

Creative Writing Articulation Meeting

April 26, 2019 – UBC Buchanan Penthouse

1. Call to Order (Graham Pearce)

- Meeting commenced at 9:00 am

In attendance: Elizabeth Bachinsky (Douglas College); Wayde Compton (Douglas College); Sheryda Warrenner (UBC); Brandie Hannen-Williams (UBC undergrad advisor); Cathy Stonehouse (Kwantlen Polytechnic University); Graham Pearce (College of New Caledonia); James Gifford (Fairleigh Dickinson University); Kristine Kerins (Camosun College); Steve Schoenhoff (North Island College); Dee Horne (University of Northern BC); Trevor Newland (Langara College); Corinna Chong (Okanagan College); Heather Simeney MacLeod (Thompson Rivers University); Karlie Shaugnessy (Selkirk College)

2. Approval of Agenda

- Three additions (Elizabeth Bachinsky):
 - o Changes to SD 57 curriculum
 - o Internationalization
 - o Indigenization
- Motion to approve agenda (Graham Pearce)
- Seconded; Passed

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

- Minutes were passed around but not yet approved
- **TABLE for next meeting**

4. Purpose of Meeting

- Graham Pearce read BCCAT's outline for meetings

5. Outstanding Articulation Requests

- Requests discussed (details?)

6. BCCAT Spring Update

- Update handout was distributed

7. New Business

a) Surplus budgets and International Students

- Douglas College: Creative writing hasn't been affected by International students
 - o Maybe 1 or 2 students of 320 total
- North Island College
 - o Same situation: very little interest in CW from International
 - o Language around International students is changing – “underprepared” students rather than International
- CNC: developing courses in CW as a result of more funds at the institution
- Okanagan College also not affected by International in CW

- ENGL courses seeing increased enrolments but CW does not see International enrolment
- CW courses are growing; added sections
- Developing screenwriting course

b) Hybrid/Blended Learning Models

- College of New Caledonia: hybrid model
 - Using technology to facilitate distance ed
- North Island College: travel writing that involves a travel module
- UBC: 200-level blended learning
 - Video scripts and video production
 - Space and student demand presented challenges for space and resources
 - New model: shift to partial online learning so that the classroom is only needed once a week
 - Flexible/hybrid learning spaces
 - Flexibility for passive learning (lectures) at home so that active learning (workshopping) can happen in classroom
- Douglas College: adapted/hybrid classroom spaces
 - Lecture seating changed to tables (students automatically set up in groups)
- Fairleigh Dickinson: Modular classrooms almost exclusively
- Camosun: Online students are a different demographic; both face-to-face and online courses fill up (online course appeals to students who would not otherwise be able to take the course; eg. Students with disabilities, full-time parents, etc.)
- SFU: students from out of province and also local students
- **NEW AGENDA ITEM for next meeting:**
 - Examine classroom space changes/modular classrooms and how these change the learning experience
 - CW delivered through alternative models/online content

c) Trends in Student Writing

- Douglas College: Popular courses: speculative fiction, YA, writing for children, songwriting
- College of New Caledonia: working with Business department to develop scriptwriting courses
- Camosun: advanced composition course is split between CW and Business students
- KPU: ideas for embedding courses into other programs (e.g. Health)
 - Creative product course – variety of perspectives enrich the course (e.g. Horticulture students)
- Interdisciplinary/cross-pollination to ensure viability of CW when budgets are tight
- UBC: New Media
 - Internet, web series, podcasting
- Student interests:
 - Social work students: domestic violence, rape, incest, etc. – dealing with heavy subject matter
 - Resistance to being censored

- Dystopian fiction; dystopian fantasy
- Transgender narrative, identity
- Graphic violence; horror – challenge for dealing with this
- Students not reading enough – giving students more resources
- Issue of students not reading – KPU, Langara, Okanagan College
 - Langara: students write action
 - Students need to write cause and effect plot
 - Formatting and punctuation issues
 - Quizzes to ensure students are doing the reading
 - Article on steeply declining rates of students engagement with readings
 - Wayde Compton (Douglas College): students must do a presentation on a novel
 - Sheryda (UBC): students must go to indie bookstore and select a book (bookstore puts on a special display shelf)
 - Students are often getting audio books
- Camosun: students with mental health issues writing about inappropriate or triggering topics
 - How to handle this?
 - Sheryda: TAs having trouble reading some of the students’ work (emotionally unsettling, triggering)
 - Trigger warnings?

d) Mental Health in the classroom

- CW is a place where mental health challenges can be exasperated
- New openness to discussion about mental health, chronic illness, etc. among younger students
- “Compassionate Inquiry” – Gabor Mate online course
 - Learn techniques for writing towards these subjects while being respectful of others
- Perhaps having a discussion about trigger warnings with a class (on a case-by-case basis, depending on the group)
- Mindfulness/meditation in the classroom; talking, being open about mental health issues

e) K-12 changes to curriculum – How does this affect CW?

- Resistance to failure/hierarchy: no child left behind
- Removing exams, promoting alternative testing methods
- College students: lack of understanding about deadlines; secondary school system allows students to hand in all of their work at the end of term
- Ontario: banned cellphones in educational institutions
- English streaming in grade 10 and 11 may produce strong creative writing students
- USA: common core: schools stream students depending on their strengths/weaknesses
 - Leads to boring smart kids and ghettoized struggling kids
- English exam tests for literacy skills (does not have to be literary)
 - Math “numeracy” exam
- All versions of ENGL courses have the same outcomes

- E.g. indigenous course and spoken word course will have the same outcomes
- Exams are geared at grade 10 – not useful for university/college assessment anyway
 - Tests have 4 evaluations
 - All grades are passing grades
 - Grades simply used as a measure for government to assess the population
- Individual teachers now determine courses – no continuity
- **NEW AGENDA ITEM (ONGOING)**
 - How are K-12 changes affecting our incoming students?

f) Indigenization

- Douglas College: top priority
- UBC: push for Indigenous Lit courses to be taught by Indigenous people
- CNC: more Indigenous students are enrolling – suggests Indigenous students are more comfortable/welcomed
- Douglas College: more resources are needed to make meaningful change
 - Push to ask for money/resources to hire indigenous people (on contract basis?)
 - Must deal with systemic barriers: relationship building (e.g. help with filling out forms)
- KPU: hiring freeze means that an Indigenous Instructor cannot be hired
 - Making classroom a more welcoming place for minorities
 - Addressing (vocally and proactively) about appropriate conduct in the classroom; educate students more carefully about how to respond to others' work
 - Students of colour groups: numbers of students of colour are now growing in courses
- Resources:
 - MOOK: Reconciliation through Indigenous Education
 - Free (if you don't request a certificate)
 - *Pulling Together*: BC Campus 6-volume series on Indigenization (PDF, available online)
- Cultivating discomfort in the classroom at the same time as fostering safe and welcoming learning environment
 - Subject matter and discussion can be discomfiting while students feel that their voices are valued and they don't have to explain
- FDU: American institution – race is heavily integrated into course material (across the institution)
 - Instructors need to be educated to be able to teach adequately – ample resources required
- Ethical issues: hiring Indigenous instructors as contract or adjunct and asking them to develop a course but then not adequately compensating or providing job security
- Onus should be on institutions to provide funding support for Indigenous instructors and educating existing instructors
 - Camosun has training program for employees led by Indigenous faculty and workshops for Indigenization

- **NEW AGENDA ITEM: perspectives on Indigenization**
 - o How do we integrate indigenization into our classrooms?

8. Elections

- Leesa Deen has expressed interest in Chairing for next year
- Nomination for Graham Pierce
- Graham has agreed to step in if necessary

9. Institutional Reports

- TRU: nothing new; faculty publications
- Okanagan College: bridge to third year partnership with UBCO; adding additional sections of first and second-year CW; developing screenwriting course
- Langara: Creative Writing Associate of Arts degree
 - o Second-year courses have taken a hit, but CW courses prop up department enrolments
- UNBC: Creative Writing Thesis option is changing (ability to write shorter pieces)
- NIC: new course in travel writing; student magazine; interest in developing visual narrative
- Camosun: loss of second-year courses; loss of creative writing requirement in Comics and Graphic Novel program
 - o numbers were good last year so hoping to grow
 - o first-year certificate in CW in the works (plans to integrate into a Creative Arts program that blends different arts genres (music, visual art, writing, etc.) – working with the dean to develop a clear vision for this program)
- FDU: First time at committee meeting
 - o Publishing ventures: The Literary Review and University Press (co-publisher with Rowman & Littlefield)
- CNC: one full-time faculty
 - o Chapbook publication with students; used to do a launch on campus and this year held it at a nightclub
 - o Great attendance -- Recruitment tool
 - o Developed Creative Non-Fiction course for September
 - o Intersession: now 3 semesters in a row; having trouble finding instructors
 - o In a period of growth
- KPU: good numbers in CW program
 - o Theme-based courses: every year different faculty offer different themes (e.g. graphic narratives, historical fiction, etc.) – popular with students
 - o Budget issues: music department may be shutting down
 - o CW in defensive mode: considering raising course caps from 22 to 35
 - o Hiring freeze; retirees are not being replaced
 - o Student CW guild is very active; slam poetry team is doing very well
 - o Student publication is now funded to pay contributors
 - o Lost writer-in-residence and reading series
- UBC: curriculum development in blended learning
 - o New media and graphic courses are being redesigned as blended learning

- TLEF grant for blended learning
- Discussing pedagogy and shifting pedagogy: alternative models to workshop
- AWP sponsor: sent large numbers of faculty and students
- Hired Billy Rae Belcourt as first Indigenous Assistant Professor in CW
- Douglas College
 - New funding for Indigenous Writer in Residence
 - Strong enrolment in songwriting
 - 2 additional sections put on this year
 - Changeover in faculty and administration
 - Associate Dean shifted into Dean position)
 - Retirements have enabled new hires (Amber Dawn and Wayde Compton, playwright Elaine Evia)
 - EVENT and Pearls (38-year student publication) ongoing and looking for student volunteers
- Selkirk College
 - Third year of publishing student-led magazine (Black Bear Review)
 - Collaboration with digital arts students
 - Excellent turn-out for launch party
 - New paid work-study position for a student
 - Low enrolments in CW 100 and 101

10. Additional Concerns

- NIC: Query about course caps for international students
- Okanagan College has instituted caps for ENGL 100 courses
 - Max. 6 students (out of 20) in each section
 - CW courses do not have caps (International students have not been enrolling)
- FDU raised concerns about instituting caps for international students across the board when some might be high-achieving students whose first language is English

11. Call to Adjourn (Graham Pearce)

- Meeting adjourned at 11:50 pm