Creative Writing [CRWR]

Cycles included in this report:
Jun 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023

Program Name: Creative Writing [CRWR]

Reporting Cycle: Jun 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023

1 Is this program offered via Distance Learning?

100% Traditional or less than 50% Distance/Traditional

2 Is this program offered at an off-site location?

No

2.1 If yes to previous, provide addresses for each location where 50% or more of program credits may be earned.

3 Example of Program Improvement

2018-2019:

2019-2020:
Overall, to help improve the quality of the program and the master plan's efficiency and accuracy these specific steps should be taken in the year ahead:
1. Evaluate which questions from the exit survey are actually relevant to assessing the quality of the Master of Fine Arts program.
2. Continue to advocate for a return to former funding levels to ensure quality recruits and student retention.
3. Continue close mentorship to ensure students are successful in the program and beyond.

2020-2021:
Overall, to help improve the quality of the program and the master plan's efficiency and accuracy these specific steps should be taken in the year ahead:
1. Evaluate which questions from the exit survey are actually relevant to assessing the quality of the Master of Fine Arts program.
2. Continue to advocate for a return to former funding levels to ensure quality recruits and student retention.
3. Continue close mentorship to ensure students are successful in the program and beyond.

2021-2022:
Overall, to help improve the quality of the program and the master plan's efficiency and accuracy these specific steps should be taken in the year ahead:
1. Evaluate which questions from the exit survey are actually relevant to assessing the quality of the Master of Fine Arts program.
2. Continue to advocate for a return to former funding levels to ensure quality recruits and student retention.
3. Continue close mentorship to ensure students are successful in the program and beyond.

2022-2023:

As the new program director, I believe it is time for a major overhaul of the benchmarks. We are hiring two new creative writing teachers and with current faculty we need to consider what we need to assess that will help us improve the program. I hope to meet with IRE during the summer to consult with the best course of action. Our tools for gathering data also need change, not only the exit survey as reported in previous years, but the three-year survey and the Graduate Activity Report. The questions need to align better to benchmarks but also we need to find a way to reflect on the data we receive and find actionable ways to adapt the program. Part of this is trying to build sustainable connections to the majority of the alumni so they feel connected to the program and contributing to it even after they have left. This will help on several levels. Using them in professional endeavors and to help orient and help mentor students are also options that will keep them tied to the program. As far as within the program itself, we still need to address the feeling students have about being prepared for teaching. While you can never really prepare for teaching until you actually teach and have your own classroom, we need to build their confidence and their toolboxes so that when they do teach they will feel ready and supported. And finally we must nurture their writing and make sure they are pushing themselves to continuously improve their own writing and to continue to challenge themselves. Our internal and external tools are a solid way of monitoring this but we also may consider how these might connect to what year they are in the program with higher expectations for those in the third year and second year.

With our new hires we are also addressing some issues that may help the program and the students. Traditionally our program has had one poetry faculty member and one fiction faculty member and between these two one was director of the program and the other ran the McNeese Review. We are now going to have a program director who also specializes in one genre, two main genre teachers, and at least one other regular faculty member who also specializes in a second genre. With this structure, students will have more options for thesis directors and for finding mentors who work with them best. This should help the sustainability of the program and student resources as well. With new faculty we also expect more mentoring about publishing and students' submitting their work for publication. While we should be hesitant in using publishing while in the program as a benchmark because we do not want the students to submit work that is not ready, some aspect of this might be considered for assessment. Essentially since we want students to emerge as writers, we need to find some assessment that tracks whether they have established the processes and habits of writers that they can carry beyond the program.

4 Program Highlights from the Reporting Year

2018-2019:

2019-2020:
Alumni & Student Successes:
Despite these challenges, our students have continued to accomplish great things. Seven out of 18 MFA students published their work in literary journals this year. Our alumni are publishing and earning numerous accolades, including publishing books and stories and poems. Notable book publications were Dorsey Craft (Olbrich)'s collection of poems, Plunder, as well as her chapbook, The Pirate Anne Bonney Dances the Tarantela.

Notable Placements:
Two 2020 graduates will begin Ph.D. programs in the fall: Sarah Harshbarger will attend the University of Tennessee and Matthew Moniz will attend the University of Southern Mississippi. Ashlee Lhamon now works in public relations at McNeese State University.

2020-2021:
With the occurence of the pandemic and two major hurricanes three students left the program during or at the end of the year. Also Chris Lowe, our fiction professor, accounting for one-half the MFA faculty, has elected to leave the area and the university in the wake of the hurricanes. In addition, our application numbers for the incoming class continue decrease due to low stipend, high housing costs, and lack of desire to live in a hurricane-prone and ravaged area. We have secured Endowed Professorships to assist in funding our writers' series and conference attendance for students and faculty.Though the pandemic and hurricanes curtailed much of these activities, we were able to host readings and conferences with visiting writers via Zoom in the spring.

Alumni & Student Successes:

Despite these challenges, our students have continued to accomplish great things. Five out of 15 remaining MFA students published their work in literary journals this year. Our alumni are publishing and earning numerous accolades, including publishing books and stories and poems. Notable book publications were Eric Nguyen's novel, What We Lost to the Water (named a 2021 Summer Book Pick by Barack Obama), Carrie Green's poetry collection, Studies of Familiar Birds, and Brett Hanley's chapbook, Defeat the Rest.

Notable Placements:

The 2021 were well placed. Ladi Opaluwa (fiction) will begin the Ph.D. program in English at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Maegan Gonzales was hired as a full-time dual-enrollment instructor at SOWELA. Gauri Awasthi has received a paid publicity and editorial internship at Four Way Books in New York City.

Alumni placements include Dr. Danielle (Grimes) Sutton, assistant professor of English at Columbus State University in Georgia, and Gerald Withers, instructor, Columbia College in South Carolina.

2021-2022:

Recovery from the pandemic and the hurricanes of 2020 has continued slowly. Some students began the academic year remotely, but by mid-fall semester everyone was on site. The cost and availabilty of housing have been a significant hurdle for our students as they are almost exclusively out-of-state students.

We were able to host one online visiting writer and one in-person visiting writer in the fall, and this spring we hosted a major event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the MFA program, which included three alumni readings on campus by alumni and a crawfish boil. On Thursday, May 7th, Eric Nguyen ('15) read from his best-selling novel based on his thesis, Things We Lost to the Water. On Friday, April 8th, Morri Creech ('98), Pulitzer Prize finalist, read from his new manuscript forthcoming from LSU Press. On Saturday, April 9th, Adam Johnson ('96), winner of both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, read from his novel in progress. In addition on Friday, Adam led a craft talk for all MFA students, which was highly effective.

Nearly all of the MFA students, as well as faculty Allie Mariano and Michael Horner, were able to attend the annual Association of Writers & Writing Programs conference in Philadelphia. Unfortunately due to our static low funding we lost three of our seven first-year students who are leaving to attend programs with double our funding. Our meager stipends and waivers unfortunately don't make us very competetive and our applications were the lowest we've seen in a decade. Many people we offered spots to turned us down for better financial offers or because they couldn't afford to come for the amount we offer. Because of this, we were only able to recruit seven people. The program will be at its lowest enrollment in over a decade next year due to this.
Our program was featured on the national podcast, MFA Writers, with an interview of recent alumna, Gauri Awasthi.

Alumni & Student Success:

Despite challenges our students continue to publish and present their work. Jack Vanchiere won the national Sigma Tau Delta poetry award at the national convention in Atlanta. After graduation he will work as an intern at the Headlands Artists Colony in California. Jordan Sheryl McQueen published a story in the anthology *It Came from the Swamp.* Reese Menefee has a poem forthcoming from *The Sun* and has started a literary e-zine called *MoonCola*. Rachel Pittman has published poems in *Gingerbread House* and *WhaleRoad Review.* She also won a residency fellowship from the Writers Colony at Dairy Hollow. Alex Howe published two poems in *New Ohio Review.*

Recent graduates Gauri Awasthi and Maegan Gonzales were awarded full scholarships to the prestigious national conference, Community of Writers. Our alumni continue to publish widely and well.

Notable Placements:

Gauri Awasthi works as an editorial assistant at the Cheney Literary Agency in New York. She also teaches Decolonizing Poetry workshops for Catapult. Ladi Opaluwa began the PhD program in English at University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

2022-2023:
We have had several current students have their work published this year: Bob Miller, Meilyn Wood, Reese Menefee, and Rachel Pittman. Two of those students are first year students. One of the first year students was told by visiting writers that his work was publishable and exciting. Current student published the most outstanding McNeese Reviews in recent memory. Four students presented at two different regional conferences. We also had a successful time at AWP in Seattle with selling the McNeese Review, visiting presentations, and networking.

Our students continue to be successful in their writing:
- Avee Chaudhuri's got a great new piece in the Missouri Review
- Scott Thomason, whose novel was named an honorable mention in the Chapter One Prize
- first issue of Ladi Mary Opaluwa's Efiko mag
- Victoria María Castells's collection of poems, The Rivers Are Inside Our Homes, from University of Notre Dame Press
- Brett Hanley (MFA, '18), poetry editor at Southeastern Review and PhD candidate at Florida State, has an interview with Sun Yung Shin up on the journal's website.
- Gage Saylor (MFA, '18) has an essay in the new Southern Humanities Review
- Gage Saylor's (MFA '19) collection Where Were You When It Happened? is a semi-finalist for the Iron Horse Book Prize
- Neil Connelly had several stories and nonfiction pieces published this year.
- Michael Shewmaker's LSU Press poetry book, "Leviathan."
- Allen Braden had a poem in The Verseville

This list should be seen as incomplete! Our alums are editors of journals and writers who consistently get their work published.

Academics:
- Two students from the class of '20 completed their PhDs this spring.

Placements:
- One graduate of 2023, Rachel Pittman, is going to Georgia State U and another, Reese Menefee, has a job teaching DE at a high school in Kentucky.
- Maegan Gonzales is currently working as a full-time faculty member at McNeese.
- Allie Mariano hired as an Assistant Editor at Oxford American
- At least three students of the class of '20 got jobs as technical writers.

5 Program Mission

The program gives graduate students pursuing the 60-hour MFA in Creative Writing training in their craft and the necessary academic background to become competent professionals and teachers of writing and literature.

6 Institutional Mission Reference

The MFA in Creative Writing prepares graduates to pursue their artistic and academic interests as well as careers in teaching. Many go directly into teaching at the university level, while others continue their education in PhD programs. Through the efforts of the graduates and the many public readings and lectures scheduled, the MFA program fosters a climate that enhances student learning, enriches the quality of campus life, and expands opportunities for the arts and humanities.

7 Assessment and Benchmark ENGL 671 and 672 Amount of Writing

Assessment: Students will submit a sufficient amount of writing to workshop.

Benchmark: 100% of enrolled students will submit a sufficient amount of writing to workshop.

"Sufficient" is defined in fiction as four stories or excerpts from a novel per year.
"Sufficient" is defined in poetry as 12 poems or pages.

Outcome Links

Creating Art [Program]
Students will create works of art in the forms of poetry or fiction.

7.1 Data

Academic Year	Fiction writers that met the benchmark		Poets that met the benchmark	
	#	%	#	%
2017-2018	11/11	100%	11/11	100%
2018-2019	10/10	100%	9/9	100%
2019-2020	9/9	100%	10/10	100%
2020-2021	8/8	100%	7/7	100%
2021-2022	9/9	100%	8/8	100%
2022-2023	8/8	100%	5.5/5.5	100%

7.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
All students met the benchmark this year; however, we've used this criterion to motivate students who have been lagging behind their peers.

2019-2020:
All students met the benchmark this year; however, we've used this criterion to motivate students who have been lagging behind their peers.

2020-2021:
All students met the benchmark this year; however, we've used this criterion to motivate students who have been lagging behind their peers.

2021-2022:
All students met the benchmark this year; however, we've used this criterion to motivate students who have been lagging behind their peers.

2022-2023:
This is one of the benchmarks we should delete or change. It is important in that this level of submission to workshop is essential for their success but since it is tied to the coursework and the grade in the course, most students submit the sufficient amount of work. We can't really change our definition of sufficient because this is the maximum amount that students can sustainably submit to workshop in any given year. Note the .5 is from a student who came in just for the spring semester and just to note we had one student in fiction leave in the fall and one new one come in the spring so their numbers were combined.

8 Assessment and Benchmark ENGL 677 TA Training

Assessment: TAs will receive training in ENGL 677: Seminar in Teaching Freshman English (Lec. 3, Cr. 3).

Benchmark: During their first year of teaching, 100% of TAs will receive training in ENGL 677: Seminar in Teaching Freshman English (Lec. 3, Cr. 3).

Outcome Links

Professionalism [Program]
Students will gain foundational knowledge of the publishing industry and creative and scholarly communities.

8.1 Data

Academic Year	First-year teaching GAs enrolled in ENGL 677	
	#	%
2017-2018	—	100%
2018-2019	5/5	100%
2019-2020	4/4	100%
2020-2021	6/6	100%
2021-2022	4/4	100%
2022-2023	4/4	100%

8.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
Continue to provide training for all TAs with enrollment in ENGL 677: Seminar in Teaching Freshman English both fall and spring semesters of the first year of teaching. Beginning this academic year the course counted for credit and toward students' GPA. Though it has been required, it hasn't been counting toward their degrees and they have tended to take the course less seriously because of that. This has been a positive change.

2019-2020:
Continue to provide training for all TAs with enrollment in ENGL 677: Seminar in Teaching Freshman English both fall and spring semesters of the first year of teaching.

2020-2021:
The first-time teachers encountered additional challenges due to COVID and the hurricanes. They did a great job staying connected to their students in a particularly trying time. It is a lot to ask of these student-teachers to maintain an online presence while trying to keep their students motivated during a global pandemic and two major natural disasters. The mentorship and support they receive through the teaching courses prove helpful.

2021-2022:
Continue to provide training for all TAs with enrollment in ENGL 677: Seminar in Teaching Freshman English both fall and spring semesters of the first year of teaching.

2022-2023:
Since they have to take this coursework if they are teaching, I recommend we delete this benchmark.

9 Assessment and Benchmark ENGL 699 Theses

Assessment: ENGL 699 Theses.

Benchmark: 100% of submitted theses will pass and be successfully defended.

Outcome Links

Artistic Aesthetic [Program]
Students will develop and articulate a mature artistic aesthetic.

9.1 Data

Academic Year	Submitted theses successfully defended	
	#	%
2017-2018	5/5	100%
2018-2019	7/7	100%
2019-2020	6/6	100%
2020-2021	4/4	100%
2021-2022	6/6	100%
2022-2023	3/3	100%

9.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
All six of the graduating students submitted their theses and passed their defenses.

2019-2020:
All seven of the graduating students submitted their theses and passed their defenses.

2020-2021:
All four students who submitted their theses passed the defenses. One student elected to postpone graduation for a year.

2021-2022:
All six students who submitted their theses passed their defenses. This year it was challenging to shepard students throught the process because of the lack of continuity of fiction professors, but everyone sucessfully completed the procedures.

2022-2023:
We met the benchmark here. This seems like a benchmark to look at. We do want students to pass this but because the aim of the program is to prepare for this and that most students who are not progressing toward this goal are asked to leave before their third year, I'm not sure if this exact benchmark is helping. Perhaps we must consider how to support students who are not progressing, but often those students have taken a different view on writing and their life goals. When they are still working hard we encourage them to take more time. Since it is the aim of the program it is important to monitor but maybe we need consultation about what we are assessing and why.

10 Assessment and Benchmark Alumni Survey

Assessment: Alumni survey question regarding the extent to which training received at McNeese assisted alumni in their careers.

Benchmark: When asked the extent to which training received at McNeese assisted alumni in their careers, 75% of students will report "sufficient" or higher on the Alumni Survey.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

McNeese MFA Alumni Survey

Outcome Links

Professionalism [Program]
Students will gain foundational knowledge of the publishing industry and creative and scholarly communities.

10.1 Data

Academic Year	Reported "sufficient" or higher	
	#	%
2017-2018	4/4	100%
2018-2019	4/4	100%
2019-2020	5/5	100%
2020-2021	5/5	100%
2021-2022	4/4	100%
2022-2023	3/3	100%

10.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
We continue to hear from our alumni about how well prepared McNeese made them for their careers and additional academic endeavors, which they attribute to both the Professional Endeavors class and the mentorship of the faculty during and beyond their time at McNeese.

2019-2020:
We continue to hear from our alumni about how well prepared McNeese made them for their careers and additional academic endeavors, which they attribute to both the Professional Endeavors class and the mentorship of the faculty during and beyond their time at McNeese.

2020-2021:
We continue to hear from our alumni about how well prepared McNeese made them for their careers and additional academic endeavors, which they attribute to both the Professional Endeavors class and the mentorship of the faculty during and beyond their time at McNeese.

2021-2022:
Our alumni report that they are well prepared for working in academic environments due to their training and instruction received in Professional Endeavors. There is room for improvement for those who pursue editing or other writing careers, which we hope to address in Professional Endeavors in the future. After the 40th anniversary event, a number of alumni have expressed an interest in forming a mentoring group for current students to give advice and guidance on career matters. We hope to begin implementing this beginning in the fall of next year.

2022-2023:
Only three of the seven graduates returned the surveys. Two of these talked about how well they were prepared compared to others who graduated from other MFA programs. They also pointed to Professional Endeavors as an essential class in their preparation. It is important to note that at least 4 of the 7 students have jobs in technical writing and that the program needs to consider more preparation for this possibly. We mostly prepare students for academia but the realities of the world suggest we should consider adding a technical writing course as a long term goal and adding some technical writing to Professional Endeavors coursework.

11 Assessment and Benchmark Exit Survey

Assessment: Exit Survey Questions:
1. Question 9A: If you served as a teaching assistant, please rate your experience. How would you rank the training program provided?
2. Question 26: Students report their improvement in the area of world literature
3. Question 35: Students rank their preparation received to compete in the academic job market.

Benchmark 1: 100% of teaching assistants will respond "good" or "excellent" on question 9A.

Benchmark 2: 100% of graduating students will respond "good" or "excellent" on question 35.

Outcome Links

Artistic Aesthetic [Program]
Students will develop and articulate a mature artistic aesthetic.

Professionalism [Program]
Students will gain foundational knowledge of the publishing industry and creative and scholarly communities.

11.1 Data

Academic Year	Reported "sufficient" or higher	
	#	%
2017-2018	3/5	60%
2018-2019	7/7	100%
2019-2020	6/6	100%
2020-2021	4/4	100%
2021-2022	6/6	100%
2022-2023	1/3	33%

11.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
100% of those graduating felt that teaching support was excellent or good. Results will be
passed along to the director of freshman composition.

2019-2020:
100% of those graduating felt that teaching support was excellent or good. Results will be
passed along to the director of freshman composition.

2020-2021:
100% of those graduating felt that teaching support was excellent or good. Results will be
passed along to the director of freshman composition.

2021-2022:
Four out of six of those graduating reported their teaching support to be excellent or good.
Two out of the six rated teaching support to be sufficient. In the narrative parts of the exit
survey, the students explained that their supervisor was very good at supporting them;
however, several noted that they wished that 677 & 679 were taught before they entered the
classroom rather than simultaneously. This has been reported for many years. This particular
measurement isn't the responsibility of the MFA program but rather the English department.

2022-2023:
We were much lower on the benchmark for this group. Some of this may be the result that the
Director of Composition was still new to the job. But these students also were the ones
affected by the pandemic and hurricanes in their first year where they missed hands on
activities at the writing center that helps with preparation. Also, because of the pandemic, 677
was held mostly online, by student request, and this system probably was not the best. It is
understandable that students felt that the lack of preparation was not enough.

There has always been a discussion to get better preparation for teaching by taking the
courses before they start teaching. For 677, which is the course they take alongside their first
semester teaching, it would not make sense to have this type of course before they teach
because students would not have the immediacy of actually having to be in the classroom and
learning alongside the course. In short, it seems like it should be a course students take
before they teach but students would not take it seriously without the pressure of being in the
classroom. It is possible that the 679 course could be moved to the spring to get them to think
about teaching composition and teaching in general and this would be a relatively easy switch
because the first year graduate students could take it at the same time as the second year
graduate students as we transitioned. We will consider this. Also, as we move the MFA
students into teaching co-requisite courses, first-year students will be embedded in some of
the courses to help out but also be connected to a slightly more experienced teacher. We also
have plans to have the first-year students observe very experienced teachers in their first year
to get more of a sense of how teaching is done. We do not have a solid plan yet and this is
something we will try to formulate in the next year. Though this benchmark has little to do with
the MFA, it is a needed benchmark because of the importance of making sure our teachers
are helping our first-year students enrolled in the course and because our largest focus,
currently, for preparation for life after the degree outside of writing itself is teaching and so
even though students don't always understand that teaching can never truly be prepared for
until you do it, we can find ways to be more supportive and also messaging the challenges of
teaching and our philosophy behind how we do things. So we will consider switching 679 to
the spring for students planning to teach and work out a systematic way to prepare first-year
graduates to teach in their second year with embedded tutoring and observation hours. These
are English Department matters as well as working with the writing center with how tutoring
time and observation time can count as part of the GA assistantship.

11.2 Data

Academic Year	Reported "sufficient" or higher	
	#	%
2017-2018	4/4	100%
2018-2019	6 /7	85%
2019-2020	5 /6	83%
2020-2021	4/4	100%
2021-2022	4/5	80%
2022-2023	Insufficient data	Insufficient data

11.2.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
Of the graduating students 85% reported good to excellent this year. Not all students are interested in pursuing academic careers. We need to adjust this rubric to account for those aims.

2019-2020:
Of the graduating students 83% reported good to excellent this year. Not all students are interested in pursuing academic careers. We need to adjust this rubric to account for those aims.

2020-2021:
All graduating students reported good to excellent this year. Everyone of them is actually interested in academic careers.

2021-2022:
Only five out of six graduating students are interested in pursing a career in academics. Sixty percent of the respondents reported their preparation for academic careers was good to excellent. One rated their preparation sufficient and one rated their preparation somewhat inadaquate. This overall assessment is lower than usual. It could partially be attributed to the challenges presented by the pandemic and hurricanes. However, redoubling our efforts in Professional Endeavors and 677, 679, and Research Methods will be a worthwhile goal to improve this.

2022-2023:
Only one student filled this out on the survey because it is listed in the MA section of the survey? The one student said yes. The wording listed in the explanation of the benchmark is different from the wording on the survey too. I'm not sure how this question pertains to the program. Our main goal is to prepare students to be writers. Our professionalization focuses mostly on writing and teaching, but I don't see how having students want to pursue academia is relevant for program assessment?

12 Assessment and Benchmark Graduate Activity Report

Assessment: Graduate Activity Report (GAR) Matrix.

Benchmark 1: 100% of students will attend at least six readings.

Benchmark 2: 50% of students will attend a conference.

Benchmark 3: 100% of students will read a sufficient amount of published material (books and journals).

Benchmark 4: 85% of students will have at least two face-to-face manuscript conferences with a published writer each year.

Benchmark 5: 100% of students will write at least four academic papers annually.

Benchmark 6: 100% of students will give at least three oral presentations annually.

Benchmark 7: Annually, 50% of students will give public readings of their creative or academic work. This includes participation at conferences.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

MFA GAR MATRIX 2016

Outcome Links

Creating Art [Program]
Students will create works of art in the forms of poetry or fiction.

Professionalism [Program]
Students will gain foundational knowledge of the publishing industry and creative and scholarly communities.

12.1 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	22/22	100%
2018-2019	19/19	100%
2019-2020	18/18	100%
2020-2021	4/15	27%
2021-2022	17/17	100%
2022-2023	9/13	69%

12.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
We have been able to secure a couple more smaller readings per year, so we have been able to maintain good numbers. The addition of funds from endowed professorships has made it easier to attain this. This is not a long-term guaranteed funding source, but it should be reliable for the near future.

2019-2020:
Due to a high attendance at this year's AWP conference in San Antonio, 100% of students were able to meet and exceed reading attendance.

2020-2021:
Due to COVID and the hurricanes, we were only able to host four readings via Zoom this year. Some students were able to attend external Zoom readings, but circumstances prohibited our being able to offer options to our students during this extraordinary year.

2021-2022:
Since we were able to resume in-person readings this year and the student-run reading series has resumed, as well as a high attendance at the AWP conference, this benchmark was easily achieved this year.

2022-2023:
This year we did not meet our benchmark. There are several students who do not come to readings. Part of this involves being sick and for the first time we had two students who started during the spring semester. However, the program will explain to students that going to the readings we have on campus and that other graduate students give is mandatory during orientation and one week before the reading. We spend money to have these writers on campus for the students and they must attend these events.

12.2 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	20/22	90%
2018-2019	12 /19	63%
2019-2020	18/18	100%
2020-2021	1/15	7%
2021-2022	15/17	88%
2022-2023	9/13	69%

12.2.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
We continue to provide some funding (registration and airfare this time), but that is entirely dependent on available foundation and endowed professorship accounts. The annual Association of Writers & Writing Programs and the South Central Modern Languages Association continue to be the most heavily attend conferences.

2019-2020:
Due to the proximity (San Antonio) of this year's AWP conference and the abilty for students to drive or be driven there, it made conference attendance much more affordable than the years when air travel is required. One student who was unable to attend AWP attended the SCMLA conference in the fall.

2020-2021:
Again with COVID there weren't many opportunities for students to attend or participate in conferences. One student attend and presented at a virtual conference held by Indiana University. The cost-benefit analysis of many of the other options were not favorable for attendance.

2021-2022:
The majority of the students in the program attended the AWP conference in Philadelphia in March, with the exception of two people who either did not want to attend or were afraid to fly. Additionally three students presented at other conferences and others attended in support of them. We hope to continue using Endowed Professorship funds to support student conference attendance.

2022-2023:
We met the benchmark with most students attending the conference. We were able to support travel to AWP by providing them an allotted amount that covered airfare and with extra money depending on their airfare. Some who flew out of Houston saved enough money to pay for their hotel. The four students who did not attend were signed up for the virtual AWP conference; however, these students did not report to me if they attended any sessions. Next year, we will have a survey for all students about the conference so that we will understand how they are using it whether in person or virtually. We also need to do a better job in providing information about regional conferences that students can submit to and travel to. We will try to build a list of conferences for the year that students can use and post it in the office areas.

12.3 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	22/22	100%
2018-2019	19/19	100%
2019-2020	18/18	100%
2020-2021	15/15	100%
2021-2022	17/17	100%
2022-2023	8/13	61%

12.3.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:

2019-2020:

2020-2021:
Graduate students continue to complain about inadequate holdings and subscriptions. Given budgetary restrictions, the library has done little to remedy this problem. We continue to encourage students to use Inter-Library Loan to fill the gaps in McNeese's collection.

2021-2022:
We continue to register complaints from graduate students about access to current journals and books. The budgetary and personnel limitations of the library have become worse in that interlibrary loan used to be able to fill our library's gaps, but the library has no dedicated staff to handle requests. This is a university-wide problem, not restricted to graduate students.

2022-2023:
For my first time with this benchmark, I'm a little unclear what the goal for the number of books and journals students read. Much of this is assuming that students are reading for their academic classes, reading on their own, and looking at journals on their own. But it is unclear what sufficient amount would be. Few students seem to subscribe or have knowledge about specific journals. Having a more extensive collection of current journals at the library would be great. We have not talked to the library. But giving the current climate this seems unlikely. The program is considering whether to develop our own library of journals. We should also change this benchmark to ask about their personal reading of books they are reading outside of class and journals they are reading on their own to help them understand that this is an important activity. This will be added to the list of things to cover in orientation and to discuss during conferences with students.

12.4 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	22/22	100%
2018-2019	19/19	100%
2019-2020	18/18	100%
2020-2021	0/15	0%
2021-2022	17/17	100%
2022-2023	11/13	85%

12.4.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
With the procurement of endowed professorships, we have been able to attract writers with strong national reputations to conference with our MFA students and deliver readings on our campus. If we are able to retain these funding sources, we should be able to continue to improve the offerings of visitors and consultants for our students. Since we have an extremely small faculty, these visiting writers have been vital for variety and range of feedback for our students' creative work. One student's conference resulted in a publication in a national journal.

2019-2020:
 With the procurement of endowed professorships, we have been able to attract writers with strong national reputations to conference with our MFA students and deliver readings on our campus. If we are able to retain these funding sources, we should be able to continue to improve the offerings of visitors and consultants for our students. Since we have an extremely small faculty, these visiting writers have been vital for variety and range of feedback for our students' creative work.

2020-2021:
Due to the hurricanes, it was only possible to host Zoom readings in the spring semester. All students (100%) had one conference with visiting writers. Next year we plan to return to our practice of hosting writers each semester and having them conduct individual conferences with all our graduate writers.

2021-2022:
We were able to resume our usual number of visiting writers this year. In the spring we hosted a 40th anniversary celebration of the program, which included hosting three writers, two of whom conducted individual conferences with students, and Adam Johnson, winner of the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, gave a craft talk to the MFA students. In exit surveys, graduates consistently rate having visiting writers either very important or invaluable as part of their experience in the MFA program. Having such a small faculty, these visiting writers provide needed varied and additional feedback to our students.

2022-2023:
We met our benchmark this semester. This is one benchmark that we may think about getting rid of. We always bring in two writers per semester and always expect students to have conferences. This is very hands on and since students look forward to these, we have no problem meeting this benchmark. The only reason we were not at 100% is because two of the students started the program in the spring so they missed out on the fall conferences.

12.5 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	20/22	90%
2018-2019	18 /19	95%
2019-2020	18 /18	100%
2020-2021	15/15	100%
2021-2022	17/17	100%
2022-2023	10/13	77%

12.5.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
We continue to have a number of students who complete MA work by the end of their third year, which accounts for some who write fewer papers. This benchmark seems more appropriate for the MA program, though we do require some academic papers in our form & theory and late 20th century literature courses.

2019-2020:
We continue to have a number of students who complete MA work by the end of their third year, which accounts for some who write fewer papers. This benchmark seems more appropriate for the MA program, though we do require some academic papers in our form & theory and late 20th century literature courses.

2020-2021:
We continue to have a number of students who complete MA work by the end of their third year, which accounts for some who write fewer papers. This benchmark seems more appropriate for the MA program, though we do require some academic papers in our form & theory and late 20th century literature courses.

2021-2022:
This continues to be a metric more appropriately measured by the MA program. The MFA program's primary focus is the production of creative rather than scholarly work. Perhaps we could change the rubric to reflect this.

2022-2023:
We should delete this one. We are a writing program that has a strong foundation in literature but because students are expected to write papers in these classes and whether they write one is dependent on the instructor, we should remove this one. We did not meet the benchmark on this one because two of the students entered the program for the spring semester only. And another student ended up dropping an academic course. This is one that we for sure should get rid of.

12.6 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	21/22	95%
2018-2019	18 /19	95%
2019-2020	17/ 18	94%
2020-2021	15/15	100%
2021-2022	17/17	100%
2022-2023	10/13	77%

12.6.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
As with academic papers, there are more opportunities for students to give oral presentations in literature courses. That said, my guess is the one student who reported only one oral presentation under-reported as most courses have one or more oral presentation components. Continue to promote oral presentations and confidence in public speaking.

2019-2020:
As with academic papers, there are more opportunities for students to give oral presentations in literature courses. That said, my guess is the one student who reported only one oral presentation under-reported as most courses have one or more oral presentation components. Continue to promote oral presentations and confidence in public speaking.

2020-2021:
For literature and form & theory courses, there are usual one or two opportunities to present per class per semester. It is possible that those students in their last semester or two may not present in classes as much; however, considering thesis defenses, graduate readings, and other extra-curricular colloquia, they are likely to hit this benchmark.

2021-2022:
Most courses have an oral presentation component, and many students either gave public readings or presented at conferences as well. Continue to develop opportunities for presentation.

2022-2023:
This is another benchmark that seems like it could be deleted for the same reasons as the previous benchmark. This is based on the courses they take and in most courses there are opportunities for oral presentations. For creative writing, we should focus on giving a reading and the next benchmark covers that. We did not meet this benchmark because two of the student entered the program in the spring and one dropped a course that would have had a presentation. Again, I recommend we delete this benchmark.

12.7 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	20/22	90%
2018-2019	16 /19	84%
2019-2020	16/18	88%
2020-2021	5/15	33%
2021-2022	15/17	88%
2022-2023	10/13	77%

12.7.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
The Stellar Beans reading series, Women's Studies Lectures, and Bibliography paper presentations have offered more opportunities.

2019-2020:
Students continue to participate in on-campus and local readings and presentations. We hope to continue to provide some funding support for those who seek to present at conferences and festivals.

2020-2021:
Again due to COVID and the hurricanes, it was difficult to hit this benchmark; however one-third of the students did have an opportunity to publicly present their work either virtually or in-person, which is significant considering the obstacles.

2021-2022:
There has been an increase this year in opportunities for students to publicly present their work beyond regular in-class presentations. Some students are not simultaneously enrolled in the MA program, so they aren't interested in presenting papers at conferences. Some do not wish to present their work outside of class. We will continue to encourage people to get that experience, but if it isn't a requirement for a class there is no way to impel them to do so.

2022-2023:
We met the benchmark on this one. We should consider upping the benchmark to 100% because we want students to read once each year in preparation for their final graduate reading after graduation and in preparation for the life as a writer. This year a few students presented at conferences and they only held one reading outside of school at the Common House where any student who wanted to could read. To continuously improve this one, which is important, we should consider starting a student committee who is in charge of hosting a reading each semester. The committee could change each semester so students would get experience hosting an event. I'd also like for students to consider how they read and get feedback about their reading but I would not want to add that to this benchmark however.

13 Assessment and Benchmark Internal Creative Writing Assessment Tool

Assessment: Internal Creative Writing Assessment Tool.

Benchmark: 100% of students will receive a 3.00 or higher on the internal Creative Writing Assessment Tool, averaged out over the entire academic year.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

MFA Creative Writing Assessment Tool 2016

Outcome Links

Creating Art [Program]
Students will create works of art in the forms of poetry or fiction.

13.1 Data

Academic Year	Poetry average	Poets that met benchmark		Fiction average	Fiction writers that met benchmark	
		#	%		#	%
2017-2018	3.77	11/11	100%	3.13	9/11	81%
2018-2019	3.66	9 /9	100%	3.95	9/10	90%
2019-2020	3.61	9 /9	100%	3.66	9 /9	100%
2020-2021	4.07	7/7	100%	4.18	8/8	100%
2021-2022	3.75	8/8	100%	3.5	9/9	100%
2022-2023	3.6	3/5	60%	3.63	8/8	100%

13.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
Continue to evaluate students. One student was not working up to standard. The first-year student was been counseled all year, but had not made improvements. He was dismissed from the program for not making adequate progress in the quality and quantity of work produced.

2019-2020:
Continue to evaluate students. Currently all students are meeting the benchmark. No changes are needed at this time.

2020-2021:
Continue to evaluate students. One student who was having trouble completing work in the midst of the pandemic and hurricane aftermath, failed to resolve an incomplete and thus was dismissed from the program. Since the student withdrew during the spring semester, they were not measured in the evaluation.

2021-2022:
All students met the benchmark this year. Generally if someone does not, they are counseled or asked to leave the program.

2022-2023:
The fiction students all meant the benchmark. In poetry, one of the students only just started in the spring and did not yet have the mainstay course Form and Theory of Poetry, did not have at least one semester of workshop, and also had only been in the program for a few weeks before his work was reviewed. We will monitor his progress. The other poet is not progressing and we are talking over plans for finishing up his MA instead of his MFA. The external reviewers marked these students higher than the internal reviewers, so that should be taken into consideration where it seems in the past the external reviewers were harder in their reviews than the internal ones.

14 Assessment and Benchmark External Creative Writing Assessment Tool

Assessment: External Creative Writing Assessment Tool, scored by select visiting writers.

Benchmark: 100% of students who have face-to-face conferences will receive a 3.00 or higher on the external Creative Writing Assessment Tool.

Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).

MFA Creative Writing Assessment Tool 2016

Outcome Links

Creating Art [Program]
Students will create works of art in the forms of poetry or fiction.

14.1 Data

Academic Year	Poetry average	Poets that met benchmark		Fiction average	Fiction writers that met benchmark	
		#	%		#	%
2017-2018	3.00	8/11	72%	3.10	8/11	72%
2018-2019	3.72	9 /9	100%	3.55	9 /10	90%
2019-2020	3.8	9 /9	100%	3.5	9 /9	100%
2020-2021	3.6	7/7	100%	3.5	8/8	100%
2021-2022	3.75	8/8	100%	3.61	9/9	100%
2022-2023	3.7	4/5	80%	3.86	7/7*	100%

*No data on the score of one fiction writer.

14.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
One fiction student got a below three average which correlated with the internal evaluation. That student was dismissed from the program due to lack of adequate progress.

2019-2020:
Continue to evaluate students. Currently all students are meeting the benchmark. No changes are needed at this time.

2020-2021:
Continue to evaluate students. One poetry student fell below the mark, but withdrew from classes before the end of the academic year, so we did not include them in the sample.

2021-2022:
All students met the benchmark this year. It is useful to have visiting writers evaluate the quality of work since our faculty is so small and deeply invested in the students.

2022-2023:
One poet was below the benchmark. This student only came in this spring and the evaluation was done with less than three weeks actually in the program. This student did not have a semester of workshop in the fall and the benefit of the mainstay course of Form and Theory so this student will be monitored but his evaluations make sense since he was brand new to the program. There was disagreement on the other student between internal and external reviewers.

15 Assessment and Benchmark Graduates Publish Work

Assessments: Graduates Publish Work.

Benchmark: 75% of MFA graduates will have published their work within three years of graduation.

Outcome Links

Creating Art [Program]
Students will create works of art in the forms of poetry or fiction.

15.1 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	6/7	83%
2018-2019	5/7	71%
2019-2020	4/6	66%
2020-2021	4/4	100%
2021-2022	5/6	80%
2022-2023	3/4	75%

15.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:Continue mentoring beyond graduation. Faculty continue to read manuscripts, suggest publishing venues, and write blurbs and recommendations for the students who remain in contact.

2019-2020:
Continue mentoring beyond graduation. Faculty continue to read manuscripts, suggest publishing venues, and write blurbs and recommendations for the students who remain in contact.

2020-2021:
Continue mentoring beyond graduation. Faculty continue to read manuscripts, suggest publishing venues, and write blurbs and recommendations for the students who remain in contact.

2021-2022:
Faculty continues mentoring graduates beyond matriculation by writing recommendations, providing book blurbs, passing along publishing and employment opportunities. Not all students remain in contact, though most do. Faculty support remains the highest quality of our program.

2022-2023:
We are meeting the benchmark based on the number of students who we could reach and filled in the survey three-years after graduation. With some web-searching though it seems like five out of the seven have become published. Again, better communication channels, more emphasis on being a helpful alum while in the program, and nurturing alumni connections to the program through virtual connections to incoming classes and current graduate students could help students feel better about the program. As far as publishing, we have a pretty good record. Though we meet this benchmark often, it is something the program still needs to nurture and consider because this is our biggest aim.

End of report