



Date: March 9, 2020

To: Cathy Sandeen, Chancellor

From: John Stalvey, Interim Provost *John Stalvey*

Cc: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
David Bowie, Professor; Chair, Department of English  
David Stevenson, Professor; Coordinator, Creative Writing & Literary Arts  
Susan Kalina, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs  
Claudia Lampman, Vice Provost for Student Success

Re: **AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings – Creative Writing & Literary Arts MFA**

I have reviewed the dean's findings, the program's response to the dean's findings, and the completed Expedited Program Review Template for the Creative Writing and Literary Arts MFA.

### **Recommendations**

My recommendation is to accept the decision and recommendations of the dean and request to delete the program after admissions have been suspended and the teach out has been completed. This program, while of high quality and success, cannot be sustained by the institution. Students interested in this field have access to an MFA program at UAF, with the difference that the program at UAF is an in-residence program. Additionally, there are 39 other low residency programs available across the US and another 12 available internationally.

### **Decision**

Recommend Deletion

**Date:** February 28, 2020

**To:** John Stalvey, Interim Provost

**From:** David Stevenson, Professor, Coordinator, Creative Writing and Literary Arts

**Cc:** John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
David Bowie, Professor, Chair, Department of English

**Program in this Review:** Creative Writing and Literary Arts MFA

## **Program Response to Dean's AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings**

### **Overview**

We are grateful for the Dean's recognition of our program's many successes and general excellence. Our reading of his findings observes a disconnect, a moment of cognitive dissonance, between his "Commendations and Recommendations" and his "Decision" to recommend deletion of the program. This raises the rhetorical question: *What are we willing to spend to maintain a highly successful program and excellent program that serves its students, the local community, and the state of Alaska so well?* If the decision to delete the program is upheld the answer to that question is: *nothing*.

We believe our best argument was made in our Expedited Program Review. To this, we will here add a few points of clarification and a proposal for going forward.

### **Student Credit Hour Production/Full-time Equivalencies**

As the Dean notes, CWLA ranks near the bottom of CAS' masters programs in student credit hours per full-time equivalent faculty. This is not surprising. Over half the instruction in the 45-credit degree program is delivered in one-on-one mentorships between students and professors. This is fixed feature of low residency models.

The real question is: how much is the gap between tuition revenue and the costs of running the program. IR data included in the Expedited Program Review indicates this figure is about \$60,000 per year.

Note, for context: program budget has been decreased by two-thirds over the last six years.

## **Workforce Ramifications**

There seems to be a disturbing sense underlying some of these proposed cuts that the arts are superfluous because they don't contribute to the workforce. That the arts don't contribute to the workforce is a gross misconception.

The arts economy of Alaska represents over 11,000 jobs and \$1.4B in value added to the state economy according to a study conducted by the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), which is produced jointly by the National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Research & Analysis and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Commerce Department. The UAA CWLA program prepares graduates for employment in this vital and growing economic sector.

Many—one-quarter to one-third—of our graduates are teachers. For example: of the thirteen full-time professors in UAA's Department of Writing, six are graduates of UAA's MFA program.

## **Program Duplication/Distinctiveness**

In his findings the Dean mentions "overlap" between the UAF and UAA MFA programs. I am not sure to what overlap he refers to here. As stated in our Expedited Review: UAF and UAA's programs are so different in structure that they do not attract the same constituency of students; as far as we know, no applicant has ever applied to both programs. We serve completely different student needs.

## **Potential Actions**

1. Continue efforts to petition the BOR to allow the program to charge a tuition surcharge of 20% as is currently done in the College of Engineering and College of Business and Public Policy. This was the directive of the Provost's response to our last Program Review (Fall 2019). This action, were it approved, would significantly close the gap between tuition revenue and program costs. Preparations for this petition were already underway when paused for the Expedited Program Review.

2. Professor [REDACTED] has offered to retire (early) if that would "save" the program. Professor [REDACTED] was one of the founders of the low-residency model here and is one of the driving forces of the program, beloved by all. She is a full professor in the Department of English working on a 60% contract. Losing her would completely close the gap between revenue and expenses. There is no question that this would be big loss, but we could probably survive it. We would then have an all adjunct faculty, but this is typical of other low-residency programs nation-wide.

Please note that we would never have made such a suggestion; this is Professor [REDACTED]'s proposal.

### **Decision**

We know that the state and the university are facing hard fiscal times. We know that these recommendations have not been arrived at lightly and that difficult decisions will be made by well-meaning people who are trying to do their best for all of us.

Please consider revising our status from “recommended for deletion” to “continued review.” We think that despite the Dean’s conclusion his findings actually make a very strong case for continuation.



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: David Bowie, Professor; Chair, Department of English  
David Stevenson, Professor; Coordinator, Creative Writing & Literary Arts

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

**Program/s in this review:** Creative Writing & Literary Arts MFA

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** None

**Campuses where the program is delivered:** Anchorage

**Members of the program review committee:**

David Bowie, Professor and Department Chair  
David Stevenson, Professor and Coordinator

### **Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role**

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and

3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The MFA in Creative Writing and Literary Arts serves that mission with graduate-level training in fiction, literary non-fiction, and poetry. Many of the creative works produced by the graduates are about Alaska and many of the students are from all corners of Alaska.

### **Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity**

At any given time, approximately 40 students are in this 45-credit program, producing an average of 10 MFA awards per year, putting it near the top of CAS's graduate programs. At the same time, however, it ranks at the bottom of CAS's masters programs in student credit hours per full-time equivalent faculty. When all costs for running the program are included, student tuition does not cover the cost, requiring CAS to allocate state appropriations for this program. The program's director has worked hard to address this issue.

### **Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success**

There is little doubt about the quality and success of the program. At its core is the summer intensive where faculty and students spend 13 days living and working together in a dynamic, brilliant community – like nothing else in CAS – that moves each student toward a finished work of fiction, non-fiction or anthology of poetry. The program is among the leaders in CAS graduate programs in the number of degrees awarded, its graduates have an outstanding record of accomplishments and accolades.

### **Program Duplication / Distinctiveness**

UAF offers an MFA in Creative Writing. Although there is overlap in the programs, the delivery methods are different with UAF's program built on students being in-residence throughout the academic year, whereas UAA's program is built on students working remotely for all by two-weeks per year. Combined, the two programs average approximately 16 awards per year, with 6 from UAF and 10 from UAA.

### **Commendations and Recommendations**

The program is commended for (a) its innovative approach where students who are dispersed geographically come together for two-weeks of collaboration and training, (b) producing far more graduates than average among CAS's masters programs, (c) the accomplishments of its graduates, and (d) working hard to narrow the gap between the program's expenses and the tuition that students pay for the program. The faculty should also be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

### **Decision**

Deletion. This is a remarkable program of which CAS is proud. However, budget cuts are forcing CAS to offer fewer programs to students in the future, especially programs where the tuition students pay does not cover the costs of the program. Although unfortunate, CAS likely cannot sustain this program beyond its current cohort of students. Program deletion requires approval by BOR and NWCCU.

**Submission date: February 11, 2020**

**Program/s in this review: Creative Writing and Literary Arts MFA in Creative Writing**

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):**

**Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage**

**Members of the program review committee:**

David Bowie, Chair and Professor, ANC

David Stevenson, Professor and CWLA Coordinator, ANC

**1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)**

The Master of Fine Arts in creative writing is a low-residency program. Students attend a 13-day residency on campus over three summers and return a fourth summer to present their theses in a colloquium. Students study at distance one-on-one with a faculty member in fall and spring semester. The program has historically accepted an average of five new students per year in each of three genres: fiction, literary nonfiction, and poetry. Thus, dating back to 2008, at any given time the program has approximately 40-45 active students (trending downward since 2018, currently at 36). Acceptance into the program is competitive: receiving about 2 to 2.5 applications per single acceptance (over last five years). About twenty percent of students are from out-of-state.

The program is designed to serve “non-traditional” students who live at home and work in their established careers. Student demographics include a typical core of half a dozen Anchorage residents, as well as students from across Alaska, including rural Alaskan communities. Currently 17% of students are of diverse cultures/races. Veteran/military enrollment also stands at about 17%. Over two-thirds of our students are women.

The program has no graduate or teaching assistantships and no tuition waivers.

Two measures by which CWLA program relevancy may be assessed are the number of different Alaskan communities in which our students reside and our numbers of annual applicants.

**A. Demographics: Serving Alaskans**

The CWLA program currently have students who are full-time residents in 12 different Alaskan communities, including Kotzebue, Bethel, Homer, Nome, Kodiak, Haines, Fritz Creek, Kasilof, among others. These are students who, if not for our low-residency program, would have to go out of state for a much more expensive low-residency program. They are nontraditional students who, for whatever personal reason, cannot temporarily abandon their current lives and move to different city for two or three years. Ultimately, they bring home a strong sense of what it means to contribute and participate in a literary community.

**B. Competition for Program Admission**

The program typically receives more than two to two and half times the number of applications more than it is able to accept for admission into the program. The program receives these applications despite the fact that it does not offer graduate or teaching assistantships or tuition waivers. Note: enrollment was limited by CAS fiat in 2018 and 2019; current application numbers are trending significant lty downward in Spring 2020.

**C. Community Collaborations**

Students and alumni have longstanding relationships with the Alaska Center for the Book, Kachemak Bay Writers Conference, the UAA Bookstore, and particularly 49 Writers, the Anchorage-based community writers organization. Graduates have served as executive directors, staff, board members, and have taught several classes

for 49 Writers. In addition the program sponsors many local literary events open to the public, including ten events well-attended events during the summer residency. All students are required to take a five credit hour Literary Practicum (CWLA 695) which very often results in these kind of alliances. The Practicum is designed individually by students and usually takes the form of project best described as community-engaged, or service learning.

**D. Extramural Funding**

CWLA works with University Advancement, the CAS Development Officer, and the University of Alaska Foundation to secure additional private funding from individuals, corporations and foundations in support of our students and programs. Support ranges from annual fund giving to event support to major gifts and more. The Visiting Writers account finances our literary guests at the summer Residencies. The Jason Wenger account, named in memory of a program student randomly murdered on the streets of Anchorage in 2008, awards cash to three graduating students every year for “excellence in thesis.” The newest foundation account, begun in 2016 in the name of Eva Saulitis, program colleague who passed away from cancer in early 2016, has quickly risen to over \$30,000. This account funds a cash award for an incoming (first year) student who demonstrates service to a community traditionally under-represented in the university.

**E. Student Goals**

Students undertaking the MFA in creative writing have few to no expectations of “employment opportunities relevant to the program.” Students come to the program to improve their writing with the goal of publication on the national level. This is accomplished with the help of faculty and peers in a structured environment that provides deadlines and requirements, critique and encouragement.

**2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend; 1400 words or less)**

**a. Overview**

All CWLA students begin the program in the summer semester and work at the rate of five credit hours per semester for nine semesters. Students present a colloquium in the tenth semester (but are otherwise not enrolled) and present their theses to the university in the eleventh semester: thus, by design, eleven semesters is the fastest a student can make their way through the program.

Over half of the program (25 of 45 credit hours) is conducted in a one-on-one mentorship between student and professor.

The low-residency program began with a core faculty consisting of two tenured faculty working at 51% and 60% FTE, and two term faculty working at 60% FTE. Of these one tenured professor (at 60% FTE) remains. The program also employs as many as 11 adjunct faculty who work one-on-one mentoring with students and who are paid per student. All adjunct faculty are working writers with distinguished publishing histories.

Program Design—the one-on-one student to faculty ratio—accounts for the many of the data sets provided in the IR Report.

**b. Program Size**

The average program size of the last seven years is 43 students. The program maintains this average as it sees approximately 10 graduates every year and strives to provide a balance of students for each program emphasis: fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

**c. Seven Year Degree Trends**

The program has seen an average of about 10 graduates per year (over the last seven years). The Graduation Efficiency Measures in IR is misleading in our case. The average terms to completion numbers do not include

## AY20 Expedited Program Review: CWLA

summer terms, during which all our students are enrolled. Thus the data in this category does not reflect the program timeline very accurately. Typically, students finish their coursework in nine consecutive semesters, including summer and then spend two more semesters presenting their colloquium and formatting their thesis.

### d. Productivity Trends

Most of the data in the Productivity Trends table results from our non-traditional low-residency design. Twenty-five credit hours (of the required 45) are taught in a one-faculty to one-student mentorship.

#### i. Enrollment/Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF)

1. Averages 18 over the seven-year period.

#### ii. SCH/FTEF

1. Averages 77 over the seven-year period.
2. Both Enrollment per FTEF and SCH per FTEF are dictated by program design. Students take a fixed number of credits, 45 at five per semester and 25 of the 45 hours are taught one-on-one.

#### iii. Seven Year Student Credit Hour (SCH) is, by design, relatively stable.

#### iv. Percent of Capacity (utilization) The average class capacity over the last 7 years is 24.7%. This is due to the fact that class capacities are much higher than the reality that most of the teaching is done one-on-one. The closest analogy would be to an Individual Study course.

#### v. Average Class Size: Reflects the individualized study model of the program.

### e. Tuition Revenue vs. Faculty List

- i. IR Productivity data shows that program spending is projected to be trending downward in expenses. In 2019 Instructional Costs were \$251,000 and full tuition revenue at \$190,000 (a spending deficit of \$61,000). This represents a significant decrease in expenses over 2015 (IR data prior to that is missing). In 2015 Instructional Costs were \$399,000 and full tuition revenue was at \$234,000 (a deficit of \$165,000). These cost savings measures were accomplished largely by replacing term and tenure faculty retirements (three part-time positions) with adjunct faculty and by eliminating the full-time program coordinator position.

## 3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

There is no formal national accrediting body for graduate creative writing programs. We are institutional members of the Association of Writing Programs and operate under the principles delineated in the AWP document: *The Hallmarks of a Successful Graduate Writing Program in Creative Writing* (2008). We track program goals and Student Learning Outcome issues through a continual set of narrative evaluations reported by both students and their individual mentor each semester. In addition, we have a lengthy (mandatory) response document for feedback about our summer Residencies. Students are in constant contact with their mentors and with their Academic Advisor. All CWLA courses are designated closed enrollment and students must have an override entered to enroll.

### Program goals

- To graduate writers capable of producing publishable creative work in their chosen genres. (UAA Core Theme 2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity)
- To prepare students for a serious writing life and/or literary opportunities in a variety of fields. (Core Theme 2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity)
- 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. (Core Theme 1: Teaching and Learning)
- To create a collaborative community of new and experienced writers from Alaska and elsewhere. (Core Theme 4: UAA Community)

## AY20 Expedited Program Review: CWLA

- To continue UAA’s policy of inviting public participation at selected readings, presentations, and educational opportunities generated through the program’s offerings. (Core Theme 5: Public Square)

### Student Learning 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.) (Core Themes 1 & 2: Teaching & Learning and Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity)
- 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.) Core Theme 5: Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity)
- 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.) (Core Theme 2: Student Success)

### A. Student Engagement

**NOTE: All students alluded to in these sections have *not* requested confidentiality concerning their UAA records.**

Students devote much of their second year to proposing, devising, and completing a literary practicum of at least 225 hours. These practica combine service learning, field placements, and community outreach in a variety of literary, arts, educational, and public venues. Groups served include veterans, seniors, prisoners, schoolchildren, novice writers, and teachers. Many projects are cross-disciplinary in nature, and some students have continued volunteering even after graduation. Among the many examples of practicum projects, students:

- Organized a two-day writing workshop, “Danger Close: Alaska,” attended by 13 current and veteran military personnel and 11 civilians, sponsored by 49 Writers, Words and War, and Alaska Humanities Forum, and taught by nationally known writers.
- Served on editorial boards or as manuscript reviewers for several literary journals and for the University of Alaska Press and High Plains Press.
- Organized the visit of poet Roger Reeves to Juneau’s alternative high school.
- Volunteered as special projects director for Alaska Women Speak, and wrote and received \$1,000 grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum.
- Served on the Publisher’s Preview Committee for children’s and young adult books at the Juneau Public Library.
- Coached middle-school students in Nome to write and produce a podcast about their experiences.
- Taught literacy classes in Kodiak.
- Led community writing workshops at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center, the 2017 Alaskan Art Education Conference, a Tucson public library, the Opportunities for Lifelong Education program, and Kachemak Bay Writers Conference, among others. (Some workshops met weekly for as long as two months.)
- Established a “Writing as Therapy” program at the Bellingham Vet Center, which was featured on KOMO News in Seattle.

### B. Selected Student Accomplishments

**Publications** (note: these publications are reputable, often national in scale, and are commensurate to creative work that counts toward Promotion and Tenure at UAA)

Nearly all of these books are based on thesis work:

## AY20 Expedited Program Review: CWLA

- A 2017 graduate's novel *Sia Martinez and the Moonlit Beginning of Everything* will be published this summer (2020) and has made several "Books to Watch for in 2020" lists.. The book was sold to Simon and Schuster in a two book deal and its rights were sold to Annapurna TV for development as a television series.
- Two students were named co-winners of the Split Rock Press Chapbook Contest. Their books *Living with Glaciers* and *The Last Glacier at the End of the World* will be published in 2020. One student is from our 2019 graduating class, the other from our first, 2011. This is the later student's fifth book since graduation.
- A 2016 graduate's book, *Open the Dark, poetry* is forthcoming from Boreal Books, Red Hen Press, 2020.
- A 2017 graduate published *Dirt and Honey*, poetry (Green Writers Press, 2018).
- A 2015 graduate published *Entangled: People and Ecological Change in Alaska's Kachemak Bay*, nonfiction (University of Alaska Press, 2018).
- A 2016 graduate published two books of poetry, *Something Yet to be Named* (Aldrich Press, 2017); *What Caught Raven's Eye* (Petroglyph Press 2018).
- A 2011 graduate published fiction, *The Dead Go to Seattle* (Boreal Books, 2017).
- A 2014 graduate published, nonfiction, *Threadbare: Class and Crime in Urban Alaska* (University of Alaska Press, 2017). Note: book was chosen by UAA/APU as a Book of the Year in 2018.
- A 2017 graduate published, nonfiction, *The Consecrated Ones: Garlen Ananian's Path* (Abril Books, 2017).
- A 2015 graduate published two books of, poetry, *Uniform* (Aldrich Press, 2016) and *Permanent Change of Station* (Middle West Press, 2018)/.
- A 2011 graduate published, nonfiction, *Find the Good: Unexpected Life Lessons from a Small-Town Obituary Writer* (Algonquin Books, 2015), their third published book.
- A 2012 graduate published nonfiction, *Pacific Northwest Road Trip* (Moon Travel, 2015).
- A 2017 graduate published fiction, *Mary's Wild Winter Feast* (University of Alaska Press, 2014).
- A 2015 graduate published fiction, *Highway One, Antarctica* (Madhat Press, 2014).
- A 2011 graduate published nonfiction, *Gaining Daylight: Life on Two Islands* (University of Alaska Press, 2014), which earned a starred review by Publisher's Weekly.
- A 2011 graduate published poetry, *The Hide of My Tongue: Ax L'óot' Doogú* (Plain View Press, 2012).
- A 2011 graduate published fiction, *Keeper of the Directions* (Euterpa, 2012).

. Their short stories, essays, poems, and reviews have appeared in numerous national, international, and Alaska journals, magazines, and newspapers. Among some 80 others, examples include:

*The New York Times, The Georgia Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, The Iowa Review, The Foreign Policy, War, Literature and the Arts, The Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment.*

Anthologies in which student work appears: *Tahoe Blues* (Bona Fide Books, 2012); *Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short-Short Stories* (Persea Books, 2012); *The Better Bombshell* (Wolfram Productions, 2013); *Adrienne Rich: A Tribute Anthology* (Split Oak Press, 2012); *Songs for a Passbook Torch: Anthology on Nelson Mandela* (Cherry Castle Publishing, forthcoming); *The Burden of Light: Poems on Illness and Loss* (Short Fuse Publishing, 2014); *The Cost of Paper: Volume II* (Black Hills Press, 2015); *Songs That Shake the Earth, Vol. 2* (Woosh Kinaadeiyí, 2015); *Denali Climate Change Anthology* (National Park Service, 2015); *Along the Shore: Poems of the Sea by Selected International Poets* (CreateSpace, 2017).

### Awards and Accomplishments

Selected Highlights include:

- A 2015 graduate was awarded the prestigious John Burroughs Medal for a "distinguished book of nature writing" in 2020 for *Entangled: People and Ecological Change in Alaska's Kachemak Bay*.
- A 2019 graduate published in the *New York Times* and *Reader's Digest* and also performed her work at Arctic Entries in Anchorage.
- A current student became a columnist at *Edible Alaska* magazine and published a new audio chapbook "How to Fold Fitted Sheet" on Flag Day Records.
- A current student was sent by Planned Parenthood as a member of a five person delegation that visited

## AY20 Expedited Program Review: CWLA

- Lisa Murkowski in Washington D.C. to speak in LBGQT issues. She also received an academic scholarship for \$4,000 from the Pride Foundation for her work in social justice during her time as student in our program.
- A 2018 graduate won first place in the Fairbank's Arts Council's Statewide Poetry Contest for "back then, ak." They were chosen to read from her work at the Graduate Hooding Ceremony in December 2018.
  - A 2017 graduate received a Pulitzer Travel Award to research his essay on the Japanese tsunami that would eventually be published in *Longreads*.
  - A 2011 graduate has received The Governor's Award from the Alaska State Council for the Arts 2017 for Distinguished Service to the Humanities.
  - A 2018 graduate's play was accepted into the 2017 Last Frontier Theatre Conference, and they received a Women Writer's Fellowship from Oregon Literary Arts.
  - A 2015 student's thesis, *Entangled: People and Ecological Change in Alaska's Kachemak Bay* was UAA's nomination for the Western Association of Graduate School's Distinguished Thesis Award.
  - A 2012 graduate won the 2014 Willa Award in creative nonfiction for her essay collection (book), *Gaining Daylight*, sponsored by Women Writing the West.
  - A 2011 graduate's novel, *The Sunflower Wife*, was a runner-up in the 2012 The AWP Award Series for the Novel, a national contest that attracted at least 10,000 entries.
  - A 2014 graduate's novel *Dispatches from the SpEd Department* was a finalist in the 2017 Knut House Press annual contest.
  - A 2014 graduate won the Nicole Blizzard Short Story Contest.
  - A 2017 graduate was the 2015 Grand Prize winner of the Anchorage Daily News creative writing contest (and the winner of the Nonfiction Open to the Public category).
  - Poems, essays, and fiction by several students have been named as finalists or runners-up in literary contests at *Fourth Genre*, *Ninth Letters*, *Nimrod*, *The Iowa Review*, and the Next Gen Indie Book Awards, among others.
  - Three graduates have been awarded individual artist grants from the Rasmuson Foundation to complete a children's opera, a novel, and a poetry manuscript.
  - Three graduates each won \$5,000 Literary Awards from the Alaska State Council on the Arts in 2017, and an additional alumnus was awarded one in 2016. In the four years this program has existed seven of the twenty awards have gone to our alumni, faculty, or program guests.
  - At least three students have been nominated for prestigious Pushcart Prizes based on published work in literary journals (one of them twice).

We also gauge program success by tracking careers and other activities in the literary arts undertaken by current and former students. Among these accomplishments are:

- Managing editor and associate poetry editor of *Cirque: A Literary Journal for the North Pacific Rim*.
- Producer of "Writers' Showcase," aired on 360 North public media, featuring the work of Alaska writers read by actors.
- Writers-in-Residence at Innoko River Wildlife Refuge and at Andrews Forest Spring Creek Project in Oregon.
- Senior editor at *Seattle Met*.
- Faculty at North Words Writers Symposium and Kachemak Bay Writers Conference.
- Columnist for *Woman's Day* magazine.
- Founder and head of Upwords Creative public relations and editing firm.
- Vice president on the 49 Writers board of directors.
- Book reviewer for *The American Alpine Journal*.
- Founder of VP & D Publishing House and owner of the bookstore The Writers Block
- Guest editor of the Island Institute's journal *Connotations*.
- Panelist at the 2016 Native Poetry Symposium.
- Founding editor of Pebblebrook press.
- A collaboration of three graduates on "Wordsworthing," a podcast, blog, and literary magazine.
- Panelists at the annual AWP national conference for writing programs and writers.
- Presenter of paper originally written for the thesis essay at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Conference.
- Creative nonfiction editor of *War, Literature, and the Arts* journal.

**4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)**

Although both UAA and UAF offer MFA degrees in creative writing there really exists no “duplication.” The program at UAF is a traditional full-time “residential” program; students move to Fairbanks, often from out of state, and tuition waivers and graduate assistantships are available. Our program, as has been described, is a low-residency program; students work at the rate of 5 credit hours per semester over nine semesters. They live at home with their families, work their jobs with minimal disruption to their lives. The two programs serve two completely different constituencies with our low residency delivery model serving less-traditional, adult learners. In conversation with the MFA program coordinator in Fairbanks we know of no applicant who has applied to both our programs; we serve different needs.

**5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)**

Strengths	MFA students demonstrate the clearest strengths of the program with their high level of production, theses projects, practicum projects, publications, and awards. The program serves a non-traditional Alaskan student population, students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and a high percentage of military/veteran students. Student practica benefit local, often underserved, communities. Literary readings in Anchorage serve the public square during the summer residency and are well-attended. The CWLA MFA program successes may be seen in our high application numbers, high student retention and graduation rates, and by the very high numbers of publications and awards garnered by our students and alumni.
Areas of Concern	The relatively high cost of the program to the university, though trending favorably, is the greatest concern CWLA faces. (Addressed in following box.)
Action	As a result of our recent Program Review (2018) and one year follow-up review (2019) the Provost and CAS Dean have directed us to petition the Board of Regents to allow the program to charge a tuition surcharge of 20% as is currently done in the College of Engineering and College of Business and Public Policy. Because so much (25 of 45 credit hours) of our curriculum (25 of 45 credit hours) is delivered in a one-to-one basis between student and faculty, our program has fixed expense that generating more tuition does little to ameliorate. Our tuition is generally lower when compared to other MFA programs in the nation. A tuition surcharge would in effect close the already shrinking gap between tuition-generated monies and the cost of instruction.
Other Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our program faces minor curricular challenges ahead due to our recent shift from a “core faculty” to an over 90% adjunct faculty.</li> <li>• Applications for our incoming class (Summer 2020) are the lowest by far that we have experienced in the history of the program. We need to find ways to rebuild public confidence in the continued viability of the university.</li> </ul>