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**Docket Item:**

University Program Approval: Oregon State University, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Creative Writing.

**Summary:**

Oregon State University proposes a new degree program leading to a B.A. in Creative Writing. The statewide Provosts' Council has unanimously recommended approval. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After Analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the program as proposed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following program:

B.A. in Creative Writing at Oregon State University.



## **Proposal for a New Academic Program**

**Institution:** Oregon State University

**College/School:** College of Liberal Arts

**Department/Program Name:** School of Writing, Literature, and Film

**Degree and Program Title:** Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing

### **Program Description**

#### **Proposed Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) number.**

CIP Number 23.1302

Title: Creative Writing Major

Definition: A program that focuses on the process and techniques of original composition in various literary forms such as the short story, poetry, the novel, and others. Includes instruction in technical and editorial skills, criticism, and the marketing of finished manuscripts.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/cipdetail.aspx?y=55&cipid=88361>

#### **Brief overview (1-2 paragraphs) of the proposed program, including its disciplinary foundations and connections; program objectives; programmatic focus; degree, certificate, minor, and concentrations offered.**

The creative writing major's disciplinary foundations are the study of the craft of creative writing combined with rigorous study of literature. Students must develop their expertise in reading literature in conjunction with their development of writing craft. At the introductory level our program will require writing workshops in all three genres we currently offer—fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction—as well as two introductory literature classes. At the upper division, students will focus on either one or two genres, taking the appropriate 300- and 400-level workshops. Literature offerings will represent a range of eras, continents, ethnicities, and sensibilities, as the major will require one pre-1800 and one post-1800 literature class at the upper division as well as three upper-division electives in literature, writing, and/or film.

Our program objectives are to produce majors who can think and write creatively and with imaginative power. They'll have highly trained analytical, critical,

technical, and editorial skills, preparing them for graduate work in a range of fields, from the MFA to law school, or for a job market with an increasing demand for imaginative thinkers and skilled writers who can construct masterful, meaningful narratives. Although we won't offer a creative writing minor, majors will still have the option of pursuing any of the existing SWLF offerings: minors in English, Writing, Film Studies, Applied Journalism, and the certificate in Scientific, Technical, and Professional Communication.

**Manner in which the program will be delivered, including program location (if offered outside of the main campus), course scheduling, and the use of technology (for both on-campus and off-campus delivery).**

The proposed degree will be offered exclusively on the OSU main campus in Corvallis. As with the English major, students will have the option of taking some courses online or as a hybrid; however, this current proposal does not include an Ecampus major option.

Existing classroom technology and the OSU Canvas site will be used at the discretion of the instructor.

**Anticipated start date.**

Fall 2020.

**Relationship to Mission and Goals**

**Manner in which the proposed program supports the institution's mission, signature areas of focus, and strategic priorities.**

Mission

Through excellent teaching, outreach, and engagement, the proposed major will train OSU graduates to confront our most pressing economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues, bringing creativity and imagination to overcoming obstacles to progress. These creative minds, coupled with the powerful tools of observation, articulation, critical thinking, and the ability to write well, will give them a valuable and influential voice across Oregon, the nation, and the world. The School of Writing, Literature, and Film already offers a highly competitive graduate degree (MFA) in creative writing. The addition of an undergraduate degree in creative writing would strengthen OSU's influence and renown in Oregon and beyond by providing a prestigious and desirable degree path for undergraduates, and also by being one of the few public universities in the region to offer such a degree.

Signature Areas of Focus

The addition of a creative writing major at Oregon State University is integral to further defining aspects of OSU's mission statement, such as OSU's signature areas of focus: Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems, Improving Health and Wellness, and Promoting Economic Prosperity and Social Progress. Through the major, students will access and curate new forms of knowledge, and the university will be able to promote its continued dedication to the maintenance of a rigorous focus on academic excellence. Creative writing is both a growing professional field and an emerging academic field of study that promotes economic growth in the humanities and social progress. Students of creative writing are able to synthesize writing about economic, social, cultural and environmental topics and progress in a creative and innovative manner, which will enhance OSU's dedication to new forms of knowledge and education in the classroom and through its graduates.

### Strategic Priorities

With its implementation of a creative writing BA, OSU would become one of the few public universities in the region to offer a creative writing major, thereby contributing to SP 4.0's "**Goal 1: Preeminence in Research, Scholarship, and Innovation.**" SWLF in general, and creative writing in particular, often engage in highly collaborative teaching. Through their active publishing lives and the many established programs associated with the MFA, faculty are engaged in public work and outreach. Through internships, symposia, and collaborative courses, creative writing at OSU has ongoing relationships with professionals (e.g., collaboration with Corvallis medical doctors in the course Poetry and Medicine) and community/government (e.g., MFA teaching internships at the Oak Creek Youth Correctional Facility and book discussions at public libraries as part of the Stone Award for Literary Excellence events).

The growing national demand for a creative writing major, the diverse nature of creative writing course reading lists, the relatively small embedded costs associated with the degree, and the ability of the MFA program in creative writing to attract diverse student cohorts are some of the ways that a creative writing major supports SP 4.0's "**Goal 2: Transformative Education that is Accessible to All Learners.**"

The proposed degree would enhance OSU's leadership by being one of the few public universities in the Pacific Northwest to offer an undergraduate major in creative writing, expanding on the platform of generating diverse forms of knowledge and economic growth in its students and graduates. The major would increase OSU's engagement with local and wider communities by increasing student engagement with the creative writing community at large, through readings, conferences, and publication, and also through the wider reach of the university, thereby contributing to SP 4.0's "**Goal 3: Significant and Visible Impact in Oregon and Beyond.**" In part because of the success of our MFA program and the quality of our creative writing faculty, the major will draw students from Oregon and beyond. As University of Oregon Creative Writing Professor Jason Brown writes in his external letter of support for this proposal, "The creative

writing programs at the two universities (UO and OSU) are not fundamentally in competition. In recent years the creative writing program at Oregon State has grown in prominence, which helps define Oregon as a prime destination for students to study creative writing. An OSU B.A. in creative writing could only help the study of creative writing across all the universities in Oregon.”

The School of Writing, Literature, and Film is already dedicated to a platform of inclusion, mutual respect, collaboration, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice; the addition of this new program will strengthen and enhance this priority, thereby making a meaningful contribution to SP 4.0’s **“Goal 4: A Culture of Belonging, Collaboration, and Innovation.”** As has been noted in this proposal, English courses offer a diverse and well-rounded education; creative writing courses with their emphasis on contemporary and innovative writers can introduce students to even more diverse writers who fully represent multicultural society in the nation and the world. Creative writing courses also lend themselves to collaboration across the university and beyond its gates.

**Manner in which the proposed program contributes to institutional and statewide goals for student access and diversity, quality learning, research, knowledge creation and innovation, and economic and cultural support of Oregon and its communities.**

#### Student Access and Diversity

The School of Writing, Literature, and Film’s dedication to student access and diversity is exemplified in the department’s foundational courses, which will be integral to the proposed BA in creative writing.

#### Research, Knowledge Creation, and Innovation

A creative writing major creates tremendous opportunities for collaboration with the visual arts, oceanography, environmental studies, forestry, engineering, digital arts, and computer science. These opportunities not only provide students with a platform to express their innovative forms of thinking but also bridge a gap between the arts and sciences.

#### Economic and Cultural Support of Oregon and its Communities

The School of Writing, Literature, and Film hosts and sponsors a wide range of events, some of which are held at off-campus public venues within the community at large, and all of which are open to the public. These events reach a broad audience and help support a vibrant literary and creative community within Oregon and beyond. They provide students with an opportunity to both hear the work of others and share their own work, fostering their involvement in the wider literary community.

**Manner in which the program meets regional or statewide needs and enhances the state's capacity to:**

Note: All referenced data was prepared (October 2018) by Jess Waldschmidt, OSU Ecampus Marketing and Enrollment Services, using Burning Glass Technologies in a Marketing Research Report on the potential of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Writing.

**Improve educational attainment in the region and state;**

In 2016 the majority of institutions granting creative writing bachelor's degrees were private (37% public, 55% private, and 8% for-profit) The addition of a creative writing BA at a public institution in Oregon would bridge an educational gap between public and private institutions, and increase the accessibility of a sought-after degree program.

**Respond effectively to social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities;**

Although national job growth in related fields is slow, regional job growth is steady. Jobs including copywriting, editing, proofreading, reporter, technical writer, writer, have grown by 14.37% in the northwest region, and 6.12% in Oregon alone. In 2018, California was considered to be the top hiring state in the country for career paths related to creative writing.

A creative writing degree opens a wide range of social and economic opportunities for students.

**Address civic and cultural demands of citizenship.**

The School of Writing, Language and Film at OSU currently offers an array of courses that support and address the civic and cultural demands of citizenship today. The proposed creative writing major is designed around these course listings and addresses and supports these demands of citizenship. We are in a time of increased interest in historically marginalized voices in the arts, and in creative writing, all voices are empowered regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and economic privilege. The creative writing major will train these students so their voices can make a positive impact on Oregon, the nation, and the world.

**Need**

**Anticipated fall term headcount and FTE enrollment over each of the next five years.**

	Headcount	FTE
Fall 2020	25	24
Fall 2021	35	34
Fall 2022	45	43
Fall 2023	55	52
Fall 2024	65	61

**Expected degrees/certificates produced over the next five years.**

<u>Degrees conferred</u>	
2020-21	2
2021-22	5
2022-23	10
2023-24	25
2024-25	35

**Evidence of market demand.**

As previously stated, on-campus creative writing degrees conferred have increased 5% since 2012. The number of institutions offering creative writing degrees is growing. Since the majority of institutions granting creative writing bachelor's degrees in 2016 were private, there is a need for creative writing major programs at public universities to close the gap of accessibility.

In a Qualtrics survey circulated to students at OSU in May 2017 regarding a possible creative writing major showed more students expressed interest in creative writing major than an English major.

**If the program's location is shared with another similar Oregon public university program, the proposal should provide externally validated evidence of need (e.g., surveys, focus groups, documented requests, occupational/employment statistics and forecasts).**

Not applicable. There is no similar Oregon public (or private) university program that shares this proposed program's location.

**Closely related programs in this or other Oregon colleges and universities.**

No public university in Oregon currently offers the BA in creative writing.

**Institution: Oregon State University**  
**Program: Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing**

Action: At the **March 5, 2020** meeting, the Statewide Provosts Council approved a new program for **Oregon State University, BA in Creative Writing** to move forward to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission for its review and approval. The **OSU** Board of Trustees approved the **BA in Creative Writing** program at its **January 23, 2020** meeting.

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**Eastern Oregon University**

Sarah Witte, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Health & Science University**

Elena Andresen, interim provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon State University**

Ed Feser, provost

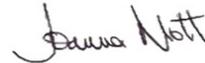
Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Tech**

Joanna Mott, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Portland State University**

Susan Jeffords, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Southern Oregon University**

Susan Walsh, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**University of Oregon**

Patrick Phillips, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Western Oregon University**

Rob Winningham, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained

