MCNEESE. STATE UNIVERSITY

Creative Writing [CRWR]

Cycles included in this report:
Jun 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018

Program Name: Creative Writing [CRWR]

Reporting Cycle: Jun 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018

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

2015-2016:
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. Reorganization of faculty teaching responsibilities.
3. Increase opportunities for students to have creative writing teaching experience.

2016-2017:
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. Reorganization of faculty teaching responsibilities.
3. Increase opportunities for students to have creative writing teaching experience.
4. Track and report data every year for each assessment.

2017-2018:
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. Increase student involvement in the McNeese Review.
4. Continue close mentorship to ensure students are successful in the program and beyond.

4 Program Highlights from the Reporting Year

2017-2018:
The added financial burden in the form of higher tuition and housing costs resulted in one students leaving at the end of the year. In addition, our application numbers for the class coming in for 2018 were down by an additional third since the reduction in funding for the third year in a row. We have secured Endowed Professorships to assist in funding our writers' series and conference attendance for students and faculty. Also, a particularly challenging faculty issue was resolved by an instructor leaving the University, which we hope will boost morale.

Alumni & Student Successes:
Despite these challenges, our students have continued to accomplish great things. Ten out of 20 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 Stacy Austin Egan's fiction chapbook, You Could Stop It Here, Rachel Rinehart's poetry collection, The Church in the Plains, Collier Brown's poetry collection, Eye, Thus Far Unplucked, and Michael Shewmaker's poetry collection, Penumbra. This is the truest emblem of the success of our program's endeavor.

Notable Placements:
Lauren Howton (MFA, poetry 2018), Brett Hanley (MFA, poetry 2018), and Paul Hansen (MFA, fiction 2017) started the Ph.D. program in Creative Writing at Florida State University in the fall of 2018. Annaliese Wagner Chaudhuri (MFA, poetry 2016) and Avee Chaudhuri (MFA, fiction 2-17) were hired as instructors of English at Stephen F. Austin State University.

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.

Course Links

ENGL671 [Creative Writing Workshop (Poetry) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

ENGL672 [Creative Writing Workshop (Fiction) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

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	
	#	%	#	%
2015-2016	9/10	90%	8/8	100%
2016-2017	10/11	91%	9/9	100%
2017-2018	11/11	100%	11/11	100%

Course Links

ENGL671 [Creative Writing Workshop (Poetry) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

ENGL672 [Creative Writing Workshop (Fiction) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

7.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
One fiction writer fell below the benchmark. Continue to monitor and provide mentorship to students.

2016-2017:
One fiction writer fell below the benchmark. Continue to monitor and provide mentorship to students.

2017-2018:
All students met the benchmark this year; however, we've used this criterion to motivate students who have been lagging behind their peers.

Course Links

ENGL671 [Creative Writing Workshop (Poetry) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

ENGL672 [Creative Writing Workshop (Fiction) (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

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).

Course Links

ENGL677 [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 [Approved]

Academic Year	First-year teaching GAs enrolled in ENGL 677	
	#	%
2015-2016	-	100%
2016-2017	-	100%
2017-2018	-	100%

Course Links

ENGL677 [Seminar in Teaching Freshman English (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

8.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement [Approved]

2015-2016:
Continue to provide training for all TAs. The training helps ensure the integrity of the instruction of departmental courses as well as prepare students for instructor positions.

2016-2017:
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.

2017-2018:
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 the 2018-2019 the course will be for credit and count 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.

Course Links

ENGL677 [Seminar in Teaching Freshman English (Lec. 3, Cr. 3)]

9 Assessment and Benchmark ENGL 699 Theses

Assessment: ENGL 699 Theses.

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

Course Links

ENGL699 [Thesis (Cr. 1-6)]

Outcome Links

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

9.1 Data

Academic Year	Submitted theses successfully defended	
	#	%
2015-2016	7/7	100%
2016-2017	5/5	100%
2017-2018	5/5	100%

Course Links

ENGL699 [Thesis (Cr. 1-6)]

9.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to monitor.

2016-2017:
Continue to monitor.

2017-2018:
All students who submitted their theses passed their defenses. As long as students make regular progress toward completion, this should never be a problem. We had a second-year student who wasn't making adequate progress in quantity or quality of work, who was asked to leave the program as a result.

Course Links

ENGL699 [Thesis (Cr. 1-6)]

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.

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	
	#	%
2015-2016	3/3	100%
2016-2017	5/5	100%
2017-2018	4/4	100%

10.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Assess how improvements can be made to better prepare students for their careers.

2016-2017:
Assess how to assist students who choose to pursue non-academic careers.

2017-2018:
There will be no further substitutions for the Professional Endeavors course, which is aimed at preparing students for careers. Emphasis has been primarily been focused on academic careers, but we plan to reach out to alumni who work in the fields of marketing, non-profits, and editing to give more exposure to those fields for those who may be interested in pursuing non-academic routes.

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	
	#	%
2015-2016	7/7	100%
2016-2017	4/5	80%
2017-2018	3/5	60%

11.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Results will be passed on to the director of freshman composition, along with feedback from Alumni Survey.

2016-2017:
Only 80% of those graduating felt that teaching support was excellent or good. Results will be

passed on to the director of freshman composition.

2017-2018:
Only 40% of those graduating felt that teaching support was excellent or good. Results will be passed along to the director of freshman composition.

11.2 Data

Academic Year	Reported "sufficient" or higher	
	#	%
2015-2016	3/7	43%
2016-2017	5/5	100%
2017-2018	4/4	100%

11.2.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
The majority of the graduating cohort was not primarily interested in pursuing academic work/teaching (4 of 7). The data listed only includes graduates interested in academia. This question is actually listed in the MA portion of the exit survey. We need to change it to the MFA portion for the purposes of this rubric.

2016-2017:
Only 80% reported good or excellent this year, mostly because of frustration with past instruction that has since been addressed.

2017-2018:
Only 60% reported good or excellent this year. Two of those graduating did not take Professional Endeavors, which is generally required of all MFA students due to having a substitution course with another faculty member that has caused major disgruntlement among the graduate students. This professor has now left the University.

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: Each year, 85% of students will read and critique a sufficient number of unpublished manuscripts.
- For fiction, "sufficient" will be set at 36 manuscripts.
- For poetry, "sufficient" will be set at 100 poems/pages.

Benchmark 4: 100% of students will read a sufficient amount of published material (books and journals).

Benchmark 5: 85% of students will have at least two face-to-face manuscript conferences with a published writer each year.

Benchmark 6: 100% of students will write at least four academic papers annually.

Benchmark 7: 100% of students will give at least three oral presentations annually.

Benchmark 8: 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	
	#	%
2015-2016	18/18	100%
2016-2017	20/20	100%
2017-2018	22/22	100%

12.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to promote the attendance of readings.

2016-2017:
This is more difficult to achieve now that we only sponsor four official visiting writers' readings due to budgetary concerns. However, with the addition of the Stellar Beans series, increased conference attendance, and bonus smaller readings, we have been able to maintain good numbers.

2017-2018:
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.

12.2 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2017-2018	20/22	90%

12.2.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
When possible assist students with travel/registration.

2016-2017:
With consistent Endowed Professorship support, we hope to assist graduate students with financial support for registration, transportation, and/or lodging.

2017-2018:
We had a large number of students who attended the annual AWP conference in Tampa Bay this spring. Since the conference was within driving distance more people were able to afford to attend. We continue to provide some funding (in this case hotel and registration), but that is entirely dependent on available foundation and endowed professorship accounts. We also have continued to have a fair number of students attend and present at the South Central Modern Languages Association conferences.

12.3 Data

	Students meeting

Academic Year	the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	18/18	100%
2016-2017	20/20	100%
2017-2018	22/22	100%

Academic Year	Fiction students that met the benchmark		Poetry students that met the benchmark	
	#	%	#	%
2018-2019				

12.3.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to encourage students to critique each other's work.

2016-2017:
Continue to encourage students to critique each other's work.

2017-2018:
Continue to encourage students to critique each other's work. This data point is never likely to fall below the benchmark, so perhaps it isn't a worthwhile point to analyze.

12.4 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	18/18	100%
2016-2017	20/20	100%
2017-2018	22/22	100%

12.4.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
While specific benchmarks may not be possible, the coordinators find this helpful in terms of assessing the depth and breadth of the students' reading. (It also serves as a prompt for useful conversation about reading habits.)

2016-2017:
Graduate students routinely complain about inadequate library holdings and subscriptions; however, ILL can help compensate for McNeese's lack.

2017-2018:
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.

12.5 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	18/18	100%
2016-2017	20/20	100%
2017-2018	22/22	100%

12.5.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Despite financial uncertainty, visiting writers will continue to be recruited to act as outside evaluators.

2016-2017:
Maintain two visiting writers per semester.

2017-2018:
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.

12.6 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	10/18	56%
2016-2017	16/20	80%
2017-2018	20/22	90%

12.6.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
This does not account for third year students who often are not enrolled in academic courses that require scholarly rather than creative work. No action taken.

2016-2017:
This does not account for third year students who often are done with their scholarly coursework and are working exclusively on creative work in their third year of study. No action.

2017-2018:
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.

12.7 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	14/18	78%
2016-2017	20/20	100%
2017-2018	21/22	95%

12.7.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Encourage students to present their works orally in courses.

2016-2017:
No action taken.

2017-2018:
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.

12.8 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	15/18	83%
2016-2017	18/20	90%
2017-2018	20/22	90%

12.8.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
The implementation of The Free Range Reading Series at Stellar Beans has offered opportunities previously unavailable to graduate students.

2016-2017:
The Stellar Beans reading series, Women's Studies Lectures, and Bibliography paper presentations have offered more opportunities.

2017-2018:
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.

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.

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	
		#	%		#	%
2015-2016	4.18	8/8	100%	4.40	10/10	100%
2016-2017	3.90	9/9	100%	3.95	9/10	90%
2017-2018	3.77	11/11	100%	3.13	9/11	81%

13.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to evaluate students. Currently all students are meeting the benchmark. No changes are needed at this time.

2016-2017:
Continue to evaluate students. Only one student is not working up to standard. Monitor and advise marginal students.

2017-2018:
Continue to evaluate students. Two students were not working up to standard. The first-year student has been counseled and encouraged. The second-year student had not made improvements despite counseling and encouragement. She was dismissed from the program for not making adequate progress in the quality and quantity of work produced.

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	
		#	%		#	%
2015-2016	3.50	8/8	100%	3.60	9/10*	90%
2016-2017	3.40	8/9	88%	3.55	9/10	90%
2017-2018	3.00	8/11	72%	3.10	8/11	72%

*No data on the score of one fiction writer.

14.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to evaluate students. Currently all students are meeting the benchmark. No changes are needed at this time.

2016-2017:
Continue to have students externally evaluated. One student per genre fell below the benchmark (both first-year students). Continue to monitor and mentor marginal students.

2017-2018:
Three students per genre fell below the benchmark. This is a significant number, but much depends on the subjective aesthetic judgement of the external evaluators. Also, these students are submitting their work for conferences with visiting writers, ostensibly to get feedback and suggestions on their stories and poems, not always their most polished work. Because one student got two years of low internal and external evaluations, as well as under-performing in workshop, that writer was dismissed from the program.

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	
	#	%
2015-2016	3/5	60%
2016-2017	4/7	57%
2017-2018	6/7	83%

15.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
No action taken. Continue mentoring beyond graduation.

2016-2017:
No action taken. Continue mentoring beyond graduation.

2017-2018:
No action taken. Continue mentoring beyond graduation. Faculty continue to read manuscripts, suggest publishing venues, and write blurbs and recommendations for the students who remain in contact.

16 Assessment and Benchmark TA Evaluation

Assessment: Teaching Assistants Evaluation each spring by director of freshman composition.

Benchmark: 100% of Teaching Assistants will receive a score of "satisfactory" or better.

Outcome Links

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

16.1 Data

Academic Year	Students meeting the benchmark	
	#	%
2015-2016	18/18	100%
2016-2017	19/20	95%
2017-2018	22/22	100%

16.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2015-2016:
Continue to monitor TAs and develop their teaching skills.

2016-2017:
One TA had excessive truancy and inadequate performance in his last semester. He did not graduate. Continue to monitor TAs and develop their teaching skills.

2017-2018:
The TAs continue to do a satisfactory job; however, now that the entire make-up of the program is paying tuition (whereas previously GAs got full-tuition waivers), the sense of responsibility seems to have shifted away from teaching and toward their own academic pursuits. Previously, there seemed more of a balance of responsibility. GAs seem to be more likely to cancel class or not meet with their supervisor as required. We have tried to return funding to closer to former levels, but the state budget has restricted all manner of raises and improvements.

Program outcomes

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

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

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

End of report