

Montana University System
INTENT TO PLAN FORM

Program/Center/Institute Title: **BFA in Creative Writing**

Campus, School/Department: **UM College of Humanities & Sciences / English**

Expected Submission Date: **May 2019**

Contact Name/Info: **Robert Baker, Chair of English / robert.baker@mso.umt.edu**

To increase communication, collaboration, and problem-solving opportunities throughout the MUS in the program/center/institute development process, please complete this form not more than 18 months in advance of the anticipated date of submission of the proposed program/center/institute to the Board of Regents for approval. The completed form should not be more than 2-3 pages. For more information regarding the Intent to Plan process, please visit <http://mus.edu/che/arsa/academicproposals.asp>.

1) Provide a description of the program/center/institute.

The Department of English plans to propose a new BFA in Creative Writing. To some extent this new degree is a reframing of the current BA in English with a Creative Writing emphasis: it gives a new formal shape to a course of study that to some extent is already in place. But it also makes changes to this course of study. The emphasis is still on developing skills in creative writing (poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction), but in the new program (in line with recommendations in the field for a vital BFA) there is strong emphasis on weaving together a substantial component of courses in literary study and a substantial component of creative writing workshops. There are also Special Topics courses that interweave these approaches, a Capstone course (requiring an extended manuscript or a portfolio), and courses in editing, revision, and writing in the workplace. Our intent is to provide students with a wide-ranging education in literary study and creative writing that will prepare them for either graduate study (in literature, creative writing, or both) or the competitive job market of our time.

2) Describe the need for the program/center/institute. Specifically, how the program/center/institute meets current student and workforce demands. (Please cite sources).

We are imagining anew what the English Department at UM could be in the present and the future. We want, first of all, to more fully interweave the study of literature and the study of creative writing and, so, to strengthen both of these paths of study. We want, further, to sustain and renew the Creative Writing program, a program that has had a national reputation since the 1960s and 1970s (when Richard Hugo taught here). In recent years that has been a growth of BFA in Creative Writing programs throughout the Mountain West and the Pacific Northwest, and given our reputation and our resources, we are well positioned to respond to this direction in the field. A BFA in Creative Writing will be of immediate value to our students (see above), our faculty, and the university as a whole. It will draw to the university students throughout the state, the region, and the country who want to study literature, creative writing, and the humanities. It will bring new energy and ambition to the English Department.

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3) Describe how the program/center/institute fits with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing institutional program array.

First, as said above, the BFA in Creative Writing will more fully bring together the study of literature and the study of creative writing at UM and, so, will strengthen these two fields with a long history at the heart of the arts and humanities mission of the university.

Second, as noted above, the Creative Writing program at UM has a long and impressive history at the undergraduate as well as the graduate (MFA) level. The BFA in Creative Writing is meant to sustain and renew this history by giving the creative writing program a new shape at the undergraduate level in particular. This change, we believe, will give new energy and scope to the entire Creative Writing program and indeed to all programs in the English Department.

Finally, while the BFA in Creative Writing is above all a way to renew our educational ideals in the English Department, it is at the same time a way to represent our department more clearly to the community, alumni, and prospective students. The Creative Writing program has for decades had a national reputation. Several years ago it was designated a Program of National Distinction at UM. Writers in the program have won a range of awards and fellowships. The prestigious graduate MFA program in Creative Writing draws not only talented graduate students but also talented undergraduate students to the university. The new BFA in Creative Writing builds on and extends this history distinctive to the English Department at UM.

4) Describe how the program/center/institute overlaps, complements, or duplicates existing efforts in the MUS. Describe efforts that will be made to collaborate with similar programs at other institutions. If no efforts will be made, please explain why.

There are other Writing and Creative Writing programs throughout the state, including at MSU, but there is no Creative Writing program in the state that has the national reputation of the Creative Writing program at UM.

There is at present (as far as we know) no BFA in Creative Writing program in the state. The proposed BFA in Creative Writing at UM would be the first such program.

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Signature/Date

College/School Dean:

Chief Academic Officer:

Chief Executive Officer:

Flagship Provost*:

Flagship President*:

*Not applicable to the Community Colleges.

Date of Final Review:

When submitting the proposal to the BOR, include this signed form with the Level II request.