	Atmospheric Science	4.9	36
College of Arts and Sciences	Music Education	4.8	37
College of Arts and Sciences	Psychology	4.8	38
Engineering and Applied Sci	Computer Science	4.6	39
College of Business	Energy Management	4.3	40
College of Arts and Sciences	Botany	4.2	41
Engineering and Applied Sci	Petroleum Engineering	4.2	42
College of Arts and Sciences	Geography	4.1	43
College of Education	Environment & Natural I	4.1	43
College of Business	Finance	4.0	45

College of Education	Adult Education	4.0	45
College of Engineering	Atmospheric Science	4.0	45
College of Business	Master of Bus Admin-Fin	3.7	48
College of Arts and Sciences	Mathematics	3.6	49
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Agronomy	3.6	50
College of Business	Economics	3.6	51
College of Health Sciences	Social Work	3.5	52
College of Arts and Sciences	Statistics	3.4	53
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Interdisc Water Resourc	3.3	54
College of Arts and Sciences	Sociology	3.2	55
UW College	Environment & Natural I	3.1	56
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Plant Sciences	3.0	57
College of Engineering	Environmental Engineer	3.0	57
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Environment & Natural I	2.9	59
College of Arts and Sciences	Chemistry	2.9	60
Engineering and Applied Sci	Environmental Engineer	2.8	61
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Reproductive Biology	2.7	62
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Soil Science	2.5	63
College of Arts and Sciences	Political Science	2.4	64
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Molecular Biology	2.3	65
College of Arts and Sciences	Geophysics	2.3	66
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Food Science & Human I	2.0	67
College of Arts and Sciences	Philosophy	2.0	67
College of Business	Economics and Finance	2.0	67
College of Engineering	Mechanical Engineering	2.0	67
College of Engineering	Petroleum Engineering	2.0	67
College of Arts and Sciences	Interdisc Water Resourc	1.9	72
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Entomology	1.8	73
Engineering and Applied Sci	Architectural Engineerin	1.8	74
College of Arts and Sciences	German	1.6	75
College of Business	Environment & Natural I	1.5	76
College of Arts and Sciences	French	1.4	77
College of Arts and Sciences	Neurosciences	1.4	77
Agriculture and Nat. Resources	Family and Consumer Sc	1.3	79
College of Arts and Sciences	Planning	1.1	80
College of Arts and Sciences	Natural Science	1.0	81
College of Education	Counselor Education	1.0	81
College of Engineering	Chemical Engineering	1.0	81
College of Health Sciences	Environment & Natural I	1.0	81
Engineering and Applied Sci	Environment & Natural I	1.0	81
Engineering and Applied Sci	Interdisc Water Resourc	1.0	81
UW College	Biomedical Sci/Reprodu	1.0	81
UW College	Interdisciplinary Studies	1.0	81

Appendix 2

Gray's Data Scorecards for MFA Graduate Employment Demand, and Low-Residency MFA Program Demand

CIP Code	Title	Market	Delivery	Award Level	Student Demand	Employ Demand	Degree Fit	Compet Intensity	Overall Score
23.1302	Creative Writing	Laramie 360	All	Master	14	-9	4	-7	2
			F2F	Master	8	-9	4	-9	-6
			Online	Master	4	-9	4	1	0
		National	All	Master	13	-11	4	-6	0
			F2F	Master	16	-11	4	-9	0
			Online	Master	11	-11	4	-5	-1

Quick Analysis

Student demand for this program is strong in both the Laramie 360 and national markets. There is a competitive preference for online delivery and there are less online programs in the Laramie 360 market region when compared to the national market, placing UW's new 'semi online/low residential' creative writing program proposal in a strong to moderate market position reflected in the competitive intensity and student demand scoring. The employment demand improves slightly in the Laramie 360 region when compared to the national market, although overall very low. Importantly, the generalist employment demand scores are in the 70th percentile throughout the various program reviewed suggesting a wide variety of employment opportunities for graduates of this program. The degree fit is appropriate.

CIP Code	Title	Market	Delivery	Award Level	Student Demand	Employ Demand	Degree Fit	Compet Intensity	Overall Score
52.0206	Nonprofit, public, & org mgt	Laramie 360	All	Master	12	0	2	6	20
			F2F	Master	-4	0	2	1	-1
			Online	Master	13	0	2	-6	9
		National	All	Master	10	1	2	5	18
			F2F	Master	5	1	2	0	8
			Online	Master	12	1	2	-5	10

Quick Analysis

Strong student demand, especially for an online program. Moderate employment demand, in the 70+ percentile throughout. Degree fit is appropriate. Competitive intensity is strong for F2F programs and is suggesting that there are a significant number of online programs. Future consideration would be an assessment of surrounding nonprofit, public and organizational management programs and searching for a niche market that combines a unique set of interdisciplinary programs, instruction, and student recruitment opportunities.

Appendix 3

Breadth of Post-MFA Employment

UW MFA graduates—Employment Information as of 2020

This information was gathered quickly. We were able to track down 111 MFA graduates since 2005. We were able to identify current employment for 80 of those 111. The work status of the others is not public on social media or the Internet, although there is evidence that many of them are employed in service-sector jobs (human relations, retail, management), working as freelance writers/editors, or are raising families.

*27 in higher education

*12 in print or digital journalism/editing

*10 in secondary education

*6 working for non-profit agencies

*5 working in public radio

*4 working in government/consulting positions (as scientists)

*3 making a living as fiction writers

*2 are arts administrators

*2 making a living as musicians

*2 are lawyers

*1 is a doctor, 1 a bookseller, 1 a librarian, 1 a baker, 1 a first responder, 1 a founder of a \$1B wealth-management fund, 1 in outdoor recreation

Appendix 4

MFA Program Fill Rates

Course Enrollments

Row Labels	Count of Courses	Sum of Enrollments	Average of Enrollments	StdDevp of Enrollments
2018	18	209	11.61	5.45
Fall	8	96	12.00	5.10
Spring	10	113	11.30	5.69
2019	21	239	11.38	4.69
Fall	9	109	12.11	4.68
Spring	11	123	11.18	4.67
Summer	1	7	7.00	0.00
2020	20	232	11.60	5.18
Fall	8	102	12.75	6.08
Spring	11	124	11.27	4.24
Summer	1	6	6.00	0.00
2021	10	103	10.30	4.03
Fall	10	103	10.30	4.03
Grand Total	69	783	11.35	4.97

Class Fill Rates

Row Labels	Count of Classes	Sum of Enrollments	Sum of Capacity	Average of Fill Rates
2018	18	220	258	83.3%
Fall	8	96	114	80.6%
Spring	10	124	144	85.4%
2019	21	239	303	76.6%
Fall	9	109	131	80.3%
Spring	11	123	155	76.7%
Summer	1	7	17	41.2%
2020	20	243	276	91.5%
Fall	8	102	118	82.9%
Spring	11	135	143	102.4%
Summer	1	6	15	40.0%
2021	10	108	132	82.3%
Fall	10	108	132	82.3%
Grand Total	69	810	969	83.5%

Course Type

IND

INT

LEC

StdDevp of Fill Rates	Fill Rate of All Classes
29.2%	85.3%
18.3%	84.2%
35.5%	86.1%
20.3%	78.9%
17.9%	83.2%
20.0%	79.4%
0.0%	41.2%
44.0%	88.0%
18.0%	86.4%
53.5%	94.4%
0.0%	40.0%
27.6%	81.8%
27.6%	81.8%
32.4%	83.6%

Appendix 5

Core Faculty “Grand Challenges” Research Pursuits

Andy Fitch:

As a creative-nonfiction author, and in pursuit of an increased digital, entrepreneurial, interdisciplinary, and inclusive research profile, I've developed a weekly column of digital dialogues with a broad range of globally prominent thinkers and leaders, for the well-regarded national publication the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Since AY 2017, I have averaged publishing over 50 substantial pieces each year for this column.

In 2020, for example, I've published (or prepared for publication) long-form dialogues, addressing long-term policy concerns, with:

--7 sitting US Senators: [Michael Bennet](#), [Sherrod Brown](#), [Kirsten Gillibrand](#), [Angus King](#), [Chris Murphy](#), [Jon Tester](#), and [Sheldon Whitehouse](#)

--3 high-profile US House Representatives: [David Cicilline](#), [Pramila Jayapal](#), and [Ilhan Omar](#)

--5 Nobel Prize-winning economists: [Abhijit Banerjee](#) and [Esther Duflo](#), [Angus Deaton](#), [Paul Krugman](#), and [Joseph Stiglitz](#)

I have pursued grand-challenges investigations:

--on Biodiversity and Earth Systems Change (with UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network director [Jeffrey Sachs](#), and Oxford Future of Humanity Institute fellow [Toby Ord](#))

--on Energy Transition and Economic Diversification (with Vox founder [Matt Yglesias](#) and MIT/Saïd Business School fellow [David Shrier](#))

--on Health and Rural Issues (with former Surgeon General [Vivek Murthy](#), and Verily Life Sciences president [Vivian Lee](#))

--on Public Trust in Research and Information (with prominent tech-platform critics [Zephyr Teachout](#) and [Tim Wu](#))

--on Quality of Democracy and Equality (with renowned legal theorists [Cass Sunstein](#) and [Ganesh Sitaraman](#))

Alyson Hagy:

As the author of eight works of fiction (four novels, four story collections), my writing has long been focused on landscape, community, and the fragilities of rural economies. I established my career as a chronicler of culture, class, and stress in Virginia and North Carolina in books like *Hardware River* and *Graveyard of the Atlantic*. More recent work (*Snow, Ashes; Ghosts of Wyoming; Boleto*) has sought to give voice to the distinct, marginalized experiences of ranchers, veterans, oil field workers, healthcare workers, indigenous peoples, and young entrepreneurs who feel forced to leave the intermountain West because of limited opportunities. This work has been recognized by prizes from the High Plains Literary Awards, Mountains & Plains Booksellers Association, and *Best American Short Stories*.

My most recent project, which has been reshaped and delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, is a collaborative effort with colleagues from the American Heritage Center and the American Studies program to record the oral histories of citizens in Wyoming's oldest mining towns as the coal industry declines. My great uncles were coal miners in southwest Virginia. The opportunity to record the voices of Wyomingites as they narrate the past/present/future strikes me as both urgent and necessary. Our communities are shaped, and maintained, by collaborative storytelling. With support from the American Heritage Center and the School of Energy Resources, our plan was to host a summer field school in Kemmerer and Diamondville, Wyoming that could become the model for oral history projects across the state. Interviews would be transcribed, archived, then edited for public presentation and discussion. These communities will need to agree on the narrative of their futures or they will not thrive. In the meantime, my focus on "the power of narrative" has led to recent presentations for Chadron State University, Northwest (WY) College, and the Wyoming Trial Lawyers Association. How and why humans shape narrative remains a burning civic question as the 21st century becomes more global and more digitized. As travel and face-to-face encounters become possible again, I look forward to listening to and amplifying the voices of Wyomingites as they articulate their plans to live together and work together in their own powerful voices.

Harvey Hix:

I was a Co-PI on a \$750K NSF grant in which Naomi Ward was the PI, and was an EOD Participant in the \$20 million EPSCoR grant. My latest book is in the field of religious studies, I'm under contract for a book of literary criticism, I have curated an exhibition at the UW Art Museum, and my previous books have been in the fields of poetry and philosophy.

Jeff Lockwood:

Since AY 2016, I have given 97 presentations (55 invited) and 69 media interviews; consulted on 6 films and documentaries; and published 5 books, 6 book chapters, 20 essays, 8 short stories, 24 columns (*Psychology Today* and *UU World*), 29 popular articles (editorials, film reviews, etc.), 6 academic articles, and 1 opera libretto.

With regard to UW's Grand Challenges, in the field of BIODIVERSITY AND EARTH SYSTEMS CHANGE, I have published research concerning national park visitors' perceptions of bark beetle outbreaks, the extinction of the Rocky Mountain locust (including the libretto and production of an opera), why people dismiss the hazards of climate change, and the prevalence of entomophobia in the American public. With regard to ENERGY TRANSITION AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION, I have published works concerning corporate and political censorship of those speaking out regarding the environmental hazards of fossil fuels, and a critique of what is meant by "sustainability". In terms of PUBLIC TRUST IN RESEARCH AND INFORMATION, I am co-authoring a textbook (under contract with Wiley-Blackwell) on the philosophy of science, and I have published a paper concerning external influences on ecological theory. And with regard to QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY, I have published and spoken widely on how corporations collude with government to suppress free speech when dissent threatens the power and profits of business.

Kate Northrop:

As an environmental poet and educator, my work aligns with Grand Challenge, Biodiversity and Earth Systems Change. One example: my 2018 summer CW 2125 course (devoted to “looking, walking, listening” e.g. direct observation of and creative response to our communities here in Laramie) resulted in an invitation to participate, as the keynote speaker, at the annual eco-poetry conference at Southern Utah University. Fall 2019, I gave the keynote address/ poetry reading at “Ecopoetry and The Essay” conference at SUU and also facilitated a number of eco-poetry pedagogy workshops with secondary school teachers. As with my colleagues in Creative Writing, I am committed to offering interdisciplinary courses: this spring I will again teach an Honors Course rooted in Animal Studies, Philosophy and Creative Writing. As well, my published work (most recently, a poetry collection from C & R Press in 2017) draws from study of eco-feminism and “the west.”

Appendix 6

The Case for Reinvestment

MFA Program Reinvestment: Building Out Digital Faculty While Expanding Student Diversity

Digital Writers In Residence:

Imagine the Creative Writing MFA taking its exemplary entrepreneurial program structure to the next level. Imagine us not just maintaining our current arrangement of 17 high-performing faculty funded through the salaries of 3.0 FTEs, but expanding to a structure of 30+ faculty (unrivaled, on a national basis, for their diversity, their transdisciplinary, and their fusion of creative and professionalizing pedagogies), funded through salaries equivalent to just 4.0 total FTEs. With our current core/affiliate faculty structure, it's actually not hard to imagine an additional layer of strategic depth, and a core/affiliate/digital faculty structure. There's never been a better opening for such an efficient MFA-program structure than today, due to the COVID-compelled integration of digital communications into creative-writing pedagogies and public performances. And UW could make this trailblazing institutional leap by simply providing a modest, targeted, term-limited reinvestment.

Given the MFA program's proven successes (even while operating on 20% of our pre-2016 budget), given our initiative to build out a low-residency MFA, our expanding revenue-generating potential, and our low-cost/high-impact program structure, we merit a temporary \$125 thousand reinvestment in our annual operating budget. This reinvestment need only occur between 2021 and 2025, and will serve as the bridge taking our program to its digital future. As of 2025, we ourselves should be able to generate much more than this amount in additional annual revenue. At that point, UW could cease providing these reinvestment funds. We would simply ask to keep an adequate percentage of program revenue to fund ongoing program operations on a self-sufficient basis. And we would continue to showcase precisely the types of thriving program innovation so vital to the long-term missions of A&S and UW.

In this interim (2021-2025) period, part of our effective transition to offering an all-online grad degree will involve building out digital elements of our current program. And here we see a cost-effective way to reinvent the traditional MFA-program feature of "writers in residence," as a new catalyst for enhanced entrepreneurial, inclusive, interdisciplinary, and digital program growth.

Temporary "Writers in residence" long have been staple components of strong MFA programs across the country. UW's MFA Program has consistently provided some of our university's most prestigious and most inclusive cultural programming, by hosting on campus world leaders in literature—many of them writers of color, including, Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, and award-winners (for Pulitzer Prizes, National Book Awards, American Book Awards) such as Sherman Alexie, Sherwin Bitsui, Camille Dungy, Steven Dunn, Edward P. Jones, Bhanu Kapil, Rattawut Lapcharoensap, Dinaw Mengestu, Claudia Rankine, Salman Rushdie, and Luis Alberto Urrea.

But bringing renowned visiting writers to Laramie for extended stays inevitably brings disproportionate costs, given our comparatively remote campus location. Aside from the expenses and hassles of weather-interrupted travel (which we all know so well!), the duration of a writer-in-residence's stay in Laramie includes a significant amount of down time. High-quality visiting writers (who might live in a large city, with much more accessible campus opportunities) won't accept a residency on our relatively distant campus if that residency includes a busy, teaching-intensive assignment. In fact, part of what such writers in residence bring to an MFA program (and to the greater campus community) is a refreshingly non-academic sensibility, not wrapped up in day-to-day institutional affairs. Accordingly, much of what UW pays for with writers/artists in residence is simply for such individuals to get to Laramie, and then to stick around from one week's class to the next.

By contrast, assembling a highly diverse and transdisciplinary roster of 15-20 "digital faculty" (renowned writers, as well as a professionalizing cadre of agents, editors, and cultural organizers, all of whom are even less likely to come to campus) would offer a dramatically improved return on investment. Operating on non-benefited \$5000 annual retainer fees, each digital-faculty member would play a distinct role in helping transition our program to a long-term digital future, and would present further one-of-a-kind opportunities for students—by allowing us to offer the best of Wyoming's location-specific advantages, alongside an even more demographically/professionally diverse creative and pedagogical experience. Each digital-faculty member would work closely with a select group of students, while also contributing (again, via digital technologies) classroom input for the whole program, and creative performances (and/or scholarly talks, and/or practical professional workshops) for the greater campus and state communities.

Along the way, building out program infrastructure to absorb these digital faculty would prove invaluable for designing, implementing, trouble-shooting, and fund-raising for our future low-residency MFA incorporating the world-class Neltje Center for Visual and Literary Arts as its philosophical (and at times physical) hub.

Expanding Student Diversity

Between 2021-2025, reinvestment funds not directed towards digital faculty will go to tapping our program's existing student diversity, to become even more inclusive. Gray's university assessments clarify how crucial current program/campus diversity is for encouraging ever-increasing inclusivity. We have a solid track record recruiting and training extremely talented (and extremely successful) URDM students. Particularly now, with a recent alum writer of color attaining global prominence, and often praising our program in her public engagements, reinvestment funds allowing us to provide GAs for two additional URDM students per year can further institutionalize this proven record of promoting inclusion, to the benefit of the entire campus community (each URDM GA, for instance, teaches 46 freshman per year in English 1010).

Long-Term Outcomes

If UW can invest in both our digital future and our present diversity, for just four years, we promise then to start picking up the tab, and no longer relying on reinvestment funds—while still letting the university (and A&S) take all the credit for our program's striking fulfillment of UW's four pillars.