Discussion on Council and 3rd Year MFA:

**Welcome:** Lee Medovoi welcomed the department to our September meeting.

There was discussion on Council and the 3rd Year Creative Writing MFA.

Meg Lota noted that at council, we talked about the historical allotment of GATships to the different programs, and how this might impact that. She stated that RCTE typically hasn’t used its allotment of 10 every year so rather than reduce that for RCTE, the wording is that all the programs would get their traditional allotment and if there’s anything leftover, CW would get the rest, and reduce their numbers. The proposition is that we specify what that allotment is.

Lee said that traditionally, there were 10 slots for each. Then up to 9 slots for EAL and SLAT, so we have a total of 39 as a kind of cap. The limiting factor for WP is, do they have the infrastructure, and 40 seems like it’s the absolute limit.

Tenney stated that the crucial thing is the principal of parody, as all 3 programs, other than EAL, each had the same # of GATships and CW felt they needed more than the 10 they were allotted, and unfortunately, RCTE felt they needed less than the 10 allotted. It became something of an issue last year because we ended up with unequal numbers and Literature was actually taken below the one we wanted. Tenney mentioned that he’s delighted to have CW go to a 3-year program, and thinks it will be better for the program. He noted that it does put extra pressure on the # of GATships, but he would be happy to approve it so long as that principal of parody is enshrined. He stated that doesn’t want RCTE to say we need 10 this year, CW gets 12, and Literature goes down to 8.

Lee mentioned that the 3-year MFA does add a new cohort of 3rd year students.

Larry Evers noted that sometimes, CW students in their first year don’t go through the preceptorship because they’re only teaching in CW. However, Larry said that this isn’t the case anymore.

Tenney added that, it does have an indirect affect because effect because budget and hiring is an issue, since the longer GAT’s retain their GATships, the fewer we have new ones being turned into new ones.
Lee stated that we can afford to have more GTAs, but the impact is really that first year cohort where that training process is.

Susan Miller-Cochran stated that this seems fair, although, the total number of students that we would be working would stay exactly the same, but what would change is the overall number of grad students we’re supervising at any given time. Susan added that right now, 110, 100...would increase to 120. Susan stated that that’s significant: it’s less work overall but to supervise a Lecturer who’s been teaching for a while as opposed to a grad student needing ongoing support.

Dwight Atkinson asked if anyone remembered why EAL was at 9 while other programs were higher.

Evers stated that all of this is complicated and has lots of versions, but there was a time when EAL had many fewer, such as 5, so there was a gradual increase in the number.

Tom Miller noted that it’s a master’s as opposed to other programs.

Evers stated that the relationship to the SLAT Ph.D. was being emphasized, and being in place where there were more GATship opportunities.

Lee noted that there could certainly be a conversation of GTA allotment.

Aurelie stated that in the past, some in CW have argued, begged, and hoped for 12 because of the fact that now, we’ve had 3 different tracks: non-fiction, fiction and poetry, and we’re trying to have parody within those sub-programs, and a cohort of 4 new students coming in every year, and therefore have a sole roster in our workshop, ideally 12 in a 3-year program.

Lee noted that this is the kind of thing we could talk about as there’s that question, with EAL/SLAT, and that’s a 6-3 split. He mentioned that a lot of these numbers are inherited and probably have rationale but it doesn’t mean we can’t talk about them. Lee mentioned he would like to separate that question from the way we move toward the 3-year MFA.

Tenney mentioned that he’s a little bit uncomfortable because we’re saying that we recognize the parody thing, but now we’re going to vote for the MFA and revisit the allocations.

Lee mentioned that the parody question doesn’t bear directly.

Meg Lota noted that there is a specification inserted into the proposal.

Tenney made sure to note that the concern is that we not be vague, and that we specify the program numbers now, and then have the conversation about how to reconfigure things.

Lee confirmed that what Council asked in turning the proposal back to CW, was to please, and strike the language that specifies any number of GTAs.

Meg Lota assured that CW did what Council asked, and what she’s suggesting is that we go forward with the specifications so we can approve the proposal and then have a discussion about numbers here.

Lee invited RCTE to take this question up.
Dwight mentioned that if there is going to be a discussion of parody, that parody also include EAL since it seems to be the non-member of the parody group.

Evers asked how many Ph.Ds, and how many MFAs should we be producing? He asked about what we have in relation to the national trends.

Lee stated that need conversations between programs, and internally within the programs.

Lee pivoted to an update on hiring. Lee mentioned that we were approved for a national search on the professional and technical writing. He said that we have to move quickly to get that forward. He said that we did not get a position in 18th century studies approved, so he hopes to talk to a number of people about this to strategize. He said that we also didn’t approve the request for a SPFI position, as there’s a difference between how COH and SBS handle SPFI.

There was discussion about how in COH, SPFI visits are requested once they are approved. In SBS, it’s the assumption that SPFI proposals are part of the hiring plan so if you don’t get one approved at the beginning of the year, then you put such a request in the next proposal.

Lee suggested that we crownsource for SPFI, and information about the candidates, circulate them, and then have a discussion. He mentioned that since we’re talking about next year’s hiring plan, we could take time to do that in a future meeting this semester, then invite some people out for the Spring, then we’ll solicit names and gather information about them.

Stephanie Pearmain spoke about internships, and noted that during the semester, we can accommodate summer/winter but for the main piece during the semester, the internships are 8 hours for 16 weeks at the semester: 50% writing/editing, and the other 50% can be applied how students are needed. She asked that you contact her for this, and noted that a lot of them are also trying to figure out how to get it down on paper if they want to go to grad school or the work force.

Lee pivoted and handed things off to UGCC and Lynda.

Lynda noted that we’re trying to initiate a discussion instead of battering folks into a proposal. She mentioned that people felt lukewarm about our 200-level curriculum setup, and they don’t know what it means when we say major American authors. She mentioned that we can’t put descriptions on UAccess and we can’t put a link to the course description page, so the 200-level courses would attract more faculty, if they’re also able to teach their passions and convictions. This conversation is embedded in a concerted effort on UG office to solicit syllabi to shoot up the pipeline for new course proposals, and some of them one prizes already in this.

Lynda continued that, as an example, David Brown has early modern literature crossing the color line. She noted that we’re getting specific in the course titles and matching them to faculty interests. She mentioned that there is further conversation about students learning specific skills in addition to learning how to read and write in general, so we actually did decide that we better keep a couple of these things. She noted that we went back and forth about pre-1800, pre-1900. Lynda also mentioned that we spent a lot of time trying to figure out upper division, critical/cultural concepts about what we’re trying to say to that label.
There were similar conversations about research method courses. Lynda mentioned that we’re envisioning a range of choice on that too, and the capstone course. She said that this leaves any discerning and adventurous English major with 3 additional electives, and that doesn’t look like a generous or free-flowing major, as the students have a range of choice of teaching to fulfill the spots on the grid. She said that this isn’t meant to be an up or out conversation. Lynda noted that we’re anticipating talking about this for the upcoming year, and that the deadline for this is mid-late October to propose changes. Lynda wanted to make a brief stop on the last page, to show that the distribution model is not the weird, wild hare that we came up with.

John Warnock stated that he hopes that the department will look at what was approved in 2002. He said it was a curriculum on the premise that our UG major should reflect a little better than it did, and all of our graduate programs and it set a number of goals that look a little like this, but with significant differences. He then asked the question: how well are our courses in our UG meeting those goals? He stated that these were more broadly-focused kind of goals that focused on a traditional UG literature major. He mentioned that the curriculum was approved by the department, and it didn’t get a chance. He mentioned that we might want to revisit those goals a little bit, as they’re stated now, and that the UG major doesn’t need any of the programs, other than the Literature faculty.

Tom Willard asked about linguistic and rhetorical approaches, and how these fit in methodologically.

Jerry Hogle noted that his understanding is that we’re advising the committee for further considerations, and that the department hasn’t talked about this as a major probably since 2002. Hogle noted further that he loves the idea of 200-level courses being held to that, and that we’re getting students in 200-300 level courses who didn’t have the skills. Jerry mentioned that he doesn’t know how you want to count 2-2 Gen Eds or not, and that some of these things may have to be put through the Gen Ed committee. He said that if it is possible to restrict 200-level courses to the size and focus, that would be great.

Lynda noted that we have to move that way, because of the way the enrollments have been falling out. But if we have really large enrollments, we don’t have that many students to share. Lynda mentioned that if, however, we add courses that appeal to people not thinking about becoming English majors and we accidentally teach them how to read and write, the 200-level courses need to operate both as trainings for majors but also as recruitment centers, enrollment enhancers, and one of the things we were always able to offer since. Lynda mentioned that on a logistical and practical level, we have to stick close to the 280 caps because we can’t afford to leave a particular faculty person high and dry.

Meeting Adjourned.