

## Academic Program Assessment Report

### M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing & Translation

#### *Assessment Tools*

As outlined in our Academic Program Assessment Plan, the Program in Creative Writing and Translation uses the following assessment tools for student learning outcomes:

- A combined thesis defense and oral examination.
- A yearly review of each student's academic progress toward the M.F.A. degree.
- An indirect review of our graduates' professional success via published works, national program rankings, and anecdotal evidence.

#### *Assessment Results*

Thesis defense/oral exams: As of May 5, 2017, all but one of the M.F.A. students eligible to graduate this spring had successfully written and defended a thesis manuscript that was deemed publishable by their thesis committees. The one outlying student, through consultation with her thesis advisor, opted to continue developing her thesis manuscript and to defend it early in the fall 2017 semester. Through oral examination, the committees were satisfied that graduating candidates were leaving the program with a broad knowledge of literature and technique.

Yearly academic review: In May, the director and assistant director of the M.F.A. program examined each student's academic transcript. Of 40 students, all showed satisfactory progress toward their degrees.

Graduate success: In its latest ranking of M.F.A. programs, *Poets & Writers* placed the University of Arkansas M.F.A. program 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation (out of 150 programs) for job placement and 18<sup>th</sup> for post-graduate fellowships. Among the many accomplishments of our graduates this year,

- Margaret McMullan (1989) won the 2017 Independent Press Award for Best Anthology for *Every Father's Daughter*.
- Tony Tost's (2004) *Damnation* got a series pickup by USA Network. He created the show and wrote the pilot and will serve as an executive producer.
- Chris Tamigi (2016) won a PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for his work on Mauro Covacich's *In Your Name*.
- The Best New Poets 2016 anthology featured alumni Jen Jabaily-Blackburn, Cara Dees, and Jen Siraganian.
- Jacob Shores-Arguello (2010) won the inaugural Canto Mundo Poetry Prize for his second collection, *Paraiso*.
- Megan Blankenship (2016) won an Individual Artist Fellowship for poetry, awarded by the Arkansas Arts Council: \$4,000

- Beth Ann Fennelly (1998) was named Poet Laureate of Mississippi.
- Sandy Longhorn (2003) won the 2016 Porter Fund Literary Prize.
- A reboot of the classic film *The Magnificent Seven* was released with screenplay co-written by Nic Pizzolatto (2005).
- Elizabeth Harris (2000) won the 2016 National Translation Award in Prose for *Tristano Dies* by Antonio Tabucchi.
- At least three recent graduates were admitted to PhD programs in creative writing.
- Mary Angelino (2011) accepted a tenure-track job at College of the Canyons in Valencia, CA.
- Adam Clay (2005) accepted a tenure-track job at the University of Southern Mississippi.
- Tobias Wray (2012) accepted a tenure-track job at the University of Idaho.
- At least nine books were published by alumni this year through distinguished publishing houses such as Simon & Schuster and Counterpoint Press.
- And hundreds of poems, stories, novels, essays, and translations by graduates were published by well-known presses and in journals such as *Poetry*, *The Oxford American*, *The Southern Review*, *The New Yorker*, *One Story*, *Measure*, *The New York Times*, and *Ploughshares*, among others.

### *Use of Results*

Almost without exception, students in the M.F.A. program graduate within four years. These students produce publishable manuscripts, and many go on to prestigious post-graduate fellowships and residencies, as well as careers in teaching and writing.

In the past year, the Program in Creative Writing and Translation began teaching ENGL 2023, Creative Writing I, as a core course. Our director and assistant director devised an assessment process for the course. The resulting data showed that our student instructors are satisfactorily teaching the course according to stated student learning outcomes and are therefore gaining valuable teaching experience for their professional resumes.

This year, our program established a literary journal, *The Arkansas International*. M.F.A. students comprise the editorial board, through which they're gaining significant professional experience in editing and publishing.

Carrying on the work of our M.F.A. curriculum committee last year, our academic advisors continued advising students toward the goal of committing their fourth (final) year to coursework that focuses on the development of publishable manuscripts and that prepares them for post-graduate publication and careers.