



# Student Handbook

**Low-Residency Program  
Master of Fine Arts  
Department of Creative Writing & Literary Arts  
University of Alaska Anchorage**

*July 2017*

Please note that this handbook is subject to revision. This is a guide, not a contract, and certain situations may require further review and/or discussion with your advisor.

## UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement, and creative expression.

Located in Anchorage and on community campuses in southcentral Alaska, UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples.

The University of Alaska Anchorage is an open access university with academic programs leading to occupational endorsements; undergraduate and graduate certificates; and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in a rich, diverse, and inclusive environment.

*Approved by the University of Alaska Board of Regents*

*September 19, 2007*

**Welcome** to the Low-Residency Master of Fine Arts Program in Creative Writing and Literary Arts at the University of Alaska Anchorage. You've embarked on an exciting and challenging apprenticeship.

This is an academic degree program that will provide you with opportunities to develop your writing and develop yourself as a writer. The practicum offers you possibilities for exploring your interests in related professional areas such as teaching, publishing, editing, and community service in the arts.

This student handbook contains much of the information you'll need to navigate the program. However, you also should consult the Graduate School Student Guidelines Handbook of the UAA Catalog for further important information. The website is:

<http://www.alaska.edu/graduateschool/index.cfm>

Please note that this handbook is currently under revision. This is a guide, not a contract, and certain situations may require further review and discussion with your advisor. The UAA Catalog is considered a contract: please familiarize yourself with the catalog materials relevant to graduate study and our program.

### **Program mission**

- To attract students from Alaska and beyond, of demonstrated ability or clear potential, who are willing to assume responsibility for directing their own development as writers and learners.
- To create a broader faculty of writers who are also strong teachers committed to mentoring students at a distance and participating fully in the residency sessions.
- To take advantage of Alaska's unique setting and community to include innovative opportunities for cross-disciplinary study and fieldwork.
- To retain CWLA's basic curriculum from its traditional delivery model within a flexible, demanding framework with renewed commitment to academic rigor and freedom.

### **Program goals**

- To graduate writers capable of producing publishable creative work in their chosen genres.
- To prepare students for a serious writing life and/or literary opportunities in a variety of fields.
- To offer a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural curriculum taught by an established faculty and a rotating guest faculty of writers, scientists, artists, humanities scholars, and musicians.
- To create a collaborative community of new and experienced writers from Alaska and elsewhere.
- To continue UAA's policy of inviting public participation at selected readings, presentations, and educational opportunities generated through the program's offerings.

### **Student outcomes**

- Students will develop and demonstrate a thorough understanding of historical context, traditions, and contemporary issues in form and theory by situating the content of their own work within their genre. (Assessment will be based on the quality and extent of the annotated bibliography, the quality and originality of the *thesis essay* component of the thesis, and the presentation and discussion of their work during the thesis colloquium.)
- Students will develop and demonstrate their skills in craft by producing a substantial body of original creative work and by articulating the craft elements in their genre. (Assessment will be based on the quality and scope of the creative component of the thesis, the accompanying discussion in the thesis essay, and the presentation and discussion of their work during the thesis colloquium.)
- Students will develop and demonstrate skills necessary for professional employment in literary fields such as writing and editing by planning, organizing, and presenting works or projects of literary and public value. (Assessment will be based on the design and execution of a practicum project.)

## THE PROGRAM: ACADEMIC STRUCTURE AND OVERVIEW

Unlike various summer writing programs, conferences, and free-standing workshops, a Master of Fine Arts Program grants a “terminal” graduate degree, the equivalent for artists of a Ph.D., and serves as the minimal qualification to teach at the college level. The student’s creative writing is equated with the academic research of traditional graduate degree programs.

The program has evolved from a long-standing, traditional, on-campus model to the low-residency model, in order that serious writers with demanding lives could pursue their studies without relocating.

The MFA is a 45-degree credit program that culminates in a book-length creative work accompanied by a thesis essay and an annotated bibliography. The degree is awarded based on successful completion of the following components:

- Coursework (45 total credits, including 10 credits of thesis work, 5 credits of practicum);
- Literary Practicum;
- The thesis, which includes:
  - Creative work (100 to 200 pages for fiction or literary nonfiction, and 48 to 64 pages of poetry)
  - Thesis essay (20-40 pages)
  - Annotated bibliography (between 40 and 70 books);
- Thesis colloquium.

The program is organized around two basic elements: summer residencies (workshops) and mentorships (Form and Theory courses). These, together with the thesis, form the academic structure of the MFA and exist to provide the student with the knowledge of what a literary genre is, where it comes from, and what options within it the student writer encounters when he or she writes in it. Over the course of study, students will become conscious of their aesthetic choices. Our program provides a setting and curriculum that allows writers of diverse ages and levels of experience to both write and reflect upon that writing.

**Summer Residency:** For 12 days each summer, students and faculty gather on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus for an intensive period of workshops, manuscript critiques, seminars, panels, lectures, and readings. We also make field trips to investigate the intersections between art, literature, science, and the natural world. The residency is part of the ten-week Summer Semester, the balance of which is conducted on-line by core faculty in each genre. Over the course of their studies, students enroll in three residencies for credit and attend a fourth to present a colloquium. The course designation for the residency is **CWLA Graduate Writer’s Workshop**:

**CWLA 652 (poetry)**

**CWLA 662 (fiction)**

## **CWLA 672 (nonfiction)**

**The Mentorship:** Each year, a student writer is paired with a faculty writer for a focused study of literature and writing craft. Together, students and mentors develop a reading list and a semester study plan. During the fall and spring semesters, students regularly submit their creative work and reading responses, and mentors answer with detailed comments that guide and challenge the student writer. The course designation for this work is **CWLA 690 Studies in Form and Theory**. In the student's third year, the course designation will be **CWLA 699 Thesis**.

### **COURSE OF STUDY**

In general, students will follow this annual schedule of courses:

#### **First year**

Summer Semester: The Graduate Writer's Workshop. 5.0 credits. CWLA 652/662/672.

Fall Semester: Studies in Form & Theory. 5.0 credits. CWLA 690.

Spring Semester: Studies in Form & Theory. 5.0 credits. CWLA 690.

#### **Second year**

Summer Semester: The Graduate Writer's Workshop. 5.0 credits. CWLA 652/662/672.

Fall Semester: Studies in Form & Theory. 5.0 credits. CWLA 690.

Spring Semester: Literary Practicum. 3.0 credits. CWLA 695.\*

#### **Third year**

Summer Semester: The Graduate Writer's Workshop. 5.0 credits. CWLA 652/662/672.

Fall Semester: Thesis. 5.0 credits. CWLA 699.

Spring Semester: Thesis. 5.0 credits. CWLA 699.

#### **Fourth Year**

Final Residency: Thesis colloquium. 1.0 credit, Literary Practicum, CWLA 695

Fall Semester: Finishing Thesis, 1.0 credit, Literary Practicum, CWLA 695

\* \* \*

An academic work week of fifteen to twenty hours should be enough time for students to sustain their commitment to pursue the degree. This will accrue toward the 225 hours of work that is standard for one graduate course of five credits.

\* Students may choose to register for all 5 required 695 credits during this semester. However, the university is enforcing Continuous Registration for every semester a student is working toward a degree but not enrolled in coursework. Thus, students will be charged for Continuous Registration in the summer they present a colloquium and every semester until the thesis has been approved at every level. This relatively new

(2014) 3-1-1 concept with regard to Practicum credits is designed to save students money. However, if you rely on Financial Aid, tread carefully.

## PROGRAM OPERATIONS

**Assignment of Mentors:** The summer residency is the time during which students get to know faculty, their genres and work, and to know more fully their own goals for the upcoming semester. Meeting with faculty over meals, for instance, is a chance to ask them about how they might work with you on your goals. Discussing the developing “study plan” with other students also helps to refine and direct it. With this in mind, students are asked to list their first three choices for the next year’s mentor, as well as their draft plan. Assignments are made by the director and core faculty, who strive to pair students with their top choices. Two caveats: one) we prefer for students to work with three different mentors during their three years in the program; two) we also prefer that a core faculty member be the thesis student’s third year mentor. Mathematically (and in some cases, *pedagogically*) it can’t always work this way, but that is the ideal.

Students and mentors will meet at least twice before the end of the residency to formalize the study plan, discuss a bibliography, and generally provide a base from which to proceed. Students and mentors will agree on the method of exchange (postal service, e-mail, Blackboard, audio comments, etc.) and set deadlines for the exchange of mailings during the semester.

**Semester Study Plan:** Fall and Spring semesters follow the university calendar and cover fifteen weeks each. Each semester’s schedule (syllabus) is created by the student and faculty advisor in the form of the study plan. Monthly exchanges of work between student and faculty are the norm. The Semester Study Plan also lists the dates of agreed-upon mailings and as much bibliography as you have been able to assemble so far (all readings for the first mailing should be included).

**The Coursework:** CWLA 690 designates a graduate seminar on “Form and Theory.” This course is the staple of graduate study and is taught in all three genres. The writer’s work is expressed in some *Form*, under the influence of, or in dissent with, some *Theory*. A third term, *craft*, is used often in conjunction with *form* and *theory* to describe the writer’s tools—use of language—used to create an expression in those forms.

In the first semester of graduate study, students can expect to consider their genre—poetry, fiction, nonfiction—as a literary construct, distinct from other genres. Students will generate their own creative work in that genre, of course, and will read examples of writing that the mentor and the student agree are relevant to the student’s development. This is the semester in which the ability to answer the questions “What is (for instance) *fiction* and why do you write it instead of *nonfiction*?” will be founded.

You and your mentor will begin discussing the focus of your work during the residency. Arriving at a meaningful title and descriptive subtitle will help shape the semester as it progresses. Writing clearly about what you'd like to know and do by the end of the semester (that you don't and can't at the start) is a good way to proceed. Spelling out how you will go about accomplishing these goals is important, too. Don't fear stating the obvious, as the obvious fades over time and distance. The Semester Plan also lists the dates of agreed-upon mailings and as much bibliography as you have been able to assemble so far, which should be at least half of the total. All readings for the first mailing *must* be included. Beyond those, students and advisors are free to revise the bibliography as necessary, providing it continues to meet the academic goals set out in the plan. The plan itself is the only document to which student and faculty advisor can refer as guide to the semester's work. It should be as complete, thorough, and clear as possible.

Conceiving, and writing, a good semester study plan is one of the most important aspects of the entire residency. Participating in workshops, attending lectures and readings, and meeting with potential mentors and other students should supply the student with ideas, language, and suggested readings for the upcoming semester plan. Once assigned to a mentor, at least two such meetings are recommended to facilitate both student and mentor in foreseeing potential problems and laying the intellectual groundwork for the work ahead. Ideally, students will leave the residency knowing how to proceed and confident of success.

Because course registration is not open to the public, the Program Coordinator must issue "permit overrides" to grant students access to registration. Students are not able to register until an override has been issued. The Program Coordinator will notify students by email when they are allowed to register.

**Mailings:** Monthly mailings begin with a cover, or *process*, letter in which the student describes his or her experience as a learner over the preceding mailing period. The work itself includes new creative writing, any revisions of formerly submitted pieces, and critical responses to your reading. An academic work week of fifteen to twenty hour should be enough for a student to sustain his or her commitment to pursue the degree.

The process letter is the place to say what is going well in your work and what is not, what you need help with and what you'd rather deal with alone, what is useful about your mentor's teaching and what is not. This process letter frees the rest of the student's work to focus on the subject, as opposed to, for example, the process of writing for university credit. The mentor responds to both the letter and the work with his or her own letter. At its best, this exchange can stand on its own, apart with its makers, and be read as a teaching document, a writerly apprenticeship and mentorship, something for which there is a long and distinguished history.

For each mailing, poets should submit about five to seven pages of new poems plus revisions. Fiction and nonfiction writers should send somewhere between 25-35 pages of work, or a total of 100-150 pages per semester. It is imperative that work (mailings) be turned in on time, as contracted. Failure to complete work as contracted may result in a “No Pass” grade for the semester. Mentors will respond to student mailings within two weeks (if it is turned in on time).

**The Critical Response<sup>1</sup>:** In general, a useful critical response will summarize enough about the piece to convey its content, will apply some evaluative lens, and will relate students’ reading to their ongoing development as writers. A close reading of a particular passage can be a productive entrance into the text.

The tone of the critical response is less formal than traditional academic prose, as if, say, the student were telling another student about this piece, its point, accomplishment, utility for writing studies. The connection of students’ reading to their own process (or particular project) infuses the critical response with whatever vitality it will have. In other words, the student is reading and writing primarily for him or herself, not for *The New York Times Review of Books*.

Defining new terms, or terms new to the student, is often a helpful part of this exercise. Writing “to teach someone coming behind you is often a better strategy than writing “to prove you read the book,” and is useful as critical responses collect toward becoming the substance of a thesis essay.

Three to five pages (1,000-1,500 words) is a good length in response to a book; two to three pages (700-1,000 words) to an essay; and one page (350 words) for poem-length readings.

**First-year students** will submit eight separate mailings of creative work and reading responses to their mentors (four mailings each semester).

**Second-year students** will submit five separate mailings of creative work and reading responses during the year’s two semesters. In the second semester, second-year students will register for CWLA 695 Literary Practicum and work with the program director.

**Third-year students** will complete a draft of their thesis essay during the Fall Semester. Failure to do so will result in a NO PASS grade, and will require that a student delay graduation a full year. The number of mailings and deadlines will be

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<sup>1</sup> Note on the term, *Critical Response*. We’re calling this a *critical response* instead of an *Annotation* to prevent confusion with the *Annotated Bibliography*, which is a part of the thesis process. The term *Reading Response* is inadequate for our purposes here, suggesting as it does, that *any* response, however presented and supported, carries the same intellectual weight as any other.

negotiated between the student and mentor. During the spring semester, students will complete their creative, book-length manuscript. They will submit any new work and revisions of the entire manuscript on a schedule to be determined with the third-year mentor.

**Student Self-Evaluation:** Within two weeks after the end of each semester, students will submit a memo to the mentor and the Program Coordinator describing that term's work. This three-to-five page memo should include reflections upon what they learned and the work they completed. Students should include specific insights into their own work and process, and discuss what study they'll undertake next. This self-evaluation will go into the student's file at the CWLA office.

**Mentor Evaluations:** Within two weeks after the end of the semester the mentor will complete a brief narrative evaluation describing the student's progress and identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for future study. This evaluation will require the mentor's signature as well as the student's and will be conveyed to the student electronically through DocuSign. This will be returned to the CWLA Student Support Administrative assistant in the CAS Hub who will place it in the student's electronic file.

**Summer Semester:** The Graduate Writer's Workshop (CWLA 652/662/672, depending upon genre) is a ten-week summer course conducted on-line (using UAA's Blackboard Academic Suite) that awards five graduate credits. This course includes the on-campus, 12-day **residency**. All students register for the ten-week workshop course in their genre, at the start of the summer semester. The CWLA office notifies students of registration deadlines as well as the schedule for the start of the workshop on-line. The department's core faculty conducts this course to prepare students for the summer residency by assigning various readings and writing exercises. It is the student's responsibility to register for the course on time. Failing to do so may result in delaying the student's progress for a semester.

Use the **Class Attendance Report** in the Appendix to track your participation and turn in the completed report to the Program Coordinator at the workshop's final session.

**The Literary Practicum:** During the second year, students are expected to work more independently, both in their Form and Theory work and in their practicum. The Literary Practicum, CWLA 695, provides students with opportunities for professional development in writing, publishing, or teaching by focusing on literary projects of their own devising or by collaborating with publishing, educational, or literary communities. The student is responsible for planning, organizing, and submitting projects to the program director.

The time to enroll in the practicum is the Spring Semester of the second year. You will work with your mentor in both Fall and Spring semesters; however, you will only sign up for CWLA 690 in the fall—even though the work continues into the spring semester. The ideal for the second-year 690 mentorship is five mailings spread over two semesters. At the end of Fall semester, you will receive a deferred grade, which will appear as “DF” on your transcript. A DF differs from an Incomplete in that it refers to work that *by design* could not be completed within the semester (“Credit is withheld without academic penalty until the course requirements are met.”) The remainder of your 690 work must be completed during the spring semester when you are technically signed up for the practicum. If your contracted 690 work is not completed during the spring, your DF will revert to an Incomplete (I) or a No Pass (NP). There may be reason to reverse the registration order: CWLA 690 in the spring and CWLA 695 in the fall. Pursue this option in consultation with the director and your mentor.

Signing up for the Practicum has recently become more complicated. The new recommendation is to sign up for 3 hours in the spring of the second year and to sign up for an additional hour the summer of the colloquium and the final additional hour the fall after the colloquium. This all has to do with the university’s recent commitment to enforce a practice known as Continuous Registration.

The parameters for the practicum are wide. Practicum credit will be awarded for participation in some literary events associated with the program, such as the Kachemak Bay Writers Conference and the Post-Residency Wilderness Experience. Other practicum projects may use all five credits for a single project. Whatever the project, the total time commitment remains the same: 225 hours of work (the standard for a five-credit graduate course).

**Documenting the practicum experience:** The initiating document is a proposal, in narrative form, that is approved by the director. Once the project is approved, the student will need to submit documentation from a third party, or progress reports (depending on the nature of the project) to the director. When the practicum is completed, the student will write a summarizing narrative in which the whole experience is a) described, b) evaluated in terms of goals and outcomes, and c) connected to the student’s writing life.

Practicum grades are deferred (DF) until the project is completed and documented.

## THESIS PROCESS

The coursework and summer residencies are designed to support progress toward the real purpose of the program, which is producing a book-length creative manuscript of publishable quality, and demonstrating, in the thesis essay, an understanding of craft/form/theory that situates the work within the genre. Although students will focus on thesis in their third year, every class builds toward the final manuscript. The thesis project includes these components:

- Creative work (100 to 200 pages for fiction or literary nonfiction, and 48 to 64 pages of poetry)
- Thesis essay (20-40 pages)
- Annotated bibliography (between 40 and 70 books).

**Thesis Proposal/Thesis Committee:** At the beginning of the third year (that is, during or shortly after the third residency), students will submit a thesis project proposal to their advisor. Committees are formed early in spring semester and typically will be comprised of core faculty members, with associate faculty serving as advisors (third-year mentors) in some cases. The committee will always have a core faculty member in the student's genre on their committee. The proposal will describe, in as much detail as possible, the focus of the essay and the general scope of the creative work. This ought to involve quite a bit of planning between advisor and student. The proposal is meant to be a "road map" to help students refine their ideas rather than a contract. The proposal should have a title and subtitle, an abstract, and a bibliography of relevant resources likely to be included. Although the essay may change over the course of the semester, a clear plan at the outset will enable the student to proceed with more confidence.

**Creative work:** The creative work should represent the student's best writing. It does not need to include everything written during the program. At its best, it should present a cohesive, unified body of work that aspires toward being a book. Most students will want to continue working on their creative projects after graduation in pursuit of publication, but the final thesis presented to the student's committee should be as polished and complete as possible.

**Thesis essay:** From basic concerns to more advanced ones, the thesis essay provides a venue for students to show their mastery of some facet of the writing process in context. By the third year, students should have ample experience in summarizing, evaluating, and relating readings to their own writing and growth as a writer. They will be able to contextualize their work in its literary genre. Aspects of traditional standards of the genre can best be explored through particular issues of formal craft, which will have taken shape as the student has read and written over the previous years, such as voice, narrative structure or stance, lyric sensibility, style, character development, dialogue, content, subtext, forms, metaphor and allegory, and so forth. The essay is not a traditional work of literary criticism, but rather a writerly consideration of these aspects in published works

as they relate to the student's own work. In general, these essays will be works of original reading and writing experience rather than extensive research. The essay can serve as an introduction to the student's creative work, highlighting areas of significant study and discovery that developed in the program.

**Annotated bibliography:** Annotations are short summaries of a work's main ideas along with the student's writerly evaluation of its pertinence and usefulness. The annotated bibliography demonstrates a critical understanding of the student's focused reading throughout the program and provides other students with a valuable reference as they develop their own reading lists. Each annotation should consist of one or two paragraphs, no longer than a third of a page, introduced by the book's bibliographic information formatted in MLA style. The bibliography should contain between 40 and 70 entries. These should be drawn largely but not exclusively from the student's reading list during the mentorships.

**Thesis colloquium:** This is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of their chosen form with other students. The colloquium is required during the fourth residency (at which the student's presence is not otherwise required—nor is he or she officially enrolled in the summer semester course; enrollment in Continuous Registration is necessary). Essentially this colloquium is derived from the student's creative work and thesis essay and presented as a short class. The student may also give a separate brief public reading from the creative work during an evening at the final residency (not a degree requirement). Students will receive more detailed guidance from advisors before the residency.

**Important note:** See the Graduate School's guidelines for additional thesis requirements, including writing the abstract, following MLA style, formatting, and submitting the final thesis to the dean's office and Graduate School. Their website for this information is:

<http://www.alaska.edu/graduateschool/thesis.cfm>

Additionally, please see the CWLA website for the CWLA Thesis Guidelines and other forms and documents that will assist the student through the process.

## PROGRAM PERSONNEL

**Coordinator:** Dr. David Stevenson coordinates the program from CWLA's office in the Department of English on the UAA campus. His role is to oversee the program's long-term planning in consultation with the Academic Board and to advocate for the program within the university and the community at large. (See description of Academic Board below.) Among his duties, he works with the program assistants on day-to-day operations and on organizing summer residencies.

### **Program Assistants:**

Rebecca Coffin works in the College of Arts & Sciences Hub office year-around to assist students with applications, registration, and other logistical details. She is the main public contact for information regarding the program.

Sara Kamahale works at CAS and helps organize and run all aspects of the summer residency.

Kim Eames works in the CAS Hub and assists the program in faculty-related issues.

**Core Faculty:** The core faculty of CWLA includes the year-around faculty responsible for advising students in each genre. They are: Anne Caston (poetry), Jo-Ann Mapson (fiction), and Sherry Simpson (literary nonfiction). Core faculty are responsible for teaching the on-line workshop courses that frame the summer residency. They also act as the academic advisors for all students in their genre. Core faculty may also mentor one to two students per year. Core faculty also serve on the Academic Board.

**Associate faculty:** Associate faculty teach as mentors in the low-residency program. They participate in the summer residencies and work with one to three students each year.

**Guest faculty:** Two to three guest faculty will be invited to each summer residency under the Northern Renaissance Arts & Sciences Series to expand the program's cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural scope. In general, they will give a public presentation and offer a workshop or seminar for the program's students. Guest faculty will be invited from the arts, music, science, cultural, and scholarly communities in Alaska and elsewhere. They do not mentor students.

**The Academic Board:** The Academic Board consists of all core faculty and the director. The Board reviews the policies and procedures of the department as well as the curriculum. Its members may work on special projects and review student applications and associate faculty hires. In general, the academic board functions much as any departmental faculty would.

## ACADEMIC POLICIES OF THE PROGRAM

**Grading and evaluation:** In this program, all assigned grading is either “Pass” or “No Pass.” The grade assigned for each semester (for all coursework except the practicum) is entered on-line by the mentor. Each mentor also completes a narrative evaluation describing the student’s progress and quality of work. These summary comments will be used as part of the student’s narrative transcript. Students will receive a copy of the faculty mentor’s comments at the end of each semester.

“Pass” indicates that the student has met the minimum course requirements, completed work in a timely manner, and has demonstrated satisfactory progress under the criteria established in the program’s goals and outcomes.

A “No Pass” is assigned if a student has not completed the minimum course requirements, and/or has not completed work in a timely manner, and/or has not demonstrated satisfactory progress under the criteria established in the program’s goals and outcomes.

A “DF” grade is deferred. It will be assigned when the work, by course design, is not to be completed within a given semester. Examples of this are the 690 course in the fall of the student’s second year, and the thesis hours.

An Incomplete (“I”) may be given by the instructor for work not completed within the semester. Incompletes must be completed before beginning work in the following semester. Students will not be allowed to continue to the next semester if their previous semester’s work has not been completed. All Incomplete grades turn into No Pass after one year according to University policy.

### Interruptions of Courses of Study

**Continuous Registration:** According to the UAA Catalog continuous registration is expected every semester as appropriate for the program, from admission to graduation, until all requirements for the degree are completed. To make continuous progress in the graduate program, students need to register for at least one graduate-level credit applicable to their degree program or pay the continuous registration fee to remain active in the program although not registered for any courses.

**Leaves of Absence:** This low-residency program, like others of its kind across the nation admits graduate students are making a commitment to their studies but who also, traditionally hold down jobs, have families, and live at a distance from the campus. In light of this, the Program attempts to be as flexible as possible. The program’s structure

requires associate faculty to be hired for one year, making it extremely difficult to allow for leaves of absence of less than one year. The director and Academic Board will consider requests for Leaves of Absence only under serious circumstances, such as family emergencies or medical issues. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

To apply for a leave-of-absence, students must petition the director and advisor in writing and clearly state the reasons. Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation. All petitions must be submitted in advance of the fall semester.

**Academic probation:** The Academic Board and the director may determine after reviewing a student's evaluations that it is in the best interest of the student to repeat a semester of CWLA 690 Forms and Theory. In the event a student earns a "No Pass" semester, the board and the director may place the student on academic probation, notify the student of specific issues or deficiencies, and provide a detailed explanation of what expectations the student must meet to return to graduate studies. The director and the student's advisor will work with the student to devise a plan for independent and/or remedial work the student must successfully complete before attempting to resume further studies at the graduate level.

To re-enter the program, the student must submit a petition describing the additional study. Students must also explain why they're prepared to resume graduate-level coursework. All petitions are reviewed and approved, on a case-by-case basis, by the director and the Academic Board. Academic probation will be lifted following the student's successful completion of the next full semester's course.

**Records/transcripts:** This program produces two kinds of transcripts: a traditional transcript based on course grades and credits, and a narrative transcript based on a) the faculty mentors' summary evaluations for all 690 coursework; 2) the core faculty member's summary evaluation after summer workshop courses 3) the director's summary evaluation of CWLA 695 Literary Practicum and 4) the genre advisor's summary evaluation of CWLA 699 coursework (thesis). Program graduates who need official transcripts can request them from the registrar's office; copies of official narrative transcripts will be available from the CWLA office.

**Grievances/complaints:** We encourage students and faculty to resolve difficulties informally before progressing to a formal grievance process. The student's advisor and/or the program director are always available for discussion, consultation, or informal mediation. If these methods don't resolve the issue, students must file a formal grievance in writing with the director of the program, who will review it and determine the next courses of action. The director is required to undertake any of the following steps:

- a. Notify the person of the nature of the grievance/complaint against him/her;
- b. Request a formal response, in writing, to the grievance/complaint;
- c. Mediate between the two parties in hopes of reaching a workable outcome;

- d. Take both documents (the grievance petition and the response) to the Academic Board for review if the situation is not yet resolved.

In cases of harassment (sexual or otherwise), substance abuse, and violent or threatening behavior, the grievance will be forwarded automatically to the CAS Dean's Office for resolution.

In the event that the student has a grievance with the director, the Academic Board members should first receive the complaint and, after review, the members will either recommend a resolution or may forward it to the CAS Dean's Office.

***Student Code of Conduct:*** *The M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing supports and upholds the university's policies regarding student conduct. For a comprehensive look at the Student Code of Conduct, see:*

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/deanofstudents/StudentJudicialServices/code.cfm>

Freedom of speech is at the core of UAA's values. The M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing strives to create an inclusive, respectful campus community that promotes and embraces individual differences. We believe that diversity includes understanding and respecting differences in ideas, religion, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, and socioeconomic status. We celebrate diversity in all of our educational and employment endeavors. Likewise, this program supports the University's efforts to make a place for diversity of thought and culture, and it supports Disability Services. To learn more about these policies and protocols, please visit the following sites:

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/diversity/choices.cfm>

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/dss/information/index.cfm>

***Sexual Harassment Policy:***

*According to University of Alaska Board of Regents policy (4.02.020b), sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors by a member of the campus community when the assailant uses, threatens to use, or implies that submission to, or rejection of such conduct will have an impact on employment or academic decisions affecting the victim.*

Sexual harassment includes other verbal or physical conduct related to sex when such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's performance at work or study by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in which to work, live, or learn. The Office of Campus Diversity and Compliance, the Dean of Students Office, and academic dean and director's offices can provide information and referral on issues of sexual harassment.

***Substance Abuse Policy:***

The misuse of alcohol and other drugs, including prescription drugs, by college students inhibits educational development and results in decreased productivity, serious health problems, and a breakdown of family structure. Repeated use of alcohol and drugs can lead to dependence. The abuse of alcohol and other drugs affects all socioeconomic groups, age levels, and the unborn. Possession, consumption, furnishing, or being perceptibly under the influence of alcoholic beverages, narcotics, controlled substances, or intoxicants, except as permitted by law, Regent's Policy, University Regulation or UAA rules and procedures, on campus property or at official activities of student organizations including while on student travel, is prohibited. State laws shall be observed at all private and public events conducted on University property. For more information, see Student Code of Conduct under Regulations.

The University and the Office of Student Affairs promotes the education of the whole student. The University is concerned about ways in which alcohol use and abuse may affect the primary academic mission of the institution, its overall atmosphere and the personal well being of the University community. The University has the duty to exercise the degree of care that a reasonable person would to ensure that private and public events are conducted in accordance with state law. Whether or not a person drinks alcoholic beverages is a personal decision, but individuals are held personally accountable for their actions.

***Campus Alcohol Policy:***

The primary objectives of UAA's policies and procedures on alcoholic beverages are; (a) to promote responsible behavior and attitudes among all members of the University community; (b) to educate the university community concerning the use and effects of alcoholic beverages in order to promote responsible decision-making; and (c) help individuals experiencing difficulties associated with the use of alcohol.

The Chancellor or the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs has the authority to approve events where alcoholic beverages may be served to individuals of legal age with positive identification. Approval to serve alcoholic beverages will be granted on designated premises for private University-sanctioned events for a limited period of time. The sale of alcoholic beverages at University-sanctioned events on campus is not permissible and may not be approved by the Chancellor. Personal consumption, possession, or display of beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages is prohibited in University public places. The possession of kegs and other large quantities of alcoholic beverages will be allowed only by special permission of the Chancellor.

## ***Notice of Nondiscrimination***

The University of Alaska does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, physical or mental disability, status as a protected veteran, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, parenthood, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, or other legally protected status.

When implementing this commitment, the University is guided by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Civil Rights Act of 1991; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Executive Order 11246, and Executive Order 11375, as amended; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008; Pregnancy Discrimination Act; Immigration Reform & Control Act; Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other federal laws or Alaska Statutes which guarantee equal opportunity to individuals and protected classes within our society.

The University's commitment to nondiscrimination, including against sex discrimination, applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission and employment.

This policy therefore affects employment policies and actions, as well as the delivery of educational services at all levels and facilities of the University. Further, the University's objective of ensuring equal opportunity will be met by taking affirmative action: i.e., making intensified, goal-oriented efforts to substantially increase the participation of groups where their representation is less than proportionate to their availability; providing reasonable accommodations to employees and students with disabilities; and ensuring that employment opportunities are widely disseminated to agencies and organizations that serve underrepresented protected classes.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

University of Alaska Anchorage  
Director, Office of Equity and Compliance  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
Phone: 907-786-4680  
E-mail: [uaa\\_oec@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_oec@alaska.edu)  
Website: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/about/equity-and-compliance/>

University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Director of Diversity and Equal Opportunity  
739 Columbia Circle

PO Box 756910  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6910  
Phone: 907-474-7300  
E-mail: [uaf-deo@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-deo@alaska.edu)  
Website: <http://www.uaf.edu/oeo/>

University of Alaska Southeast  
Director of Human Resources  
11066 Auke Lake Way  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Phone: 907-796-6473  
E-mail: [gcheney@alaska.edu](mailto:gcheney@alaska.edu)  
Website: <http://uas.alaska.edu/hr>

For sex discrimination claims or other inquiries concerning the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, individuals may contact the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Assistant Secretary in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights:

UAA Title IX Coordinator  
3890 University Lake Drive, Suite 108, Anchorage, AK 99508  
Phone: 907-786-4680  
E-Mail: [uaa\\_titleix@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_titleix@uaa.alaska.edu)  
Website: [www.uaa.alaska.edu/about/equity-and-compliance/](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/about/equity-and-compliance/)

UAF Title IX Coordinator  
739 Columbia Cr., Fairbanks, AK 99775  
Phone: 907-474-7300  
E-Mail: [uaf-tix@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-tix@alaska.edu)  
<http://www.uaf.edu/titleix/>

UAS Title IX Coordinator  
11066 Auke Lake Way, Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907-796-6036  
E-Mail: [uas\\_jytitle9@alaska.edu](mailto:uas_jytitle9@alaska.edu)  
<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/policies/titleix.html>

Office for Civil Rights, Seattle Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
915 Second Ave., Room 3310  
Seattle, WA 98174-1099  
Phone: 206-607-1600  
TDD: 800-877-8339  
E-mail: [OCR.Seattle@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Seattle@ed.gov)  
Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

For employment or educational discrimination, students, parents, employees and applicants for employment may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act.

Office for Civil Rights, Seattle Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
915 Second Ave., Room 3310  
Seattle, WA 98174-1099  
Phone: 206-607-1600  
TDD: 800-877-8339  
E-mail: [OCR.Seattle@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Seattle@ed.gov)  
Website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>

For employment discrimination, employees and applicants for employment may file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at the below addresses within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Federal Office Building  
909 First Avenue  
Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98104-1061  
Phone: 800-669-4000  
Fax: 206-220-6911  
TTY: 800-669-6820  
Website: <http://www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm>

For educational discrimination, individuals may file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Educational Opportunities Section, PHB  
Washington, D.C. 20530  
Phone: 202-514-4092 or 1-877-292-3804 (toll-free)  
Fax: 202-514-8337  
E-mail: [education@usdoj.gov](mailto:education@usdoj.gov)  
Website: <http://www.justice.gov/crt/how-file-complaint#three>

For employment or educational discrimination, individuals may file a complaint with the State of Alaska:

Alaska State Human Rights Commission  
800 A Street, Suite 204  
Anchorage, AK 99501-3669

Anchorage Area: 907-274-4692  
Anchorage Area TTY/TDD: 907-276-3177  
Toll-Free Complaint Hot Line (in-state only): 800-478-4692  
TTY/TDD Toll-Free Complaint Hot Line (in-state only): 800-478-3177  
Website: [www.humanrights.alaska.gov](http://www.humanrights.alaska.gov)

For discrimination related to a Department of Labor funded grant, individuals may file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Labor within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act.

U.S. Department of Labor  
ATTENTION: Office of External Enforcement  
Director, Civil Rights Center  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room N-4123  
Washington, DC 20210  
Fax: 202-693-6505, ATTENTION: Office of External Enforcement (limit of 15 pages)  
E-mail: [CRCEXternalComplaints@dol.gov](mailto:CRCEXternalComplaints@dol.gov)  
Website: <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/index.htm>

For discrimination related to a National Science Foundation funded grant, individuals may file a complaint with the National Science Foundation within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act.

National Science Foundation  
Complaints Adjudication & Compliance Manager  
Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI)  
4201 Wilson Blvd., Rm. 255  
Arlington, VA 22230  
Phone: 703-292-8020  
E-mail: [tsisley@nsf.gov](mailto:tsisley@nsf.gov)  
Website: <http://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/>