



The  
MFA  
Program  
for Writers

WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

Program Handbook

*Revised February 2023*

MFA Program for Writers  
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*Warren Wilson College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679- 4500 for questions about the accreditation of Warren Wilson College.*

*Inquiries about Warren Wilson College, such as admission requirements, financial aid, educational programs, etc. should be addressed directly to the College and not to the Commission's office. The Commission is to be contacted only if there is evidence that appears to support an institution's significant non-compliance with the accrediting agency's standards.*

## WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

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Since its establishment by the United Presbyterian Church in 1894 as the Asheville Farm School for mountain boys, Warren Wilson has undergone significant changes: to a coeducational high school when combined with Dorland-Bell School for girls; in 1942 to a junior college; and in 1967 to an accredited, four-year college, offering the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Set within one of the most biodiverse regions in North America, Warren Wilson has an environmental ethic anchored in the early history of its land and promised in its mission. Students, faculty and staff honor these traditions and, through the College's educational program, apply formal commitments to sustainability in their work, service, and academics. Warren Wilson was one of the first institutions in the nation, in the 1970s, to pioneer an environmental studies major.

Since 1967, Warren Wilson College has come far as a four-year college. The curriculum has greatly expanded as enrollment has increased. Students can now choose from a wide variety of majors, concentrations, and minors, plus honors and pre-professional programs. Although the College has remained primarily an undergraduate institution, in 1981 it added a graduate program, the MFA Program for Writers, that has become nationally acclaimed with many award-winning faculty and alumni. The Master of Arts in Critical Craft Studies program was added in 2018.

The College's recent past also has been distinguished by the forging of numerous partnerships with the broader community including The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, Buncombe County Schools and, on the edge of campus, North Carolina Outward Bound School and Verner Center for Early Learning. In 1996 the College and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians became official partners in the Cherokee Archaeology Field School on campus near the Swannanoa River. More recently, Warren Wilson and the City of Asheville signed an agreement stating their intent to work together toward climate partnership goals

Warren Wilson College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Warren Wilson College and its graduate divisions, the MFA Program for Writers and the Master of Arts in Critical Craft Studies, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender or gender identity, age, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation, in the administration of its educational policies, recruitment or admission of students, scholarship, grant or loan programs, employment procedures, training programs, promotion policies, or other related personnel practices.

## MFA PROGRAM FOR WRITERS

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The MFA Program for Writers, designed and initiated by Ellen Bryant Voigt at Goddard College in 1976, was the first low-residency graduate program in writing in the country and came to Warren Wilson College in 1981 as the school's first graduate division. Intended to provide an alternative to the residential classroom and workshop format, to abolish false delineations between emerging writers and the traditions which they enter, and to put the student at the center of both the curriculum and the institutional structure, the Program has been continually revised to make it increasingly attentive to the development of each student writer, while maintaining academic rigor within a supportive context. The program embraces diversity of all kinds and aims to foster a learning environment which is generous, respectful, and inclusive. (See *Program Policy: Academic Community*.)

The four-semester course of study toward the Master of Fine Arts degree is carried out by alternating on-campus residency sessions and six-month semesters of independent study under close faculty supervision. The residencies, ten days in early January and July, are attended by all faculty and students. Readings, lectures, classes, workshops, meetings, conferences to plan the independent study, and the informal exchange of the residencies, encourage a strong sense of community and give direction for the semester. Students will find a non-competitive atmosphere in the classes and team-taught workshops, and the low student-faculty ratio (never more than 5:1) ensures personalized attention. The Semester Project, designed during residency, is supervised through correspondence between student and faculty supervisor at regular contracted intervals. The individualized course of study and thorough engagement of faculty, occurring within the context of one's ongoing adult life, make the Program useful to writers at all stages of their development.

## ADMISSION

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The Program's commitment to active teaching and active learning is unshakeable. While the balanced study of literature and the craft of writing makes its graduates attractive candidates for teaching positions, no one should apply to the Program for employment purposes. Likewise, while our graduates publish their work widely, no one should apply seeking only an editor for projects in progress. Our goal is not to supply credentials or technical support but to assist students with their education and their development as writers.

Students are admitted to the Program primarily on the basis of an original manuscript. The manuscript should indicate sufficient quality of work, level of commitment and sophistication of skills to suggest the applicant is ready for graduate work in writing and literature. These examples of poetry or fiction are read by faculty panels to determine not the likelihood of publication but rather a sense of energy, excitement in the language,

ambitious intent, and some understanding of form. Manuscripts are not returned but material from them may be used for workshop discussion if the student so chooses. Revised drafts of this work may also be submitted to the supervisor as part of the first semester exchange; it's very common, however, that a student may be advised to set aside an existing work-in-progress and focus on new projects, new goals. The primary focus should rest on work undertaken in the Program, under supervision. (See *Residency, Semester Project* and *Guidelines: Project Preference Form*.)

The application should give evidence of preparation in literature, a background in the humanities, the ability to do independent study and an applicant's readiness to receive and use criticism. Publication and workshop experience are given consideration but not weighted heavily. Transcripts should be sent from the student's school(s); the Program usually requires an earned undergraduate degree, although exceptions may be made if the manuscript and other materials are particularly strong (see below). We also require two letters of recommendation from persons who are familiar with the student's writing and able to assess the student's capacity for independent study and congeniality in a close-knit community. Two very important elements of the application are the brief essays required, one in response to some recently-read piece of literature, and the other offering an assessment of one's own writing, reasons for wanting to enter the Program, and a general sense of goals.

An application fee is required before an application is processed and it cannot be waived nor refunded. Manuscripts are read by members of a faculty panel and discussed, in conjunction with the other application materials, in committee with Academic Board representatives. Applications to the Program are processed upon receipt of all materials and considered by the Board twice a year (March and September). Financial aid is based on need as determined by the FAFSA; application for aid does not enter into admissions decisions (see *Financial Aid Guidelines*).

In making admission decisions, the Board tries to gauge compatibility between the student's abilities and the Program design, but does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender or gender identity, age, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation. Comments made in response to application manuscripts are intended for the Program's internal use and are not made available to applicants, nor can the Program supply individual evaluations to applicants denied admission.

Although some writers work in more than one form, our experience has shown that students benefit enormously from concentrating on one genre during their tenure in the Program. Thus, applicants are accepted to do work in either poetry or fiction; if they have submitted manuscripts in both, and are accepted in both, the student must choose the genre for study.

Students are admitted into the Program for a specific residency (January or July of a given year). Occasionally, applicants may be waitlisted by the Program and offered deferred admission into the subsequent semester. In some cases, deferred entry is

requested by the admitted student; such requests are typically honored, but a student may delay matriculation no more than a single term. In either case, upon acceptance, the student pays a non-refundable enrollment deposit, which ensures a place in the residency and is applied toward the first semester's tuition.

The Program accepts a small number of students without Bachelor's degrees whose applications are exceptional, taking into account the amount, nature and quality of undergraduate study; the ability to analyze and articulate response to literature; previous experience with criticism of their work; and indications of a sophisticated understanding of language and form. At the same time, many students enter the Program having already completed graduate degrees; neither these degrees nor graduate credit toward a degree can earn the student acceleration through the Program and thereby reduce the minimum four semesters required for the Master of Fine Arts. The growth of each student's writing is our primary concern, and we believe two years a necessary period for manifest change and development.

Student participation in the Program is expected to be continuous: i.e., consecutive semesters of study. However, special accommodation is made for students who are able to pursue their studies only during alternate semesters. Requests for this study option may be indicated on the application or made subsequently by petitioning the Academic Board.

The program also offers a Residency-Only opportunity for a writer of color each semester. The Holden Residency Scholarship, funded by Friends of Writers, Inc., covers tuition and residency fees for an eligible writer of color in either fiction or poetry who is contemplating entering an MFA program in creative writing and wishes a fuller introduction to what our program offers and entails before applying. The Holden Residency Scholar will participate fully in all events of the MFA Program for Writers' ten-day residency, attending lectures and classes, workshop and bookshop sessions, and readings. They will also have a one-on-one conference with a faculty member. No graduate credit is earned, independently or toward a subsequent degree, during this residency-only engagement. Writers who have already earned an MFA in creative writing are ineligible. The application fee is waived for Holden Residency Scholars who subsequently apply for full-program admission.

## RESIDENCY

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The intensive residency period every six months (January and July) serves as a principal component of the Program and the foundation of a supportive, committed community. Required to initiate a semester's study, it provides the student a breadth of exposure to balance the more specific focus of the Semester Project; time to prepare the study plan with the help of a faculty supervisor; counseling and support for developing an individualized curriculum; and a source of stimulation for the ongoing work. The summer residency is held on the Warren Wilson campus; the winter residencies take place at Blue Ridge Assembly in nearby Black Mountain, NC.

During the first day of the residency, new students meet with the Director and Board Chair for orientation, are introduced to the faculty, and join returning students for a reception, dinner, and the first of the evening readings by faculty and graduates. Throughout the residency, the Director and Board members meet with students grouped by semester to discuss expectations for the term: deadlines, guidelines for preparing the essay and thesis manuscript, instructions for completing evaluation forms, and details about the exchange with the supervisor. In addition, the Director meets individually with each student entering the essay or final semesters, to review and approve the Semester Project plan. Much informal counseling also takes place among students and faculty members, and, because the group is small, new students quickly become acquainted with both the members of the community and the procedures of the Program.

Each day, discussion classes and lectures are offered, by faculty and graduating students, in literature, poetics and the craft of writing. Students receive descriptions of the courses in advance of the residency, select the classes that interest them (in either genre), and do preliminary reading. Students and faculty attend all the lectures, which often set a general focus for the residency session. Classes serve as introductions to a body of work or an element of craft that students often pursue in greater depth during the semester project; preparation for and participation in a Bookshop seminar is required, but students are also urged and expected to attend as many classes as their energy allows. A student works closely with only one faculty member each semester but during residency has access to all faculty in class or lecture, readings, workshops, and small seminars.

Students develop analytical skills, serve as resources for one another and receive a broad range of responses to samples of their writing in the daily workshops. Students are able to choose among genre-specific workshops (poetry, fiction or novels) and a "cross-genre" group that discusses both forms. Each group includes 8-10 students from every stage of progress through the Program. Faculty members rotate among the standing groups in pairs—this way, no single aesthetic can dominate, and any individual student has a chance to work with most of the faculty. Each student submits worksheet material, which is distributed to workshop members in advance of the residency for careful preparation of the texts. Worksheets are also made available, through password-protected entry, on the Program's website. (See *Guidelines: Worksheets/Workshop Participation.*)

Approximately two weeks before the residency, students submit a Project Preference Statement describing briefly but clearly their goals for the writing they will do in the upcoming semester. Faculty review these statements carefully in conjunction with the worksheets they also read carefully in advance of the faculty meeting early in the residency during which pairings are determined. Faculty draw on the worksheets and project preference forms, in the group discussion, to assess whether he/she/they can be supportive of and helpful to a particular project, and make a collective judgment about appropriate supervisor selection. Each faculty member works with no more than five students (the average faculty load is three) during the non-resident term. The Program is concerned that every student work with a faculty supervisor enthusiastic about the student's work who feels able to make a contribution toward the pursuit of that student's goals and the development of the student's talent. It is assumed that each student will work with a different faculty supervisor each term.

On campus, students meet at least twice in individual conferences with the faculty supervisor, preparing the Semester Project Study Plan. Faculty familiarize themselves with the student's file before the second conference, but students should not expect faculty to read and comment on additional manuscript material during the residency. Students are reminded that they are extremely valuable resources for one another and should not restrict themselves to faculty response.

During the residency, each student prepares a written narrative account, describing preparation for and participation in the session. This first evaluative occasion helps the student summarize and articulate useful ideas for future writing and reading. The Residency Evaluation (familiarily known as “the Green Sheets”) also helps the Program plan the next session and enters into the student's record the work done in literature and contemporary letters, practical criticism and creative writing.

Students are required to participate fully in the entire 10-day period for award of both the semester's credit and the degree. Continuing students unable to attend the residency must request a Leave of Absence; a new semester cannot be undertaken without an initiating residency. On the other hand, students taking a Leave of Absence semester who wish to participate only in the residency are welcome to do so when there is space for them in workshops and classes.

Readings and lectures are open to the public, but other activities and facilities are for students only. Students may not be accompanied to the residency by spouses, friends or family; the residency period is an extremely exciting time but requires the student's full attention. Other information, including accommodations, is included under *Brief Guide to Residency*.

## SEMESTER PROJECT

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The second essential component of the Program is the semester project. During the residency session, each student is assigned a faculty supervisor and devises a six-month independent study project with a written study plan; the project is carried out in the six months off-campus with frequent, thorough dialogue through correspondence (and often tapes, conferences, email and other supplementary methods) with the supervisor. The heart of the exchange is detailed written response to the student's manuscripts. Each student is entitled to six exchanges with the supervisor and must complete at least five (see *Award of Credit*). Students should be prepared to invest a minimum of 25 hours per week in the Semester Project.

It is expected that the primary focus of the project in all terms except the Essay Semester will be the student's own creative work. The student should submit poems or fiction to the supervisor at least every three weeks, respond to criticism and general suggestions, and submit revisions of the material. During the residency, the student and supervisor agree on goals for this work—as specific or as general as seems appropriate for the particular student in any given semester—and methods or approaches they will try. In

the first two semesters, emphasis is placed on generating new writing, and on goals that will increase the writer's capacity for strong work as well as provide the tools needed for that work. If an entering student has in mind to complete an existing project, this request should be clearly articulated on the Project Preference Form. The Program faculty, however, may feel that the student will be better served by putting aside that project until other kinds of study have been explored, and will assign a supervisor accordingly. The Program places its concern for the student's education, and development as a writer, over the production of individual polished pieces, until the student begins the preparation of the thesis manuscript.

It is the Program's belief that a writer's gifts are enlarged and deepened through broad reading and careful thought about that reading, and these form a crucial part of every semester's plan. The selections for the reading list, like the determination of Project goals, derive from the needs and background of the individual student and the advice of the supervisor but usually include broad reading in contemporary letters, a focused examination of a major writers who may serve as models, and some exploration of the traditions of literature. Although methods of reporting the reading are generally flexible, each Project should produce a bibliography of about 20 books of poetry, fiction or critical prose, with approximately 12-15 annotated entries.

Annotations are, put simply, one writer writing to another writer about a third writer's work. They are meant to be neither scholarly efforts nor book reviews but analysis of texts—3-4 double-spaced pages of clear English prose in which the student examines some aspect of craft in a poem, story, or novel. In the first semester annotations help to develop skills in discursive prose and argumentation; in the second, to locate a fruitful essay topic; in the third, to generate rough draft material for the essay, or test the completed essay's premises on additional texts; and in the final, to prepare for the residency class. Throughout, annotations contribute to the ongoing dialogue between student and supervisor and should be submitted with each exchange. When appropriate (see *Guidelines: Critical Inquiry*), the Program may allow a student to articulate responses to reading in a working journal, rather than through formal annotations, but the expectations for any semester—even "extra" semesters—include critical inquiry.

The dialogue that develops between the student and faculty supervisor in their written correspondence is another important component of the study. In letters, the student offers thoughtful accounts of the process of the study and receives detailed responses to the work submitted. After becoming familiar with the student's work and habits of work, the faculty member makes new suggestions for reading and study as well as specific comments for revision. Thus, during the residency and throughout the six-month semester, the student develops an important apprentice-colleague relationship with an experienced writer and teacher, and the solitude necessary for any art is balanced by supportive direction and response.

Semester Project Plans are submitted to the Program Office by the final day of each residency. Midway through the semester, students and supervisors report on progress toward the project goals and the efficacy of the student-supervisor relationship. Midterm Evaluations are not part of a student's permanent file but are used by the Director strictly

for counseling purposes. Students and faculty are also encouraged to contact the Director, MFA Project Manager: Academic Affairs, or Board Chair at any time during the semester if they feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied with the student-supervisor exchange.

At the term's end, the student and the supervisor submit narrative reports of the project, with proposals and recommendations for future study in the Program. These Semester Project Evaluations, accompanied by the annotations, log of the correspondence, bibliography of all books read during the term, and sample of the semester's revised imaginative writing (averaging 20-35 pages of fiction, 10-15 poems), must be received in the Office approximately four weeks prior to the next residency period (see current Deadline Schedule). A fine is assessed for failure to meet the deadline; students also risk losing credit and/or advancement. Copies of the evaluations must be exchanged by the supervisor and the student; these become part of the student's official record and, subsequently, the narrative transcript (the Program does not use grades).

Upon successful evaluation, recommendation of credit by the supervisor, and review of all submitted materials by the Director, the project is awarded 15 hours of graduate credit which will cover in varying proportions the study of literature, contemporary letters, applied criticism and creative writing (see *Award of Credit*). Prior to the next residency session, students are notified about the award of credit by letter, in which the Director may also counsel the student about the upcoming term. All decisions to withhold credit are reviewed and confirmed by the Academic Board.

Throughout the semester, the faculty supervisor serves as the chief mentor for the project. Some students take advantage of local resources as well, such as workshops and readings, or maintain close contact with peers in the Program. However, this cannot be substituted for work on their writing or for exchange with the faculty supervisor.

### Sample log entry by student:

<p><b>Packet #3: Emailed 9/20/13:</b>  4- pp. letter, single-spaced  Log and bibliography  4 pp. annotation, Enjambment in Gluck's "Nest"  3        ½ pp. annotation, Repetition in Kelly's "Song"  4        pp. revised annotation (Syntax and Line in Carl Phillips)  3 new poems ("New Year," "Fall," "Night Wind")  2 revised poems ("Message," was "Sorrow"; "Elegy")</p> <p><b>Received, 9/23/13:</b> <i>By email:</i>  5- pp. letter, ss 9/25/13 <i>By priority mail:</i>  Written comments on all work  Scansion exercises (6 pp.)  Photocopied essay by Frost</p>	<p><b>Packet #4: Emailed 4/12/14:</b>  8 pp. letter, double-spaced Log  and bibliography <i>Two</i>  <i>annotations:</i>  -- Shifting POV and narrative momentum in <i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i> (4 pp.)  -- Use of Dialogue in 2 Welty stories (dbl. anno., 8 pp.)  20-pp. new novel excerpt (chapter 3)  15-pp revised story, "Marlebone" (was "Ashes")</p> <p><b>Received 4/15/14</b>  6 pp. letter, ss  Embedded commentary on all fiction and annotations  --Woolf, "Modern Fiction" (attached essay)</p>
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## AWARD OF CREDIT

The MFA Program for Writers offers a Master of Fine Arts degree for which a minimum of four successful semesters of study and five residency sessions is required. A successful semester and the resulting 15 hours of graduate credit require documentation (in the narrative evaluations, bibliography, log and work sample) of the following:

- full participation in the residency period initiating the semester (classes, workshops, readings, individual conferences, and the required Bookshop seminar);
- a completed reading list of at least 15-20 books of poetry, fiction or analytical prose;
- at least 12-15 bibliographical annotations (3-4 double-spaced pages)--or, with the Director's approval, for a post-essay semester, 50 pages in a working journal—which demonstrate clear English prose and close engagement with texts;
- substantial products resulting from active study of creative writing—i.e., at least 8-10 poems and/or thorough revisions of poems, or 2-3 completed pieces of fiction and/or thorough revisions of fiction;
- 5 or 6 full exchanges with the supervisor in reasonably regular intervals, not only reporting on work done but engaging in consistent, sustained dialogue over the term.

The essay semester, requiring in-depth study of a few well-chosen texts, may mean a smaller number of books read and no annotations; preparation of the thesis manuscript may limit production of new pieces of poetry and fiction; or, a faculty member may suggest fewer annotations and several comparative essays. However, the above expectations pertain as general guidelines for each semester in the Program, and are commensurate with the minimum time commitment of 25 hours per week of study.

Credit is granted only in 15-hour units; students who meet only a portion of the expectations, or participate fully in the residency but fail to complete the semester project, will receive no credit for the partial work. On the other hand, if the above guidelines have been met, credit may be granted for semester projects which undertake one or more degree requirements, fail to meet the criteria for approval of those requirements, and thus fail to secure advancement toward the degree.

Decisions about the award of credit are made in the month between the end-of-semester deadline and the subsequent residency. Students must complete all exchanges with faculty and submit required materials by the specified date (see current Deadline Schedule); failure to do so will result in a \$100 processing fee, will delay decisions about advancement toward the degree, and may jeopardize the award of credit.

Students who work within the structure of the Program longer than the minimum 4 semesters and either request or are advised to take an "extra semester," in which they do not advance toward the degree, nevertheless study within the Program structure, utilize faculty resources, receive graduate level credit, and therefore must meet the usual expectations for creative work, critical inquiry, dialogue with the supervisor, and thoughtful evaluation. Completed semesters of this nature in no way impugn the status, or success in the Program, of students in good standing. Students may undertake more than one extra semester, but the degree must be completed within 7 years after matriculation.

## DEGREE ESSAY

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The Program believes that broad reading of successful examples of a genre, analysis of the elements of craft in those examples, and articulation of one's response to them are crucial to a writer's development of their own talent and skills. Part of what we teach is how to examine work from the "inside"—how to read as a writer. Our primary teaching tool, and thus a component of each semester project, is the annotated bibliography: short analytical treatments of some aspect of a work read. As a student progresses through the Program, these critical occasions are deepened with the preparation of the Degree Essay and the Graduate Class. In addition to sharpening critical skills, the essay semester occasions familiarity with another literary form, a practicum in structure, and an opportunity to develop a clear English prose style. Most particularly, this sustained attention to another's work, at a distance not always available with one's own pieces, provides valuable insights for the student writer's unique creative project.

Upon successful completion of two semesters in the Program, the student, supervisor and Director assess readiness to undertake the degree essay. Preparation requires not only sophistication in the reading and response to it, and facility in writing clear prose, both made evident in the annotations; the student must have begun selection of an essay topic of interest, challenge, and relevance to his/her/their own creative work.

A small number of students—particularly those without a strong background in literature and writing—ask to take an "extra" semester before beginning the essay or may be required by the Board to do so. Another term of broad reading, critical inquiry, annotations, and even brief (7-10 pages) comparative essays, helps develop the prose skills, the facility with argumentation, and the focused topic necessary for success in the essay. Although it does not advance the student toward the degree, a completed semester of this nature is eligible for credit and in no way impugns the status, or success in the Program, of students in good standing (see *Academic Probation* and *Financial Aid*).

In the second half of the second semester, students should begin planning the degree essay by formulating, with the supervisor, three viable relevant topic proposals, which will be submitted with the final evaluation. A specific focus for the essay should evolve from the student's needs, interests and background; it is assumed that the student will also address his/her/their own creative work during the conclusion of the essay semester, and in our experience this is most easily accomplished when the essay itself involves investigation and thoughtful consideration of issues which are relevant to the student's own writing at this stage. Essay topics are refined during the residency preceding the essay semester in individual conferences with the faculty supervisor and with counseling by the Director. Topics are then reviewed and approved by the faculty body before the end of the residency session. It is expected that students will work closely with their faculty supervisors in drafting and revising the degree essay, and the usual criteria for semester dialogue are requisite for essay approval (see *Award of Credit*). The Project Study Plan should incorporate deadline schedules and methods of exchange, and must be approved by the Director. Subsequent substantial changes in the topic or packet schedule require approval from the Director.

The Degree Essay must be fully documented using MLA. In addition, it should observe margins of 1 inch on all sides, with pagination in the upper right-hand corner; the cover page should follow the template (page 16) but without director signature. However, students are not expected to write a research paper nor in any way conform to some traditional notion of an academic thesis. The best essays are those which clearly reflect a writer passionately engaged with the work of (an)other writer(s), with that engagement reflected in close textual analysis. Minimum expectations are:

- A 30-50-page analysis of an element of craft in one or more admirable texts;
- The coherent development of an argument, in clear prose, with supportive evidence from the chosen texts.

Approved essays are made available in the Program Office's digital archive and suggest the variety of approaches possible.

At the essay deadline (*see current Deadline Schedule*), the student is responsible for submitting the essay to the supervisor and two copies to the Program Office. Students wishing, or advised, to request an extension should contact the Director. A \$100 late fee is assessed, and no essay may be processed later than 2 weeks before the end-of-semester deadline. On receipt of the essay, the Office forwards one copy to the faculty member assigned as second reader who submits to the Program Director within two weeks an overall assessment of the essay, a recommendation concerning its approval for Degree Requirements, and any suggestions for revision that seem appropriate. At the same time, the Supervisor submits a report on the essay to the Program Office, and every essay is read by the Director.

Upon recommendation by the second reader, the supervisor and the Director, the Academic Board will accept the essay in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. If there is disagreement among readers, a Board member will also review the essay. If the essay is not subsequently approved, the student will not be able to advance into the final semester nor submit a petition to graduate; however, the award of credit for the semester is made as an independent judgment at the term's end and does not require acceptance of the essay.

Occasionally, the essay may be granted a "provisional acceptance" to indicate that it has met the criteria for substance and style but failed to attend fully to matters of mechanics or presentation. This designation is used **ONLY** when the Board believes the student can successfully complete corrections within two weeks. Provisionally accepted essays must be revised and resubmitted before the end-of-semester deadline and incur a \$100 fee.

Degree essays may not be undertaken, completed, submitted for approval or substantially revised without faculty supervision—i.e., in an unsuccessful semester, during a leave of absence from the Program, or in June and December.

## PETITION TO GRADUATE

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Upon completion of at least three successful semesters in the Program and acceptance of the analytical essay, students may enter the Final Semester, which focuses primarily on creative writing and the completion of an original manuscript of poetry or fiction. Again the project will include a reading component (approximately one book per week), and the student is expected to continue to engage in critical inquiry, articulating 12-15 well-considered responses to texts. Usually, the focus of the reading is the Graduate Class topic, which is derived from issues in the student's creative work, in collaboration with the supervisor, and approved by the Director. Some alternative format for articulating insights in the analysis of craft, such as the use of a working journal rather than annotations, may be advised by the faculty supervisor and approved by the Director.

The major thrust of the final semester is the completion, refinement and ordering of the thesis material. Students will be collecting, revising and reflecting, with their supervisors, on pieces written during their tenure in the Program as well as generating new poetry or fiction for the manuscript. And discovering the shape of the volume begins with the selection of petition material. In the second month of the final semester (see current Deadline Schedule) the student must submit to the Office, in duplicate, the petition to graduate, which will consist of approximately one-third to one-half of the final manuscript. The sample--completed poems, stories or novel chapters selected from pieces written during the entire tenure in the Program, including leave semesters--should represent the student's best work, work that has been seen through revision. Criticism received from previous supervisors and colleagues could serve as a guideline for this selection, but the pieces should also be discussed with and approved by the supervisor in the semester's first exchanges. The petition is then sent to an outside, impartial reader who is an experienced, published writer of fiction or poetry, and also familiar with the Program standards and expectations. The Academic Board will draw on both the outside reader's assessment and the student's record in its decisions. The accepted petition will form the core of the thesis manuscript.

Clearly, a student whose thesis material has not progressed sufficiently to warrant petition approval would be unable to complete the project by term's end. Thus, while rejection of the petition does not preclude credit for the semester, it does mean that the semester will not advance the student toward the degree—hence, an "extra semester." A student whose petition has been denied may take one, but no more than one, additional semesters, and may submit one, but no more than one, subsequent petitions.

With approval of the petition, the student's semester project is confirmed as appropriate to the goals and expectations of a Final Semester in the Program. Progress toward these goals is assessed again by the supervisor approximately one month before the semester's end; following that affirmation, graduation is anticipated at the conclusion of the next residency, pending successful completion of the semester (see *Award of Credit*) and all degree requirements for imaginative and analytical work (see *Award of the Degree*).

## THESIS PREPARATION

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The Thesis Manuscript is a collection of original work (poems, short stories, chapters of a novel) generated or substantially revised while in the Program. Review and selection of products from the various semesters is an important part of the project, but the student is also encouraged to continue to write new work for the volume: discoveries from the degree essay are made manifest in this new material. Students reach a culmination of their work by not only bringing the texts to the highest possible degree of precision and grace, but also undertaking a new form: i.e., the larger formal structure created by the juxtaposition and order of disparate poems or stories, or, for novelists, the smaller formal structure resulting from synopsis and excerpt.

The Program focuses on quality rather than quantity; yet, the thesis needs to be substantial in order to represent the student's work, to make some whole larger than its individual parts, and to indicate mastery of a literary genre. As a guideline, the Academic Board defines "larger form" with minima of 30 pages of poetry and 70 pages of fiction; and has established maxima of 50 pages of poetry or 100 pages of fiction to enforce the rigor of exclusion, selection and choice. Derived from customary thesis length, these parameters may, when incompatible with an unusual form of creative work or with pedagogical concerns, be waived by the Director upon appeal by the student. The graduating student is expected to work closely with the faculty supervisor to revise and shape the Thesis Manuscript. Toward the end of the semester, the student must attend to three important deadlines (see Deadline Schedule):

- receipt by the supervisor of a complete draft of the Thesis Manuscript for final instructional, editorial and evaluative comment, and the comprehensive bibliography (MLA format) for review;
- receipt by the Program Office of the student's Semester Project Final Evaluation, semester bibliography and annotations, and the comprehensive bibliography of all works read in the Program;
- receipt of the Thesis Manuscript by each member of the student's Thesis Interview Committee and (two copies) by the Program Office.

The final version of the manuscript must be carefully edited for typographical or grammatical error; all margins 1 inch; pagination in the upper right-hand corner. It should be brought to the residency, to be placed in the archives of the Warren Wilson Library as part of the Thesis Volume, which should be submitted with a binder clip or in a box:

- title page, with provisions for approval signatures (see next page)
- table of contents
- manuscript (poems, short stories, excerpt from a novel)
- a clean, legible copy of the degree essay (listed in the contents table as an Appendix, in order to avoid repagination)
- a comprehensive bibliography, prepared according to MLA format, of all works read during the student's tenure in the Program, whether for semester projects or residency participation (see *Guidelines: Documentation*).

**SAMPLE TITLE PAGE OF THESIS MANUSCRIPT**

TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT  
A Collection of Poems/Short Stories  
(or, Excerpt from a Novel)

by

Student's Name

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Fine Arts degree

MFA Program for Writers  
Warren Wilson College

Month 00, Year

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Director

Date

## THESIS INTERVIEW

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Following approval of the petition, final semester students work with a supervisor to complete the Thesis Manuscript. During the final residency, graduates continue to respond to the work of their peers, and receive response to their own work; however, this occurs not in workshop, which focuses on individual pieces in progress, but in the Thesis Interview. The Interview is an hour-long conversation among the student, a faculty member familiar with the student's work, and two fellow graduates in the same genre. Specific personnel are designated by the Director.

At semester's end (see Deadline Schedule), the graduating student emails the completed manuscript, semester bibliography, comprehensive bibliography and Semester Project Evaluation to the supervisor. One week later the student emails to the Office the evaluation form, annotations, semester and comprehensive bibliographies, as well as the thesis, which replaces the usual "work sample." The student should also mail one hard copy to be available for circulation during the residency. The comprehensive bibliography should list all works read during the student's tenure in the Program, and prepared according to MLA format (see *Documentation Guidelines*); it will be entered—in full and as submitted—into the graduate's transcript. The original typescript of the manuscript, comprehensive bibliography and analytical essay, should be brought to the residency for placement in the Library archives (see *Thesis Preparation*).

This same deadline also holds for receipt of the manuscript by each of the three other members of the Interview Committee. In the interim between end-of-semester and residency, Interview Committee members will read the manuscript and prepare to respond to it during residency. (Meanwhile, each graduate has been assigned as a participant reader for two other graduates' interviews as well, and will be receiving those manuscripts.) Response may be both descriptive and evaluative, noting thematic concerns or stylistic characteristics and making appropriate recommendations for revision or future work. The author is free to query Committee members about problematic parts of the volume, decisions made in its compilation, or plans to expand the thesis into a full-length volume. The intention of the interview, however, is not editorial; the graduate should expect to join a conversation about the evolution and nature of his/her/their aesthetic, salient influences, formal issues raised by the thesis volume, and even the relationships between the thesis and the analytical essay or graduating class (see *Thesis Interview Guidelines*).

Following the Interview, but before the end of the residency, students may make corrections in the Thesis Manuscript before submitting it for placement in the Library archives.

Subsequent to the residency, graduates will receive official confirmation of completion of degree requirements and award of the degree; this replaces the usual end-of-term letter from the Director awarding credit and advising on the upcoming semester.

## FINAL RESIDENCY

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The Program's low-residency design is particularly effective in helping students develop habits of reading, analysis, composition and revision while immersed in an on-going adult life. Part of the process involves a gradual shift from apprenticeship, with its natural dependence on a mentor, to increased self-confidence, self-sufficiency as writers, and relationships with peers. That shift is formalized during the final residency with the Thesis Interview, Graduate Class, and Graduate Reading.

In the final semester in the Program, the Semester Project goals include preparation of the Graduate Class. During the initiating residency, the student and supervisor select a class topic which is then approved by the Director; the topic may evolve from the focus of the essay semester, or may undertake new concerns and interests, but in all cases should be pertinent to the student's own creative work and the issues it raises. The point of the requirement is less teacher preparation (though this is an attendant benefit) than another occasion for analysis and articulation (see *Graduate Class Guidelines*).

Approximately two months prior to the final residency students are asked to submit a course proposal—a brief description of the class format and goals, with any recommended reading—which is then approved by the Director and distributed to the other students in the pre-residency mailing. The class is assigned an hour on the schedule and is considered an important part of the residency curriculum. Following the final residency, the graduate is emailed copies of the evaluations submitted by peers and a faculty member assigned to attend for that purpose. The faculty evaluation of the class is also reproduced as part of the graduate's narrative transcript.

In addition to sharing the discoveries of their reading and analysis, graduates are also given the opportunity to demonstrate their achievements in creative work. One copy of the Thesis Manuscript, submitted to the Office at the term's end, is displayed during the final residency. The graduate also prepares a brief public presentation of poems or fiction (Graduate Reading), selected from the Thesis Manuscript.

Each residency culminates in the Graduation Ceremonies and celebration. On the final afternoon, the community, usually joined by the graduates' family and friends, gathers for the last of the Graduate Readings, the award of diplomas by the Warren Wilson President and Provost or their delegates, a formal dinner, and a dance.

## AWARD OF THE DEGREE:

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The Master of Fine Arts degree is granted by the Warren Wilson College President and Board of Trustees upon recommendation of the Academic Board and the Graduate Council. The student's record must indicate the following:

- full participation in 5 residency periods;
- successful completion of 4 semester projects, with a minimum accumulation of 60 graduate credit hours;
- work with at least four different faculty supervisors;
- broad reading in literature and contemporary letters, as demonstrated by a bibliography of usually at least 50-60 entries;
- the ability to articulate cogent response to work by other writers, as demonstrated every semester in brief bibliographical annotations or their approved equivalent; in the degree essay; and in the graduate class;
- a substantial 30-50-page analytical essay of intelligence and insight;
- a Thesis Manuscript of poetry or fiction of high quality;
- objective assessment of that manuscript by faculty and peers in Thesis Interview;
- a graduate class taught to peers during a residency period;
- a public reading from the creative thesis during residency.

Since the Program does not use grades, the student's transcript study is a condensed narrative account of his/her/their participation in residency and semester projects, drawing on evaluative materials supplied by the student and appropriate faculty. The Graduation and Transcript fee covers the cost of preparation; copies may be obtained from the Warren Wilson College Registrar at a minimal fee. Graduates submit a written request (see the program website) for a transcript and allow up to three weeks for its preparation.

Warren Wilson College is fully accredited by the Southern Conference of Colleges and Schools. Generally the academic community recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as the highest ("terminal") degree in writing. Most PhD programs in literature accept MA or MFA degrees for advancement toward the PhD, and graduates applying to other graduate schools or to employers find their narrative transcripts well-received.

The Master of Fine Arts degree at Warren Wilson represents the study of literature from within—from the writer's, not the critic's or the scholar's perspective. It is not, however, a technical or narrow degree. The reading and analytical components of each Semester Project, and the variety of classes and workshops offered during the residency periods, provide opportunities for unusually well-integrated humanities-based curricula—without sacrifice of direct manuscript work and criticism. Thus, qualifying for the Associated Writing Programs' "studio/research" designation, the Warren Wilson Program prepares its graduates especially well in literature as well as in writing, and this balanced preparation makes its graduates attractive candidates for teaching positions. However, the current job market is such that there are more credentialed applicants than jobs for them, and competition is fierce. At the university level, publication and national reputation are often more important than degrees. No one should be encouraged to enter or continue in the Program if the writer is seeking the degree mainly for employment purposes; no program should pretend to offer guarantees. The Program goal is not to supply credentials but to assist students with their writing and their education.

Because of institutional membership with the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, students are able to access AWP's online resources, which are managed specifically for writers, teachers, students and educational institutions concerned with the craft and teaching of writing. AWP is supported by grants from the Literature Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, by corporate, foundation and institutional donors, and by the memberships of over 500 college and university writing programs and thousands of individual writers and teachers. AWP covers current openings in writing at the college level and elsewhere; listings are updated regularly at [https://www.awpwriter.org/careers/job\\_list](https://www.awpwriter.org/careers/job_list). A complete description of the AWP services and benefits can be found on their website, or through contacting them directly at [www.awpwriter.org](http://www.awpwriter.org).

Graduation from the Program, however, need not mean severance from its principles and support. See the *Post-Graduate Semester* and *The Extended Community* for post-graduation resources.

## PROGRAM FACULTY

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The MFA Program for Writers offers students a close, sustained relationship—an apprenticeship—with masters in the field: excellent writers who have stature within the writing community and significant publication credentials, who are actively involved in their own art, and who are concerned and conscientious teachers.

In hiring, the Academic Board tries to avoid the restriction of any one “school” or aesthetic, to locate faculty with a range of experience, and to offer a variety of resources every semester (usually 8-12 supervisor choices for each student poet or fiction writer). The Program follows the same non-discriminatory practices it adheres to in Admissions, and it provides a faculty diverse in background, identity, experience, and aesthetics. All faculty appointments are for visiting, part-time positions, which accommodate admissions decisions rather than the other way around; that is, there are no standing, continuous contracts which dictate fixed admissions quotas—the Program is free to accept as many, or as few, strong applicants as it finds for any given semester. This also allows the Program the opportunity to consider balance and variety when staffing for each semester.

At the same time, the Program recognizes, in hiring, the unique nature of low-residency teaching and the value of continuity of tone and expectation. Usually, about half the teaching staff for any given semester are writers with long experience in the Program—a “core” faculty group familiar with the Program format and standards, as well as the evolving work and development of current students. Another third of the staff may be writers who teach with us less regularly, and the remainder are new faculty.

Each faculty member participates actively in the residency period—teaching a class or lecture, co-directing workshops, giving a reading, participating in Thesis Interviews, evaluating a graduate's class, meeting individually with students to plan semester projects, and remaining accessible to other students and faculty for informal exchange. During the six-month semester, faculty will be contracted to supervise 2-5 independent study projects, serve as a Degree Essay second reader, and evaluate the student's progress twice during the term.

Supervision of projects includes willingness to help students plan these projects as well as frequent and thorough exchange through correspondence. Having familiarized themselves with the student writing samples in the worksheets, faculty arrive at the residency prepared to participate actively in the decisions that assign a supportive and helpful supervisor to each project. Since the assignments are made early in the residency, there is ample time in the session for the supervisor to read the student's file, to meet the student in two individual conferences, and to make suggestions for the project's focus, reading list, writing goals, essay or class topic and thesis preparation as appropriate. Together the student and faculty schedule the correspondence, which will include:

- up to 6 student submissions over the course of the semester (a letter, new creative work, revisions, annotations or essay draft sent every 3-4 weeks);
- prompt, attentive response to submitted material (normally, within 3-4 days);
- detailed criticism of student work in a letter and/or annotated directly on the manuscripts;
- dialogue with the student about current reading, work habits, questions of form and aesthetics, etc.;
- suggestions for reading, revision, essay or class topic, and any other academic issue arising as the project evolves

Twice during the term, supervisors submit written evaluations of the project and a log of the correspondence to the Program Office. At mid-term, the report is informal: it does not become part of the student's record but is used by the Director as an early-warning system if the student seems to be in danger of not completing the semester or if there are difficulties in the student-supervisor relationship. At the term's end, a faculty member's detailed narrative assessment of the student's progress and written products forms the basis of award of credit, recommendations for further study, and/or award of the degree. The Faculty Semester Evaluation enters the student's record, along with materials supplied by the student, and is made available to subsequent supervisors and the Academic Board; the supervisor also sends a copy of this report to the student, and a portion of it is quoted in the student's transcript.

If at any time during the semester a student feels the supervisor is negligent, the Program Office should be notified immediately so that the Director and Academic Board can determine with both parties how the situation can best be remedied.

Renewal of contracts depends on Program needs, assessment by students of the faculty member's performance, and mutual convenience of the Program and the faculty member. The Program has the right to evaluate faculty in relation to Program goals in its decision to renew employment. The contract for a new faculty member prohibits rehiring for the immediately succeeding semester: this policy enforces an evaluation period.

The Program encourages students to be direct and candid in assessing faculty performance—in their Residency, Mid-term and Semester Project Evaluations—and considers these responses very carefully in its hiring decisions. At the end of each residency period, student evaluations of faculty classes are copied unsigned and sent to the faculty member. While student Mid-term Evaluations are not made available to supervisors, the Director may draw on them to counsel a faculty member where appropriate, and at term's end, the student sends a copy of the Semester Project Evaluation to the supervisor. These structures combine with an unusual camaraderie—faculty are housed together, conduct workshops together, and attend one another's lectures—to provide an ongoing orientation toward the goals and procedures of the Program, consistent with the Program's commitment not merely to the presence of outstanding writers but also to a student's continual access to outstanding teachers.

## Program Faculty Past and Present

<p><b>GODDARD (1976-80):</b>            Don Bredes            Rosellen Brown            Mary Carter            Raymond Carver            George Chambers            Frank Conroy            Stephen Dobyns            Richard Ford            Louise Glück            Barbara Greenberg            Donald Hall            Robert Hass            David Huddle            John Irving            Faye Kicknosway            Thomas Lux            William Matthews            Heather McHugh            Lisel Mueller            Craig Nova            Steve Orlen            Joyce Peseroff            Richard Rhodes            Michael Ryan            Jane Shore            Stephen Tapscott            Ellen Bryant Voigt            Geoffrey Wolff            Tobias Wolff</p> <p><b>WWC (1981 - ):</b>            Betty Adcock            Dilruba Ahmed            Kaveh Akbar            Joan Aleshire            Agha Shahid Ali            Debra Albery            Mia Alvar            A. Manette Ansay            Lesley Nneka Arimah            Elizabeth Arnold            David Baker            Dean Bakopoulos            Sally Ball            Wilton Barnhardt            Rick Barot            Andrea Barrett            Charles Baxter            Don Belton            Karen Bender            Oliver B Bendorf            Adria Bernardi            Marianne Boruch            Robert Boswell            Brian Bouldrey            Karen Brennan            Jamel Brinkley            Sharon Bryan            Liam Callanan            Gabrielle Calvocoressi</p>	Christine Castellani Maud Casey Lan Samantha Chang Sonya Chung Robert Cohen Michael Collier Peter Cooley Justin Cronin Charles D'Ambrosio Stacey D'Erasmus Tracy Daugherty Carl Dennis Stuart Dischell Stephen Dobyns Judy Doenges Anthony Doerr Stephen Dunn Stuart Dybek Kim Edwards Stanley Elkin Lynn Emanuel Susan Engberg Elizabeth Evans B.H. Fairchild Roger Fanning Carolyn Ferrell Angela Flournoy Chris Forhan Daisy Fried Carol Frost William Gass Jeremy Gavron Reginald Gibbons Louise Glück Barbara Greenberg Linda Gregerson Lauren Groff Judith Grossman Jennifer Grotz Allan Gurganus Jane Hamilton Matthea Harvey Ehud Havazelet Brooks Haxton David Haynes Robert Hemenway Laura Hendrie Edward Hirsch Tony Hoagland Jonathan Holden Caitlin Horrocks Marie Howe C.J. Hribal Vanessa Hua David Huddle Allegra Hyde Mark Jarman Amaud Jamaul Johnson Diane Johnson Joyce Johnson T. Geronimo Johnson	A. Van Jordan Donald Justice Sally Keith Brigit Pegeen Kelly Pagan Kennedy Christine Kitano Laila Lalami Victor LaValle Mary Leader Dana Levin Larry Levis Sandra Lim Margot Livesey James Longenbach Thomas Lux Thomas Mallon Maurice Manning Kai Maristed Michael Martone Aireal D. Matthews Grace Dane Mazur Nina McConigley Campbell McGrath Erin McGraw Heather McHugh James McMichael Christopher McIlroy Kevin McIlvoy James McManus T.M. McNally Pablo Medina Ana Menendez Claire Messud Lisel Mueller Antonya Nelson Susan Neville Alix Ohlin Matthew Olzmann Steve Orlen Peter Orner Gregory Orr Paul Otremba Tom Paine Michael Parker Alex Parsons Janet Peery Kathleen Peirce Lucia Perillo Katie Peterson Carl Phillips Rowan Ricardo Phillips Connie Porter Francine Prose Hanna Pylväinen Nahid Rachlin Claudia Rankine Barbara Ras Roger Reeves Frederick Reiken Martha Rhodes Mary Elsie Robertson	Marilynne Robinson Robin Romm Kenneth Rosen Mary Ruefle Richard Russo Michael Ryan Ira Sadoff Jason Schneiderman Steven Schwartz Rion Amilcar Scott Nicole Sealey Alan Shapiro Solmaz Sharif Jim Shepard David Shields Grace Shulman Joan Silber Marisa Silver Bennett Sims John Skoyles Tom Sleigh Jane Smiley Dave Smith Dominic Smith Anna Solomon Patrick Somerville Marcia Southwick Irini Spanidou Debra Spark Megan Staffel Maura Stanton Susan Stewart Darcy Steinke Ruth Stone Sarah Stone Mary Szybist Peter Taylor Jean Thompson Daniel Tobin Pimone Triplett Peter Turchi Chase Twichell Douglas Unger Kirstn Valdez Quade Jean Valentine Laura van den Berg Ellen Bryant Voigt Connie Voisine Chuck Wachtel Diana Wagman James Wilcox Alan Williamson Eleanor Wilner Anne Winters Geoffrey Wolff Renate Wood Susan Wood Robert Wrigley Monica Young C. Dale Young Dean Young
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## ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

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The MFA Academic Board and the Warren Wilson College Graduate Council ensure the consistently high quality of graduate study in writing within the Program. In addition to the Administrative personnel (Director and two Project Managers), the Graduate Council is permanently residential at the College campus. Comprised of the MFA and MA in Craft Studies directors, the MFA Academic Board Chair, Dean of the Faculty, Provost, at least one member of the English and Arts Department and representatives from the various curricular divisions of the College, the Council convenes twice a year. Its primary responsibility is to maintain consistency among the policies and procedures of the graduate programs and compatibility between the objectives of the programs and the College.

The Academic Board includes the Board Chair and Vice Chair(s), and may include both former and active members of the Program faculty. In its charge are the Program's unique educational design, its twin commitments to rigor and support, and its on-going national reputation. The Board meets twice a year, just prior to each residency, and through email as needed; its members are also consulted regularly throughout the semester by the Director. Its duties include:

- hiring and evaluating administrative personnel;
- reviewing applications and making admissions decisions;
- approving degree essays and petitions to graduate;
- recommending degree candidates to the Graduate Council;
- arbitrating questions of credit;
- advising the Director on hiring and evaluation of faculty;
- assisting the Director during residency periods, particularly with student counseling;
- approving the Program budget, salary and fee schedules;
- determining policy and procedures for the Program;
- reviewing requests for Policy waivers; and
- representing the Program in meetings with the Graduate Council, related committees, and Administrative officers of the College.

*See MFA ADMINISTRATIVE HANDBOOK for detailed responsibilities and procedures.*

## PROGRAM POLICY

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*Policy exemptions are granted only by petition to the Academic Board.*

### **I. Academic Community**

The students, faculty, and administration of the MFA Program for Writers are committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive, generously supportive environment. We value and actively seek to increase diversity in our student body and faculty as well as in our teaching and texts. All voices are welcome and honored here.

As a community of writers, we acknowledge the power of language and our responsibility to use that power prudently as serious practitioners of this craft. We endeavor to be mindful and respectful of all perspectives and experiences in both our personal interactions and in creative and critical work. We strive to empower all writers and to amplify voices that have historically been muted. We are enriched by our vibrant differences and united in our common passion for our art.

### **II. Academic Freedom**

MFA faculty, staff, and students are granted the protection of academic freedom extended to all members of the College academic community: the right to examine all pertinent data, to question assumptions, to be guided by the evidence of scholarly research, to pursue individual vision in imaginative works, and to study and teach the substance of a given discipline.

### **III. Academic Honesty**

The policy on academic honesty at Warren Wilson College clearly states:

*For the sake of personal integrity and for maximum educational benefit, students must be scrupulously honest about their work. Turning in work which is wholly or in part not their own material without clearly and accurately giving the credit to the originator [is a] reprehensible form of dishonesty in a scholarly society. It is the responsibility of all students to make every effort that their actions are above reproach in the performance of work that is supposed to be original. Students who knowingly allow others to copy or use their work are also culpable.*

Precisely accurate claims and attributions must begin with application materials and extend to all work submitted to a faculty supervisor or in partial fulfillment of degree requirements. Any suspected violation should be reported to the Program Director, who will conduct an investigative review and make a recommendation to the MFA Academic Board. Consequences may range from denial of credit to required withdrawal from the Program, depending on the severity and frequency of the violation. Students retain the right to appeal the Board's decision by petitioning the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the College.

#### **IV. Academic Probation**

Academic Probation indicates that a student's standing in the Program is under review by the Academic Board, and that the student may not assume automatic continuance in the Program in subsequent semesters. Failure to prepare for and participate fully in the residency, failure to complete the semester, failure to advance toward the degree, failure to meet deadlines, violation of policy or forfeiture of enrollment deposit, may incur Academic Probation—or, during Academic Probation, may result in withdrawal from the Program. In addition, bank loans, employer reimbursement and all institutional financial aid may be jeopardized by Academic Probation.

#### **V. Admissions**

- A. An application fee is required before an application is processed, and the fee cannot be waived nor refunded.
- B. Financial aid is based on need as determined by the FAFSA and does not enter into admissions decisions.
- C. The Academic Board tries to gauge compatibility between the applicant's abilities and the Program design, but does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, creed, national origin or disability.
- D. Comments made in response to application manuscripts are intended for the Program's internal use and are not made available to applicants, nor can the Program supply individual evaluations to those applicants denied admission. Likewise, application manuscripts will not be returned.
- E. Students are admitted into the Program for a specific residency (January or July of a given year). The Program does, on occasion, offer deferred admission to qualified applicants after the next semester's openings have been filled
- F. Upon acceptance, the student pays a non-refundable enrollment deposit, which insures a place in the residency and is applied toward the first semester's tuition. Students admitted into a particular semester may, upon remittance of the enrollment deposit and before the deposit deadline, request that their admission be deferred to the following semester. Students requesting more than one semester deferral will be required to reapply.
- G. Neither completed graduate degrees nor graduate credit toward a degree can earn the student acceleration through the Program nor reduce the four semesters required for the Master of Fine Arts degree.
- H. Non-matriculating students attending under the auspices of the Holden Residency Scholarship may apply for full-program admission, but there is no guarantee of subsequent admission.

- I. Students admitted in one genre may participate in residency classes in other genres but must complete degree requirements in the genre (poetry or fiction) to which they were admitted.

## **VI. Affirmative Action**

- A. As an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer, Warren Wilson College is committed to developing a campus community that reflects the full diversity of the human experience and, as such, welcomes all applicants. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race color, national origin, age, disability, religion, sex, familial status, sexual orientation, and reprisal.
- B. Recruitment for any hiring in the MFA Program shall include appropriate efforts to encourage the candidacy of members of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and members of other groups underrepresented among MFA personnel. Such efforts might include advertising in publications of special interest to members of underrepresented groups, notification of appropriate candidates listed in directories of minorities and women, etc. Special efforts shall also be made to pursue the candidacy of such individuals and to increase their inclusion in finalists to whom we extend contracts.
- C. Recruitment for any full-time staff positions shall be based on an open and public search process. Openings shall be advertised in appropriate publications and should indicate the College's equal employment opportunity/affirmative action policy. Warren Wilson College requires MFA staff search committees to be constituted by WWC employees.

## **VII. Billing Procedures ~ *Please consult current fee schedule***

- A. A non-refundable enrollment deposit is due upon acceptance into the Program and is applied to the first semester's tuition. The deposit must be received approximately ten days after admission and guarantees the student a single room, faculty resources, and a place in workshop, classes, readings, and any other residency events.
- B. Continuing students must reserve a place in each residency and ensure participation in each upcoming semester by payment of a nonrefundable enrollment deposit, as well as settlement of any past due fees, library fines and the like, approximately three months prior to the residency. The deposit is made to confirm a particular registration; if a student requests a change in status after the deadline, the deposit may not be applied to Residency Only participation or a subsequent semester.
- C. The residency fee and at least half of the semester's tuition, for new and continuing students, must be paid by Registration, which begins the residency period, via the MyWWC portal. Registration fees must be paid in order to receive a supervisor assignment. Payment of the remaining half of the tuition can be deferred the deadline in March or September (*see the Deadline Schedule*); however, no student will be allowed to register for a new semester unless all outstanding accounts are paid.

- D. Graduating students must pay all residency and graduation fees prior to the final residency or at Registration which begins the residency period. Diplomas and transcripts will not be issued until all accounts are paid.
- E. Students attending the residency only prior to a leave of absence must pay the LOA fee by the enrollment deadline, and residency-only tuition and the residency fee by the Registration deadline.
- F. Miscellaneous fees (for transcripts, Leave of Absence status or processing of late materials) should accompany requests made to the Office for these services.
- G. Any student who is delinquent in payment of bills may be subject to cancellation of registration and immediate termination of access to faculty resources.

### **VIII. Credit, Advancement and Tenure**

- A. Credit is granted only in 15-hour units. Students who fail to participate fully in the residency, who fail to complete the semester project, or who meet only a portion of the expectations for a successful semester, will receive no credit for the partial work.
- B. Full participation in the residency period includes the following requirements:
  - workshop/bookshop preferences, workshop manuscript formatted according to the guidelines, bookshop annotation, signed Project Preference Form, signed Semester Project Plan and Residency Evaluation Form (“Green Sheets”) all received in the MFA Office by the stated deadlines;
  - advance preparation of workshop or Thesis Interview materials;
  - all workshop and bookshop sessions, and evening readings;
  - faculty lectures, and faculty and graduate discussion classes;
  - 2 appointments with faculty supervisor for joint preparation of the Semester Project Plan;
  - semester counseling sessions and appointments as appropriate;
  - payment of all fees.
- C. Students who fail to meet the requirements for residency participation will not be allowed to go forward into the Semester Project. If previously in good standing, the student will be allowed a Late Leave of Absence and placed on Academic Probation, with corresponding loss of nonrefundable deposit and appropriate late fees; if already on Academic Probation, the student will be withdrawn from the Program.
- D. Decisions about the award of credit are made in the month between the Final Deadline for receipt of Semester Project Evaluations and the subsequent Residency. Students must complete their exchanges with faculty and submit evaluative materials by the specified date (see current Deadline Schedule); failure to do so will result in a \$100 processing fee, delay decisions about advancement toward the degree, and jeopardize the award of credit.

- E. Credit or fulfillment of degree requirements (essay, petition, thesis or class) is granted only on the basis of materials also submitted to the faculty supervisor as part of the semester's regular exchange in a minimum of 5 exchanges occurring at reasonably regular intervals throughout the semester. (See "Degree: Award of Credit" for specific expectations.)
- F. Students who need or prefer to work toward the degree at a pace less rapid than the minimum requirement may either request or be advised to take an "extra semester" which bears no responsibility for attending to degree requirements but must nevertheless meet Program expectations for award of credit. Semesters of this nature in no way impugn the student's status or success in the Program when the student is in good standing (see Academic Probation). Students may take more than one extra semester, but the degree must be completed within seven years, and MFA Grants and renewable scholarships may be awarded for only four semesters.
- G. Credit may be granted for essay semesters in which the essay fails to meet the criteria for approval and advance the student toward the degree, if the supervisor and Director deem the project of sufficient merit in itself (see criteria, Award of Credit). Semester credit, on the other hand, is required for essay approval. Essay topics are approved by the Semester Faculty during the residency. Any subsequent changes to the topic must be approved by the Director.
- H. Decisions about the approval of the essay are made in the month between the Degree Essay Deadline and the Final Deadline for receipt of Semester Project Evaluations. Students must complete work with the supervisor on the essay and submit the finished product to the Office by the specified date (see current Deadline Schedule). Failure to meet the deadline will result in a \$100 processing fee, delay a decision about acceptance, and jeopardize both the award of credit and permission to enter the final semester.
- I. Occasionally, the supervisor will advise the student to contact the director for an extension of the essay deadline. Permission requires a \$100 late fee, and no essay may be processed later than 2 weeks before the end-of-semester deadline.
- J. The Degree Essay will be evaluated by the supervisor and the Second Reader (a member of the Semester Faculty), and also read by the Director. If approved by all three, it will be accepted by the Board in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. If the readers disagree, a member of the Board will provide an additional review.
- K. The Second Reader and Director may grant the degree essay a "provisional acceptance," which means that the essay has largely met the criteria for substance and style but has failed to attend fully to compositional issues and matters of mechanics and presentation. This designation is used only when it is believed that the student can successfully complete corrections before the end of the term. Essays which are provisionally accepted must be revised and resubmitted no later than the end-of-semester deadline. A fee of \$100 will be assessed.

- L. If a degree essay is not approved by the end-of-semester deadline, the student will not be able to advance into the final semester. Degree essays may not be undertaken, completed, submitted for approval or substantially revised without supervision—i.e., during a leave of absence, or in June and December.
- M. A student whose essay fails to meet the criteria for approval may take one, but no more than one, additional semester without permission to advance, and may submit one, but no more than one, subsequent essay or revision.
- N. Approval of a student's Petition to Graduate is granted by the Academic Board in response to an outside reader's and supervisor's reports on one-third to one-half of the proposed thesis manuscript. Denial of the petition does not preclude credit for the semester, but does prevent the semester from advancing the student toward the degree.
- O. A student whose petition has been denied may take one, but no more than one, additional semester without advancement, and may submit one, but no more than one, subsequent petition.
- P. A student may not remain in the Program if he/she/they:
  1. fails to receive credit for 2 consecutive semesters;
  2. fails to return after 2 consecutive leave semesters;
  3. alternates non-credit semesters with leaves of absence, and thus fails to make use of the Program resources;
  4. has consistently failed to meet the Program standards for quantity and quality of work, has goals and working methods inconsistent with the Program design and purposes, does not participate fully in Residency, or is abusive of faculty, staff, and/or other students.

## **IX. Deadlines**

- A. Each student, whether enrolled or on leave, is responsible for adhering to the semester's Deadline Schedule. Students on leave are not exempt from the scheduled deadlines for receipt of materials in the Program Office.
- B. Failure to meet the deadline for payment of any outstanding fees will result in cancellation of registration and immediate termination of access to faculty resources.
- C. Failure to meet the deadline for the enrollment agreement, non-refundable enrollment deposit, and settlement of past due fees, will mean loss of a guaranteed place in the residency and the upcoming semester. Without exception, late receipt of the deposit or outstanding debt will place students on a waiting list.
- D. When a request for Leave of Absence is received after the deadline for the enrollment agreement, the student will forfeit the nonrefundable enrollment deposit (it cannot be rolled forward to the next semester) and incur a Late Fee of \$500, \$1000, or \$1500, depending on proximity to the residency.
- E. Failure to meet the deadline for the workshop, bookshop or housing preference forms will result in assignment without regard for preference.

- F. Failure to meet the deadline, page limitations or instructions for preparation of worksheet material will incur a late fee of \$100, with a further \$100 penalty for each week beyond the deadline. Continued failure to comply risks exclusion from the residency, loss of the nonrefundable deposit, Academic Probation, and withdrawal.
- G. Failure to meet the deadline for the bookshop annotation will result in exclusion from bookshop and consequently the upcoming semester project, with loss of the nonrefundable deposit, Academic Probation and/or withdrawal from the Program.
- H. Failure to meet the deadline for receipt of the Semester Project Evaluation and accompanying materials will result in a \$100 processing fee, will delay decisions about advancement toward the degree, and may jeopardize the award of credit.
- I. In the unusual circumstance that the Academic Board grants an extension of the deadlines for receipt of semester materials or the degree essay, the student may be required to take a leave or Extra semester while the submitted material is assessed.
- J. The Program does not recognize an "incomplete" semester that can be completed at a later date. Materials not received before the first day of the subsequent residency cannot be accepted as evidence of the semester's work nor considered toward the completion of the semester, award of credit, and satisfaction of degree requirements.
- K. During the residency period, students contract with supervisors for the written exchange that will occur during the non-resident semester. Usually, supervisors can be flexible during the term and make adjustments to the arranged schedule of mailings; however, students who fail to meet deadlines with their supervisors and fail to make other arrangements relinquish their right to those exchanges and may thereby jeopardize credit for the semester.

**X. Faculty (*details of employment are outlined the Administrative and Faculty handbooks*)**

- A. Faculty are contracted for full participation in residency sessions (*see Program Faculty*), and failure to participate may result in withholding of stipends.
- B. Faculty are contracted to respond to 6 exchanges with each student; students must have five full exchanges with the faculty supervisor during the non-resident semester in order to receive credit. [*Note: Specific scheduling of these exchanges varies somewhat in the “Novel Extra” Semester and the Final Semester in order to allow faculty review of a larger amount of manuscript material. This has no impact on student obligations in regard to the semester’s analytical component and on-going dialogue.*]
- C. Faculty members are expected to provide prompt (i.e., within 3-4 days of receipt) and attentive response to student submissions. assuming that they receive materials as scheduled in the Semester Project Plan. Late submissions will probably result in late responses.
- D. A student who feels a faculty member is negligent in contracted duties should notify the Director immediately. The Director and Academic Board will determine with the faculty member and the student how the situation can best be remedied. Sufficient evidence of negligence is considered violation of contract, and the stipend will be withheld.
- E. Faculty work is considered completed by the Final Deadline for receipt of Semester Project Evaluations and upon receipt of such evaluations. Students are not allowed additional exchange with the faculty supervisor after this deadline, except through special arrangements approved by the Director.
- F. All faculty are considered visiting, part-time independent contractors, without presumption of renewal. At the end of a contracted semester, renewal of teaching involvement depends on Program needs, assessment by students and the Academic Board of teaching performance, and mutual convenience of the Program and the faculty member. The Program has the right to evaluate faculty in relation to Program goals in its decision to renew employment.
- G. Contracts with new faculty members cannot be renewed for the semester immediately following the initial contract, in order to allow a period of review and evaluation of teaching performance.
- H. If a faculty member feels a student has been abusive, the student may not remain enrolled.
- I. If a faculty member is dismissed during a semester pursuant to the Title IX Policy, such dismissal is considered a violation of contract, and the stipend will be withheld.

## **XI. Financial Aid**

- A. Application for financial aid does not affect admissions decisions, which are made on the basis of the writing sample, essays and other materials.
- B. Institutional grants and scholarships are available to eligible students for four semesters of study (see *Financial Aid Guidelines*). Neither federal loans nor institutional grants, however, are available for students attending the Program as Residency-only participants or as Holden Residency Scholars.
- C. Terms and procedures regarding federal direct unsubsidized loans are determined by Federal Title IV Regulations. Students are wholly responsible for obtaining appropriate guidelines and attending to annual renewal deadlines.
- D. A maximum five semesters of full-time enrollment in the Program are considered eligible for aid from Title IV federal programs (see Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards).
- E. Students who have taken out federal direct unsubsidized loans should be aware that federal regulations do not allow a leave of absence of more than sixty days. A six-month leave of absence will be treated as a withdrawal by the lending institution; any leave of six months will be considered the "grace period" and the student expected to begin repaying the loan during an extended leave or immediately on graduation. Students are wholly responsible for investigating the specific terms of their grants and loans in regard to leave semesters.

## **XII. Leave of Absence**

- A. Student participation in the MFA Program is expected to be continuous: i.e., consecutive semesters of study from enrollment through graduation. However, MFA students may request and be granted one leave of absence without jeopardizing their enrollment or their standing with the Program. Requests, in the form of a petition to the Board, must be received before the deadline for receipt of the Enrollment Agreement Form, approximately three months in advance of the leave semester (see current Deadline Schedule); must cite in writing the reasons for the request; and must be accompanied by payment of the Leave of Absence Fee (see current Fee Schedule). Students requesting leave status after the deadline will forfeit the enrollment deposit and be charged an increasingly substantial Late Leave of Absence Fee.
- B. Leave of absence entitles the student to: maintenance of files and records; inclusion in Program mailing lists and receipt of Program materials; return to full participation in the Program upon settlement of any outstanding debt and payment of the non-refundable enrollment deposit (see current Fee Schedule), received by the Program at the specified deadline

(approximately 3 months prior to the residency period that initiates the semester: see current Deadline Schedule).

- C. Students on leave of absence are responsible for attending to all deadlines; for maintaining a current address with the Program Office in order to receive information and materials; for renewing Loans and Grants as needed (see K below); and for submitting proposed essay/class topics and bookshop annotations for their return.
- D. Receipt of the enrollment deposit, approximately three months before the end of the leave semester (see current Fee and Deadline Schedules), is a prerequisite for return to active study. Students on leave who miss the enrollment deposit deadline or have not completed payment of fees for previous semesters will not be guaranteed a place in the Residency and will risk Academic Probation.
- E. Students needing to extend the leave period must make a request, in the form of a written petition to the Board. Requests must be received before the deadline for receipt of the Enrollment Agreement Form (see current Deadline Schedule), approximately three months in advance of the leave semester; must cite in writing the reasons for the request; and must be accompanied by payment of a second Leave of Absence Fee (see current Fee Schedule). Students requesting extended leave status after the deadline will forfeit the enrollment deposit and will, except for medical emergency, be assessed an additional Late Fee and be placed on Academic Probation. Students seeking an extension of the leave period are also responsible for the terms of Grants and Loans (see K below).
- F. No student may take more than two consecutive leave semesters and remain enrolled. In addition, students returning after a full year on leave will not be admitted into the essay semester and must undertake an “extra” semester in which to prepare essay topics under faculty supervision.
- G. Because the MFA Program is designed particularly for adults, special accommodation is made, through petition to the Board, for students who are able to pursue their studies only during alternate semesters. However, additional semesters of leave or failure to receive credit, excepting medical emergencies, will place the student on Academic Probation. In addition, no circumstance avoids the loss of the nonrefundable deposit.
- H. Academic Probation indicates that the student's standing in the Program is under review by the Academic Board, and that he/she/they may not assume automatic continuance in the Program in subsequent semesters. Failure to prepare for and participate fully in the residency, failure to complete the semester, failure to advance toward the degree, failure to meet deadlines, violation of policy or forfeiture of enrollment deposit, may incur Academic Probation—or, during Academic Probation, may result in withdrawal from the Program. In addition, bank loans, employer reimbursement and all institutional financial aid may be jeopardized by Academic Probation.

- I. Degree essays may not be undertaken, completed, submitted for approval nor substantially revised during a leave of absence from the Program. Students on leave following completion of the final semester and prior to the Thesis Interview may add new poetry or fiction to the Thesis Manuscript, but must retain the Petition manuscript material.
- J. MFA Residency Periods are designed for students beginning nonresident semester projects and for recipients of the Holden Residency Scholarship. Students on leave who would like to participate in the residency without initiating a semester project may do so only at the convenience and discretion of the Program. Residency-only requests are noted on the enrollment form; these requests are routinely granted. The RO student will be assessed tuition and residency fees in addition to the Leave of Absence Fee. RO students will also be provided an individual faculty conference only upon request.
- K. Students who have taken out student loans should be aware that Federal Regulations do not normally allow a leave of absence of more than six months; therefore, an extension of a leave may render the student withdrawn by the lending institution. Additionally, in some cases any leave of six months may be considered the "grace period" and the student expected to begin repaying the loan during an extended leave or immediately on graduation. Students are wholly responsible for investigating the specific terms of their grants and loans in regard to leave semesters.

### **XIII. Records**

- A. A student is entitled to see all academic and financial record kept on him/her/them by College officials.
- B. No one outside the College nor unauthorized personnel within the College (see F below) may see a student's records without the student's consent.
- C. A student's academic record shall contain all application materials, formal correspondence by and to the Program Office or Director, Semester Project plans and evaluation forms completed by the student and faculty.
- D. Records kept by individual teachers, administrators, and counselors are not available to students, nor are they shared with others.
- E. A student who objects to the accuracy or pertinence of something in their record should discuss the matter with the person responsible for placing it there; if resolution cannot be reached, the student may appeal to the Academic Board.

- F. Access to student's records is accorded to:
- Program faculty, Academic Board members, Program administrators and College staff with legitimate educational interests in the materials;
  - authorized Federal and State officials auditing the Program;
  - recognized accrediting organizations carrying out their accrediting functions;
  - in an emergency, appropriate persons determined by the President, Registrar, or Program Director, if the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others.
- G. Enrolled students may request, at no cost, a statement from the Program Office verifying their status in the Program. For additional information, a transcript must be requested (see H below).
- H. Since the Program does not use grades, the transcript of a student's work is a condensed narrative account of his or her participation in residency, semester projects, and progress toward the degree. A transcript is provided upon written request of the Warren Wilson Registrar ([registrar@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:registrar@warren-wilson.edu); a request form is also available in the Alumni section of the Program website) by the student and is usually ready, at a minimum fee, within three weeks of the request.
- I. Faculty assessment of the Semester Project is entered into the transcript directly from the short paragraph, written for that purpose, on the Semester Project Evaluation Form. The Director reserves the right to excerpt transcript paragraphs which are too long, unprofessional, or inconsistent with the remainder of the evaluation.
- J. In order to receive credit for a completed semester, the student is responsible for submitting to the MFA Office, according to the announced deadlines, the Semester Project Plan; Residency, Mid-term and Final Evaluations; semester bibliography; and log of exchanges with the supervisor.

#### **XIV. Refund/Repayment and Withdrawal Policy** *(updated March 2021)*

- A. The date of withdrawal is understood as the day on which the Program Office receives written notification of withdrawal by the student; or such later date as the written notification may indicate; or, in the case of unofficial withdrawal, without notification, the midpoint of the six-month semester.
- B. If a student is dismissed during a semester pursuant to the Title IX Policy, it is considered a withdrawal by the student as of the effective date of the dismissal. All the following policies for fees/tuition charges and the return of Federal Funds apply.
- C. For Residency-Only students, no refunds will be provided upon withdrawal.
- D. New students who wish to defer entrance into the Program may ask that the enrollment deposit be applied to the subsequent semester. Deferments requested before the deposit deadline may be granted at the convenience of the Program; if the request is received after the deadline, the deposit is forfeited. If a longer deferment is sought, the student must reapply.
- E. New and continuing students withdrawing after the enrollment deposit deadline but before the residency begins will be refunded all fees paid except the non-refundable enrollment deposit.
- F. The enrollment deposit and residency fees are non-refundable for any student who withdraws once the residency begins.
- G. A student withdrawing during the residency period will therefore forfeit the enrollment deposit and will receive a 75% refund of tuition charges.
- H. A student withdrawing after the residency but during the first thirty days of the semester will therefore forfeit the deposit and will receive a 25% refund of tuition charges.
- I. Any student withdrawing after the first thirty days of the semester will receive no refund.
- J. The first full day of the residency is the final deadline for payment of fees (“registration”), the date on which a supervisor is assigned, and therefore considered, in matters of refund and withdrawal, the first day of the semester.
- K. Withdrawn students who wish to return to the Program must reapply and will be reviewed under normal admissions procedures. Previously earned graduate credits are retained for seven years after matriculation. If accepted for re-admission, no student may immediately enter either the essay or final semesters before successfully completing an “extra” semester under faculty supervision. Withdrawn students who are re-admitted more than seven years after originally entering the program must begin with the first semester.

## **XV. Return of Federal Funds**

- A. The treatment of Title IV funds (which includes the Federal Direct unsubsidized Loan and the Federal Graduate PLUS Loans) is governed by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, Public Law 105-255 (Return of Title IV Funds).
- B. The US. Department of Education provides guidance on how to determine the amount of federal aid “earned” based on the length of enrollment during the pay period (semester). This process is called Return of Title IV Funds. This process cannot be estimated; it is based on the actual withdrawal date. If a student withdraws before completing more than 60% of the semester, the percentage of Federal aid "earned" is equal to the percentage of the semester completed. Only if the student completes more than 60% of the semester can the point be determined at which they earn 100% of the awarded aid.
- C. A student who fails to withdraw properly from the program may be treated as an unofficial withdrawal. 50% of any federal aid received will be returned to the original source. Since the only federal aid available to graduate students are Federal Direct Student Loans or Federal Graduate PLUS loans, “unearned” loan funds will be returned to the Department of Education (lender).
- D. The US Department of Education formulas are used to determine a withdrawn student’s earned versus unearned federal aid. Any unearned federal aid will be returned first to a Federal Graduate PLUS Loan Program and then the Federal Direct Student Loan Program, and then all other Title IV programs, in that order. A copy of this calculation is available upon request.
- E. This same earned/unearned percentage will be used for all other aid (institutional and private donors as well as federal). Any remaining unearned non-federal aid will be returned first to Warren Wilson College funds, then to private donors (church, civic club, employee benefit, etc.), in that order.
- F. The guidelines for the return of federal funds differ from the tuition charges and time periods maintained by WWC Student Accounts Office and the MFA Program (see above). These differences may cause the student to OWE THE COLLEGE FOR COSTS ORIGINALLY COVERED by financial aid.

The Return of Federal Funds Policy is subject to change, if necessary, to remain in compliance with Federal Regulations. *Revised 3/31/2021.*

## **XVI. Residency**

- A. Students are expected to participate fully in the entire 10-day period; such participation is required for the ensuing semester's credit and for the granting of the degree. If for some exceptional reason a student cannot participate fully, he/she/they must petition the Academic Board in advance of the period.
- B. Continuing students in the Program who are unable to attend the residency at the conclusion of a semester must request a Leave of Absence. Students on Leave may attend a residency as a "Residency Only" student (see Fee Schedule). Students in the Final Semester may defer the return for a final graduating residency only at the convenience and discretion of the Program. (See *Leave of Absence*.)
- C. Students may not begin a Semester Project without full participation in an initiating ten-day residency session.
- D. The Residency is an intensive and demanding period, designed for Program students only. The evening readings and lectures are open to the public, but classes, workshops, and bookshops are closed sessions and participants are asked not to share those sessions through social media.
- E. Each student is issued a room key upon arrival. If the key is not returned to the Program Office before the student leaves campus, there will be a fee, determined by the Housing Office or Guest Facilities at Blue Ridge Assembly. Students are asked to keep rooms locked for security reasons.
- F. No pets are allowed in the dormitories at any time.
- G. The dormitories are for the use of enrolled MFA students only. Students are not allowed to have guests staying overnight in their rooms, nor be accompanied to the Residency by family without prior approval by the Board.
- H. Faculty dormitories are off-limits to students.
- I. Students are liable for damages to or any articles missing from their dormitory rooms.
- J. All students are charged a mandatory comprehensive Residency fee, covering room, board, and use of campus facilities during residency. Rooms with private baths are available to students at Blue Ridge Assembly for an additional fee.
- K. State law prohibits walking on the WWC campus or Blue Ridge Assembly with an open container of alcohol.
- L. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the WWC campus or at Blue Ridge Assembly except in designated areas.

## **XVII. Title IX**

Our Community Guidelines encourage faculty and students to foster an environment of open and respectful engagement. Those Guidelines recognize that our words, actions, and mannerisms may sometimes give offense and provide guidance toward direct communication and internal resolution.

Allegations of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status and allegations of retaliation fall under the auspices of **Title IX** policy and procedures and as such must be reported to and addressed through the College. To ensure compliance with federal and state civil rights laws and regulations, and to affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational program or activity, Warren Wilson College has developed internal policies and procedures that provide a prompt, fair, and impartial process for those involved in such allegations. Warren Wilson College values and upholds the equal dignity of all members of its community and strives to balance the rights of the parties in the grievance process during what is often a difficult time for all those involved.

The summary below excerpts the College's **Title IX Policy Handbook**, available in the student and faculty access areas of the Program. This handbook outlines the "one policy, two procedures" approach toward informal and formal resolution of allegations regarding equal opportunity, harassment, and discrimination. What follows are key statements on policy and an outline of Title IX reporting structure and grievance processes. Please refer to the Title IX Policy Handbook for comprehensive details.

### **Policy on Nondiscrimination**

Warren Wilson College is committed to providing an educational environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. The program does not discriminate, in hiring, admissions or matriculation, on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, or any other protected category under applicable local, state, or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any grievance process on campus, with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and/or other human/civil rights agencies. The College and the MFA Program strive to ensure that all individuals are safe, included, and respected in their learning environments.

Any member of the MFA or larger WWC community whose acts deny, deprive, or limit the educational or employment access, benefits, and/or opportunities of any member of this community, guest, or visitor on the basis of that person's actual or perceived membership in the protected classes listed above is in violation of Warren Wilson College Nondiscrimination Policy.

### **Inclusion Related to Gender Identity/Expression**

Warren Wilson College strives to ensure that all individuals are safe, included, and respected in their working and learning environments, regardless of their gender identity or expression, including intersex, transgender, agender, and gender diverse students and employees. Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression is not tolerated by Warren Wilson College.

In upholding the principles of equity and inclusion, Warren Wilson College supports the full integration and healthy development of those who are transgender, transitioning, or gender diverse, and seeks to eliminate any stigma related to gender identity and expression. If a member of the Warren Wilson College community feels they have been subjected to discrimination under this Policy, they should follow the appropriate reporting/Formal Complaint process described below.

### **Disability Discrimination and Accommodation Policy**

Warren Wilson College is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities, as well as other federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

The ADA also protects individuals who have a record of a substantially limiting impairment or

who are regarded as disabled by Warren Wilson College, regardless of whether they currently have a disability. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, or caring for oneself.

Warren Wilson College is committed to providing qualified students with disabilities with reasonable accommodations and support needed to ensure equal access to Warren Wilson College's academic programs, facilities, and activities. All accommodations are made on an individualized basis. A student requesting any accommodation should first contact the Director of Disability/Access Services, who coordinates services for students with disabilities.

The Director of Disability/Access Services reviews documentation provided by the student and, in consultation with the student, determines which accommodations are appropriate for the student's particular needs and academic program(s) in accordance with the College's applicable policies. Grievances related to disability status and/or accommodations will be addressed using the procedures in Appendix F of the policy handbook.

### ***Discriminatory Harassment Policy***

The sections below describe the specific forms of legally prohibited harassment that are also prohibited under Warren Wilson College Policy. When speech or conduct is protected by academic freedom and/or the First Amendment, it will not be considered a violation of Warren Wilson College Policy, though supportive measures will be offered to those impacted. All offense definitions encompass actual and/or attempted offenses.

#### **Discriminatory Harassment**

Discriminatory harassment—defined as unwelcome conduct by any member or group of the community on the basis of actual or perceived characteristic protected by policy or law—is a form of prohibited discrimination under Warren Wilson College policy. The Program, in conjunction with the College, will act to remedy all forms of harassment when reported, whether or not the harassment rises to the level of creating a “hostile environment.” A hostile environment is one that unreasonably interferes with, limits, or effectively denies an individual's educational or employment access, benefits, or opportunities. This discriminatory effect results from harassing verbal, written, graphic, and/or physical conduct that is severe or pervasive *and* objectively offensive.

The Program reserves the right to address offensive conduct and/or harassment that 1) does not rise to the level of creating a hostile environment, or 2) that is of a generic nature and not based on a protected status. Addressing such conduct will not result in the imposition of discipline under Warren Wilson College policy, but may be addressed through respectful conversation, remedial actions, education, effective Alternative Resolution, and/or other informal resolution mechanisms.

#### **Sexual Harassment**

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the State of North Carolina regard Sexual Harassment, a specific form of discriminatory harassment, as an unlawful discriminatory practice.

Acts of sexual harassment may be committed by any person upon any other person, regardless of the sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity of those involved. Sexual Harassment, as an umbrella category, includes the offenses of quid pro quo harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, and is defined as unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe and pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a complainant access to their education. (See Section 17.B. and Appendix A of the Title IX handbook for greater detail.)

#### **Online Harassment and Misconduct**

Members of the community are encouraged to be good digital citizens and to refrain from online misconduct, such as feeding anonymous gossip sites, sharing inappropriate content via social media, unwelcome sexual or sex-based messaging, distributing or threatening to distribute nude or semi-nude

photos or recordings, breaches of privacy, or otherwise using the ease of transmission and/or anonymity of the Internet or other technology to harm another member of our MFA or wider Warren Wilson College community.

### **Expectations Regarding Unethical Relationships**

There are inherent risks in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals in unequal positions (such as faculty/staff member and student). The MFA Program for Writers believes that sexual relations between an enrolled student and a faculty/staff member always involve an uneven balance of power and would complicate and disturb the community and in particular the condition of trust in which supervisors and students must work. Therefore, such relations are prohibited. (Appendix D of the Title IX handbook provides additional details.)

### **Federal Statistical Reporting Obligations**

Campus Security Authorities have a duty to report the following for federal statistical reporting purposes (Clery Act):

- a) All “primary crimes,” which include criminal homicide, rape, fondling, incest, statutory rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, and arson;
- b) Hate crimes, which include any bias-motivated primary crime as well as any bias motivated theft, simple assault, intimidation, or destruction/damage/vandalism of property;
- c) VAWA-based crimes, which include sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; and
- d) Arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for weapons-related law violations, liquor-related law violations, and drug abuse-related law violations.

All personally identifiable information is kept private, but statistical information must be shared with Public Safety regarding the type of incident and its general location (on or off-campus or in the surrounding area, but no addresses are given) for publication in the Annual Security Report and daily campus crime log.

### **Title IX Reporting Structure**

All Program faculty members are considered **mandated reporters**. Mandated reporters are obligated by policy to share knowledge, notice, and/or reports of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation with the Program Director, who is a **Title IX Deputy**. Program faculty must also promptly share all details of behaviors under this Policy that they observe or have knowledge of, even if not reported to them by a Complainant or third-party. Failure of a Mandated Reporter to report an incident of harassment or discrimination of which they become aware is a violation of Warren Wilson College Policy and can be subject to disciplinary action for failure to comply. The Program Director is required to relay all such reports to the **Title IX Coordinator** at Warren Wilson College, Tacci Smith (tsmith@warren-wilson.edu; 828-771-3700).

At the request of a Complainant, notice may be given anonymously (i.e., without identification of the Complainant) to the Title IX Deputy or Coordinator by a Mandated Reporter. The Mandated Reporter cannot remain anonymous themselves.

If a Complainant has requested that a Mandated Reporter maintain the Complainant’s anonymity, the Mandated Reporter may do so unless it is reasonable to believe that a compelling threat to health or safety could exist. The Mandated Reporter can consult with the Title IX Deputy or Coordinator on that assessment without revealing personally identifiable information.

## How to Report

Complaints of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation may also be made using any of the following options:

1) **File a report or Formal Complaint with, or give verbal notice to, the Title IX Deputy Program Director Debra Allbery, or Title IX Coordinator Tacci Smith** ([tsmith@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:tsmith@warren-wilson.edu) or 828-771-3768). Such a report or Formal Complaint may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail, to the office listed for the Title IX Coordinator or any other official listed.

2) **Report online, [using this form](#)** which is directed to the College. Anonymous reports are accepted but can give rise to a need to investigate to determine if the parties can be identified. If not, no further formal action is taken, though measures intended to protect the community may be enacted. Warren Wilson College tries to provide supportive measures to all Complainants, which may be impossible with an anonymous report that does not identify the Complainant.

Because reporting carries no obligation to initiate a formal response, and because Warren Wilson College respects Complainant requests to dismiss complaints unless there is a compelling threat to health and/or safety, the Complainant is largely in control and should not fear a loss of confidentiality by making a report that allows Warren Wilson College to discuss and/or provide supportive measures.

The Title IX Coordinator promptly makes supportive measures available to the parties upon receiving notice or a complaint. At the time that supportive measures are offered, Warren Wilson College will inform the Complainant, in writing, that they may file a Formal Complaint with Warren Wilson College either at that time or in the future, if they have not done so already. The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure that their wishes are considered with respect to any planned and implemented supportive measures.

## Informal and Formal Resolution

Based on the initial assessment, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate one of these responses:

- **Supportive Response** – Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive services offered as appropriate and reasonably available, such as counseling or medical referrals, increased security, or any other actions deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator.
- **Informal Resolution** – typically used for less serious offenses and only when all parties agree to Informal Resolution, or when the Respondent is willing to accept responsibility for violating policy.
- **Administrative Resolution** – investigation of policy violation(s) and recommended finding, subject to a determination by the Title IX Coordinator or Decision-maker and the opportunity to appeal to an Appeal Panel/Appeal Decision-maker.

## Confidentiality

To make informed choices, it is important to be aware of confidentiality and mandatory reporting requirements when consulting campus resources. Within the institution, some resources may maintain confidentiality and are not required to report actual or suspected discrimination or harassment in a way that identifies the parties. They may offer options and resources without any obligation to inform an outside agency or campus official unless a Complainant has requested the information be shared.

If a Complainant expects formal action in response to their allegations, reporting to any Mandated Reporter can connect them with resources to report crimes and/or policy violations, and these employees will immediately pass reports to the Title IX Coordinator (and/or police, if desired by the Complainant or required by law), who will take action when an incident is reported to them.

### **When a Complainant Doesn't Wish to Proceed**

If a Complainant does not wish for their name to be shared, does not wish for an investigation to take place, and/or does not want a formal complaint to be pursued, they may make such a request to the Title IX Coordinator, who will evaluate that request in light of the duty to ensure the safety of the campus and to comply with state or federal law.

The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate discretion over whether Warren Wilson College proceeds when the Complainant does not wish to do so, and the Title IX Coordinator may sign a formal complaint to initiate a grievance process upon completion of an appropriate violence risk assessment.

The Title IX Coordinator's decision should be based on results of the violence risk assessment that show a compelling risk to health and/or safety that requires Warren Wilson College to pursue formal action to protect the community.

### **Jurisdiction and Time Limitations**

This Policy applies to Warren Wilson College's education program and activities, to conduct that takes place on the campus, but this Policy can also be applicable to the effects of off-campus misconduct that effectively deprives a person of access to the MFA Program's educational program or activities. Warren Wilson College may also extend jurisdiction to off-campus and/or to online conduct. The Respondent must be a member of Warren Wilson College's community in order for this Policy to apply.

There is no time limitation on providing notice/complaints to the Title IX Coordinator. However, if the Respondent is no longer subject to the Warren Wilson College's jurisdiction and/or significant time has passed, the ability to investigate, respond, and/or provide remedies may be more limited or impossible.

Acting on notice/complaints significantly impacted by the passage of time (including, but not limited to, the rescission or revision of policy) is at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, who may document allegations for future reference, offer supportive measures and/or remedies, and/or engage in informal or formal action, as appropriate.

When notice/complaint is affected by significant time delay, Warren Wilson College will typically apply the policy in place at the time of the alleged misconduct and the procedures in place at the time of notice/complaint. Typically, this Policy is only applied to alleged incidents that occurred after August 14, 2020. For alleged incidents that occurred prior to August 14, 2020, previous versions of this Policy will apply. Those versions are available from the Title IX Coordinator.

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### ***Responding to Complaints Submitted through the WWC College Student Complaints and Appeals Portal***

When a complaint pertaining to the MFA Program for Writers is received through the college portal, the MFA Director is contacted immediately. The Director determines the nature of the complaint. All complaints that are a violation of the college's Title IX policies, including those that include issues of abuse and harassment of any kind, are, by college policy, referred to Warren Wilson College's Title IX Officer.

Complaints about MFA Program policy and procedure are referred to the chair of the MFA Program's Academic Board, who convenes a meeting the plenary Academic Board. The Board reviews the complaint, soliciting, as needed, additional information from involved parties, and issues a final ruling, which is communicated by the board chair to the complainant and, as needed, other involved parties. Full documentation of the complaint and resolution is provided by the Director to the Warren Wilson College Dean of Students.

## GUIDELINES: CRITICAL INQUIRY

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The MFA Program for Writers is committed to several important pedagogical precepts: the individual attention given to each student, the importance of community, the encouragement of a range of aesthetics. Another, addressed here, is the belief that a writer's gifts are enlarged and deepened through broad reading, careful thought about that reading, and continuous efforts to articulate issues of craft. There is no set curriculum, no required reading list or canon that every student must master; rather, each student is encouraged to take the lead from his/her/their own work, at any given moment in its development, to pursue the most appropriate models, historical and contemporary. At the same time, productive engagement with other writers, other texts, needs to be active, pragmatic, passionate and ongoing. This is what faculty demonstrate in residency lectures and seminars.

The analytical portion of every semester is largely, but not exclusively, focused on primary texts, not scholarship, on craft rather than literary theory or cultural history. The Program has also evolved a progressive set of occasions for this analytical work. The first is the "annotation." The student writes a brief analysis, in response to a single work by a writer (usually a single poem or story) and focused on some particular aspect of the text that s/he has found compelling—point of view, imagery, diction, syntax, structure. In the first semesters, annotations help the student learn how to identify just such basic areas of craft, compile a vocabulary for analyzing imaginative works, develop a clear, serviceable prose style, and read as a writer. Annotations also contribute to the dialogue between student and supervisor, providing quick illustrative reference for issues raised by the creative work, and the depth of insight or conviction in particular annotations may signal promising essay material.

Annotations are, put simply, one writer writing to another writer about a third writer's work. They are meant to be neither scholarly efforts nor book reviews but analysis of texts—3-4 double-spaced pages of clear prose in which the student examines some aspect of craft in a poem, story or novel. Specifically, in the first semester annotations help to develop skills in discursive prose and argumentation; in the second, to locate a fruitful essay topic; in the third, to generate rough draft material for the essay, or test the completed essay's premises on additional texts; and in the final, to prepare for the residency class. Throughout, the annotations contribute to the ongoing dialogue between student and supervisor and should be a component of each exchange.

While the annotations provide a structure—a set of lenses—for considering a great variety of fiction or poetry, the analytical essay asks for an extended occasion, an in-depth engagement with chosen texts and a well-developed argument. A student is expected to make essay proposals at the end of the second semester; during the subsequent residency, a topic relevant to the student's own work is focused, refined, and approved by the faculty; within one month, the specific texts are reaffirmed. The requirement for 12-15 annotations is waived for this semester; however, many students and supervisors choose to use annotations—by now a familiar form—to generate rough draft essay material, or, following the essay deadline, to extend the

implications of its findings by applying its assumptions to new texts. Although creative pieces may be given a back seat to the highly concentrated work of a substantial 30-50 page essay, students report that this project has a profound impact on their subsequent fiction or poetry.

Increasingly, students who entered the program without a strong background in literature and writing, or write slowly, or find themselves mid-project, or simply want to extend the availability of faculty resources, will ask to take an "extra semester," usually before the final term, and these requests are routinely granted. Such a semester, however, cannot be wholly dedicated to writing only poems or fiction, without a reading and/or analytical component: just as there is no project available for partial credit, so there is no Warren Wilson semester that does not stipulate the engagement of the entire writer and an equally full engagement by the supervisor. A semester writing only poems or fiction is, by definition, a leave of absence.

After the essay, students return to the multiple occasions for critical inquiry provided by annotations. Supervisors may also suggest that students revisit a text with a new craft lens; or apply the same lens to a variety of texts; or compare texts in lengthier entries; or use the annotations to analyze potential texts for the upcoming class. With the Director's approval, students may make use of another appropriate form, such as a working journal; as in the early semesters, when substantial revision of the annotations may be necessary, analytical pieces are logged as annotation equivalents. (See below for Working Journal guidelines.)

In the final semester, all students work toward a new format for articulating their discoveries: the Graduate Class. When the Program schedules that class, it does so with confidence that the hour-long presentation has developed from active study of texts and craft. The class topic is not merely a restatement of the essay's insights, but should derive from the semester's reading and address issues important to the student's imaginative work. The annotations then will serve multiple functions: they will facilitate the dialogue with the supervisor; they will support the preparation of the thesis manuscript; and they will generate the text-specific notes necessary to a solid class presentation.

A student taking an "extra" semester may petition the Board to undertake a final year after the essay—that is, to prepare the class during one term, and revise, add to and order the thesis manuscript in a second term. Within the constraints of scheduling, the Board will grant permission for the class to be presented in advance of thesis preparation if the student's previous analytical work is strong. However, it is expected that both projects will contain a full complement of appropriate critical inquiry.

## Essay Format and Mechanics

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While students are not encouraged to write a research paper nor in any way conform to some traditional notion of an academic thesis, the Program's degree essay must exhibit *graduate level accomplishment* and pride in presentation. Each essay should have a title page (see sample for Thesis Manuscript) and a bibliography, and should use standard format and punctuation for all reference material and quotations. A brief sample is included below in the *Guidelines to Documentation*. However, students preparing an essay are urged to consult additional sources. Essay length is 30 to 50 pages; these are firm minimum and maximum guidelines. Any student wishing to petition for an exception should contact the Director.

Complete information on MLA style can be found in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8th edition (MLA, 2016) and online at the MLA Style Center: <https://style.mla.org/>. Many colleges and universities have also created "MLA Quick Reference" webpages which can easily be accessed online. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) is one of the most comprehensive and well-organized: see the MLA guidelines at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

## Working Journal

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After successful completion of the degree essay, some students who have demonstrated facility with analytical prose may benefit from the format of a working journal for the articulation of insights about issues of craft. The journal encourages—and in fact depends upon—a continuum of critical inquiry, accommodating a wider range of texts and an accruing discussion of a student's reading. This is often beneficial when the Final Semester student is undertaking a semester project with broad areas of exploration, from which the graduate class topic will emerge. The format is less useful, however, when the topic has already been narrowed and focused: the now-familiar form of the annotations provides an efficient opportunity for shapely, economical discussion of the probable texts for the class.

In addition, this option should not be considered as a reduction of the analytic component in the semester project. Award of credit with progress toward the degree specifies that it **must be equivalent in substance** to the customary 12-15 annotations requirement; it **must demonstrate clear English prose and close engagement with texts**; and it **must reach a 50-page minimum** over the course of the semester.

This format remains an exception. All requests to pursue a working journal, in lieu of annotations, must be supported by the faculty supervisor, justified by its pedagogical function in light of the semester goals, and approved by the Director.

## GUIDELINES: DOCUMENTATION

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We encourage all students to observe Modern Language Association (MLA) format in documenting critical analysis throughout the program. Degree Essays *must* be fully documented using MLA style, which combines in-text citations with a list of works cited (see Bibliography below); **no footnotes or endnotes** are required.

The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition (MLA, 2021) and the MLA Style Center: <https://style.mla.org/>, are the authoritative sources for MLA style, but MLA guidelines and examples are readily available online from many websites (such as <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.) What follows here are general guidelines for in-text citations and the list of Works Cited. While the new edition of the *MLA Handbook* includes significant changes for bibliographic entries, the practices for in-text citations are virtually unchanged. Students should consult the MLA Style Center online or the MFA office with questions. A practice template for bibliographic entries is available at <https://style.mla.org/interactive-practice-template/>.

### IN-TEXT CITATIONS

*Any source information that you provide in-text must correspond to the source information on the Works Cited page. More specifically, whatever signal word or phrase you provide to your readers in the text, must be the first thing that appears on the left-hand margin of the corresponding entry in the Works Cited List.*

- **If the author's name is included in a signal phrase, the in-text parenthetical citation consists of a page number. Punctuation follows the parentheses.**

As Christanne Miller observes, “[Dickinson’s] letters may be as elliptical metaphorically and syntactically as her poems” (6).

- **If the author is not named in a signal phrase, the author's last name must appear in parentheses along with the page number:**

Proust is “a Romantic in his anxiety to accomplish his mission, to be a good and faithful servant” (Beckett 61).

- **If the essay includes two or more texts by the same author, include the title of the work in a signal phrase or in the parenthetical reference:**

In Chekhov’s “Sleepy,” as in his other stories from this period, we often find inanimate objects animated: “When the light begins to flicker, the patch and the shadows come to life and are set in motion as though by a wind” (63-64).

In Chekhov’s stories from this period, we often find inanimate objects animated: “When the light begins to flicker, the patch and the shadows come to life and are set in motion as though by a wind” (“Sleepy” 63-64).

- When quoting fewer than four lines of typed prose or fewer than three lines of poetry, the quoted material may remain within the paragraph. Line breaks in poetry should be indicated by a forward slash, and the citation should be note line numbers rather than pages. Longer passages should be formatted as follows:

#### FORMATTING LONG QUOTATIONS

- For quotations that extend to four or more lines of prose or three or more lines of verse: place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented one inch from the left margin (do not indent the right margin). Maintain double-spacing in prose quotations; single-spacing is fine for poetry. The parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks; parenthetical citations should be placed to the right of the final line, and should note the line numbers, not page number.

Since poetry deals with the singular, not the general, it cannot—if it is good poetry—look at things of this earth other than as colorful, variegated, and exciting, and so, it cannot reduce life, with all its pain, horror, suffering, and ecstasy, to a unified tonality of boredom or complaint. (Milosz 265)

But secretly, while the grandmother  
busies herself about the stove,  
the little moons fall down like tears  
from between the pages of the almanac  
into the flower bed the child  
has carefully placed in the front of the house. (31-36)

## Bibliography

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The MLA format for the works cited should be used not only in annotations and the Degree Essay (in which case the page should be labeled **Works Cited**), but also in the comprehensive bibliography, a list of all works read during the student's tenure in the Program which accompanies the final Semester Project Evaluation and is included (as submitted) in both the Thesis Volume and the student's narrative transcript. The student is responsible for attending to all matters of correct citation, spelling, punctuation and the like. It is therefore recommended that students also use MLA style for the bibliography submitted at the end of each semester, in order to facilitate accurate compilation of the comprehensive bibliography.

***Changes in the MLA Style Guide, 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> edition:***

Beginning with MLA's 8<sup>th</sup> edition, the work's publication format is **not** considered. Instead of asking, "How do I cite a book [or DVD or Web page]?" the writer creates an entry by consulting the MLA's list of core elements—facts common to most works—which are assembled in a specific order. The MLA core elements are **Author, Title of source, title of container, other contributors, version, number, publisher, publication date, location**. In the new model, then, the writer asks, "Who is the author? What is the title?" and so forth—regardless of the nature of the source.

**Double-spacing** should be observed throughout a bibliography; no additional spacing is used between entries. The first line of the entry is flush left with the margin; the second and subsequent lines are indented one-half inch to create a hanging indent.

Periods occur after the author and title, but all other information is separated by commas. Publisher names should be given in full, but U and UP remain acceptable abbreviations for *University* and *University Press*.

The city of publication is no longer noted. Placeholders for unknown information like *n.d.* (*no date*) and *n. pag.* (*no pagination*) are no longer used.

**Entries should be alphabetized by the last names of the authors** or, if there is no author, the first words of the titles other than *a*, *an*, or *the*. The running bibliography should present all reading as a single alphabetical continuum, with additions noted each packet or semester by bolding or asterisks; do not separate by "type" or genre (stories/poems, full collections, craft essays, letters, etc.).

- **Note translators and editors** after the title, unless a full anthology is being cited. Do not abbreviate (i.e., *ed.* or *trans.*)

*Beowulf*. Translated by Seamus Heaney, Norton, 2001.

Felstiner, John. Preface. *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*. By Paul Celan. Translated by John Felstiner, Norton, 2001, pp. xix-xxxvi.

- **To cite a source by two or more authors or editors**, list them as they appear on the title page, and reverse (last name, first name) only the first author. If citing a book by three or more authors, list only the **first** followed by *et al.*

Brown, Deborah et al., editors. *Lofly Dogmas: Poets on Poetics*. U. Arkansas, 2005.

Rankine, Claudia and Lisa Sewell, editors. *American Poets in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The New Poetics*. Wesleyan UP, 2007.

- **When listing multiple works by a single author**, type three hyphens and a period rather than repeat the author's name, and present the titles alphabetically.

Sebald, W.G. *Austerlitz*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Random House, 2001.

---. *The Emigrants*. Translated by Michael Hulse. New Directions, 1997.

- In the semester and comprehensive bibliographies, **individual pieces** (for instance, single stories or poems) should be cited, in quotation marks and with appropriate page numbers (include p. or pp.), only when one has not read the entire volume.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine." *Interpreter of Maladies*.

Houghton Mifflin, 1999, pp. 23-42.

- **Work from an anthology** should include the titles of both the selection and the anthology; the editor; and page numbers on which the selection appears.

Barker, Wendy. "Emily Dickinson and Poetic Strategy." *The Cambridge Companion to*

*Emily Dickinson*, edited by Wendy Martin, Cambridge UP, 2002, pp. 77-90.

- **The citation for an item in a periodical** should use *vol.* and *no.* (previously these abbreviations were omitted) as well as the date (month/season and year) for an issue. While periods follow the author and title, the remaining information is separated only by commas.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo*, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

Metress, Christopher. "Via Negativa: The Way of Unknowing in Cormac McCarthy's *Outer*

*Dark*." *The Southern Review*, vol. 37, no.1, Winter 2001, pp. 147-54.

- **Articles from online databases and articles on a website should include the URL.** Do not include <http://> or <https://>. There is no longer a requirement to note the date consulted.

Lorensen, Jutta. "Between Image and Word, Color, and Time: Jacob Lawrence's *The*

*Migration Series*." *African American Review*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 571-86.

*EBSCOHost*, [search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN](http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN)

[=24093790&site=ehost-live](http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=24093790&site=ehost-live).

- It's sufficient to note "**e-book**" when that is the 'container,' but if the particular type of e-book consulted is known, that should be included in the bibliographic citation:

*MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Kindle ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

## GUIDELINES: EXTRA SEMESTER

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Increasingly, students who entered the program without a strong background in literature and writing, or who write slowly, or who find themselves mid-project, or who want to extend the availability of faculty resources, will elect to take an “extra semester,” which does not advance the student toward the degree. Completed semesters of this nature are eligible for credit and in no way impugn the status or success in the Program of students in good standing (see *Academic Probation* and *Financial Aid*). At the same time, because these extra semesters are undertaken within the Program structure and utilize faculty resources, they must meet the usual expectations for residency participation, creative work, critical inquiry, dialogue with the supervisor and thoughtful evaluation.

Thus, an extra semester cannot be wholly dedicated to writing only poems or fiction, without a reading and/or analytical component: just as there is no project available for partial credit, so there is no Program semester that does not stipulate the engagement of the entire writer and an equally full engagement by the supervisor (see *Semester Project* and *Award of Credit*). In addition, permission to undertake multiple extra semesters will not be granted to a student who has repeatedly failed to complete successful projects for credit (see *Academic Probation*).

Many students choosing an extra semester do so following the essay and prior to the final semester. Some of these students wish to prepare the class during this time and present it at the subsequent residency. Requests for this option must be made to the Director at the beginning of the extra semester and will be subject to the constraints of the residency schedule. When reviewing such requests, the Board will also consider the strength of the student's essay and the annotations already completed, since the graduate class is the articulation of a seasoned student's critical inquiry. In addition, preparing and presenting the class in the extra semester does not preclude the requirement for a full complement of analytical work in the final term and its articulation in annotations, a working journal, a drafted lecture or notes toward the class (see *Award of Credit* and *Award of the Degree*).

A smaller number of students ask to take an extra semester before beginning the essay or may be advised by the Director or Board to do so. In this additional term, continued broad reading, critical inquiry, annotations, and even brief (7-10 page) comparative essays, help develop the prose skills, the facility with argumentation, and the focused topic necessary for success in the essay.

Finally, there are a few students whose thesis materials, by the second month of the final semester, have not progressed sufficiently to indicate probable completion of the project by term's end and thus do not warrant approval of the petition. In rare cases, this decision is made post-petition approval. If, in the Supervisor Checkpoint for Final Semester Progress, the faculty member indicates the student is unlikely to complete degree requirements, the final semester becomes a de facto extra semester. While the semester may still be awarded credit, it will not advance the student toward the degree, and an additional term will be required. (See *Petition to Graduate* and *Academic Probation*).

## GUIDELINES: EXTRA SEMESTER /ADDITIONAL GENRE

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Most extra semesters are requested within the student's primary genre. It is also possible, however, for the student to develop a project that investigates alternatives—a semester focused on poetry for a fiction writer, on prose fiction for a poet, and for writers in either genre a semester in creative or literary nonfiction, which is not offered as a course of study toward the MFA degree. These exploratory options require an application, submitted to the Director for presentation to the MFA Academic Board.

Students applying for the Alternative Genre Extra Semester should be in good academic standing and making consistent, timely progress toward completion of degree requirements in their primary course of study (fiction or poetry). Although the Board will consider persuasive exceptions, additional-genre extra semesters are viewed as most appropriate for students who have completed an approved Degree Essay. In its review of the application, the Board will be especially attentive to the amount of strong material accruing for the thesis manuscript.

Applications must be received, electronically by the Director during the previous semester at the time the enrollment agreement is due, and must include:

1. a recommendation for the project from a previous or current supervisor;
2. an articulate, persuasive statement of the project's relevance to the primary course of study; and
3. a writing sample in the proposed genre:
  - a. The writing sample in **poetry** (10 pages) or **fiction** (25 pages) will be reviewed by the faculty readers for that particular admissions round. *[Note: the required sample will be waived for those students who were admitted to the Program initially in both genres.]*
  - b. The writing sample in **creative nonfiction** (25 pages) will be reviewed by the Director and two of the faculty available as potential supervisors for the project. The Director may also ask for an additional Board reader if there is disagreement.

The Board retains the right to ascertain eligibility and also, each semester and in light of other program needs, whether to allocate faculty resources to this option. Supervisor assignments will be handled in the usual manner at the initiating residency for the semester. Assignment of a previous supervisor is discouraged but will be decided case by case.

Criteria for the award of credit remain the same as for any semester in the Program, including an integrated analytical component (see *Award of Credit*). Creative material produced during additional-genre extra semesters may be included in the student's thesis manuscript only if recommended by the final semester supervisor and approved by the Board.

## EXTRA SEMESTER FOR NOVELISTS

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The Novel Semester is an extra semester and is only open to students who have (a) completed two semesters of study and (b) completed and revised at least 100 pages of a novel draft. A student wishing to take the Novel Semester must apply to do so during the previous semester at the time the enrollment agreement is due. The application (no more than a page from the student, and a short e-mail from the current supervisor supporting the request) will go to the Director along with 100 pages of the novel-in-progress, which will be assessed by members of the Board. Factors in the decision may include: readiness of the student, quality or quantity of the work, availability of faculty, and so on.

A student may take the Novel Semester only once while enrolled.

The Novel Semester student will only have 5 exchanges with the faculty supervisor, and the initial packet counts as the creative work of two exchanges. Throughout the semester, rather than doing formal annotations, the student will keep an on-going analytical journal discussing issues relevant to the student's work, as examined in the semester's reading. Installments of the journal will be submitted to the supervisor in every exchange.

In other semesters (until the final semester), students turning in novel chapters will do so with the understanding that their supervisors will only read a maximum of 40 pages at a time and that the level of detail of the supervisor's response may be affected by a steady stream of 40-page packets. But students in the Novel Semester come to the residency with the novel manuscript in hand. The supervisor will take the manuscript from the student and respond to it in its entirety within 7 weeks. This exchange makes up the creative work of packets one and two. The supervisor mails these initial comments, and the student mails back a thoughtful response and plans for the semester. In the remaining three exchanges, the student may send up to 40 pages of the revised novel at a time.

In the Final Semester, students who have undertaken previously the Novel Semester will be able, like any other fiction student, to give their supervisors the proposed thesis—so more than 40 pages—at the start of the semester. The supervisor will respond to this larger manuscript more generally—not line-by-line or page-by page, although the petition material may prompt close attention—and the rest of the semester's packets will be restricted to no more than 40 pages (though the supervisor must read the entire thesis manuscript once again before it is submitted at the semester's end).

## GUIDELINES: POST-GRADUATE SEMESTER

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The Program considers post-graduate proposals from its alumni who have completed the MFA degree at least one year prior to the application. Appropriate projects might include the completion of a book-length manuscript, new work that represents a radical departure in one's prior aesthetic, the undertaking of a new form, or the exploration of another genre (including non-fiction).

Whatever its pedagogical goals, the post-graduate semester closely resembles degree semesters with which the WWC alum is familiar. In short, the Program expects:

- full participation in an initiating residency;
- thoughtful assignment of a supervising faculty mentor;
- a semester's project plan, developed with the supervisor, addressing the semester's goals for the student's poetry, fiction or non-fiction;
- some analytical component (annotations, working journal, short essays, a lecture) in response to careful reading;
- active engagement in the production of new work and revision for at least 25 hours per week;
- full dialogue, throughout the semester, in six packet exchanges;
- narrative evaluations by the supervisor and student, with the award of 15 hours graduate credit.

When the project is within the same genre as the graduate's MFA Thesis Manuscript, one available model might be the Program's "Novel Semester," also extended in this instance to include poetry manuscripts: that is, the first two packet submissions might be combined, allowing for initial faculty review of a substantial portion of the work-in-progress. (The usual caveat remains, however: Program faculty do not function as line editors for material being readied for publication.) A project in an unfamiliar genre would necessarily be more exploratory.

Applications will be reviewed by the Director and the faculty members of the Admissions Team for the relevant semester. A limited number of proposals will be accepted for any specific semester, and admission may not be deferred except by the Program.

Post-graduate students will be responsible for full tuition and fees, and will not be eligible for financial aid.

## FINANCIAL AID

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Financial aid is given to MFA students on the basis of need. Unlike many larger programs, we do not give prizes or fellowships for fine writing, since we believe such awards foster a damaging competition in the student community. It is difficult to predict from an application manuscript which students will make the greatest gains during the course of study; on the other hand, rewarding previous achievement may set up false distinctions. Given the high standards set for admission into the MFA Program, we are equally eager for all admitted students to attend.

Since students are on campus only during brief residency periods, we cannot offer teaching or research assistantships. The low-residency format, however, allows students to attend a writing program without moving or changing jobs, and to work--full-time, in many cases--while studying. Thus, in comparing the costs of graduate writing programs, one should recognize the absence of hidden costs such as moving or being required to live in a more costly area, and the advantage of maintaining income during the period.

Application for financial aid does not affect admissions decisions, which are made on the basis of the writing sample, essays and other materials. However, if a student's enrollment depends on financial assistance, the FAFSA ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)) must be completed well in advance of the admission deadlines. Additional forms will be required by the WWC Financial Aid Office after admission acceptance, should federal loan assistance be desired.

Financial aid is awarded for one academic year at a time (July-June) and ***must be renewed each year by submitting the FAFSA***, using the prior-prior year's tax return information. Applicants who are not US citizens, and have no SSN, may submit the FAFSA online, selecting "No, I am not a citizen or eligible non-citizen" and responding to the "Social Security" question by entering all zeros. A "rejection" is anticipated; however, the Program/Financial Aid Office can work with those results.

## REQUIRED FORMS

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The following forms are used to determine eligibility for financial support:

**FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA).** You can obtain this form at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Request that the results be sent to Warren Wilson College by using the school code of 002979-00; you will receive FAFSA results by email. The MFA Office has direct access to the FAFSA results received by the Financial Aid office.

These reports will be used to determine aid eligibility for all MFA scholarships, MFA Grants, and for subsidized federal student loans. FAFSAs must be filed annually by students receiving financial aid; these can be submitted any time after October 1 but before March 1 to determine the aid level for the next academic year.

For *new students*, the FAFSA must be processed no later than March 1 (for the July semester) or September 1 (for the January semester) using the prior-prior year's completed Federal Tax Return.

**HOLDEN MINORITY SCHOLARSHIP AND RODNEY JACK APPLICATIONS:**

Students interested in being considered for either of these scholarships, intended for writers of color and LGBTQ+ students respectively, should indicate eligibility on the Submittable application form.

## SOURCES OF AID

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The forms listed above are used to determine eligibility for the following:

**FEDERAL DIRECT STAFFORD LOAN PROGRAM.** Student loans are the best primary source of financial aid available to graduate students and the best source of loans is the Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program (Unsubsidized Stafford and GRAD PLUS). The lender for all Federal loans is the Department of Education. The application, master promissory note and “entrance counseling” can all be found on-line at [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). Your electronic signature is the same as that used for the FAFSA. Repayment begins 6 months after you cease to be enrolled. For repayment purposes, an institutional “leave of absence” is a period of non-enrollment using up your grace period and potentially entering repayment. Students generally have up to 10 years to repay accumulated loans; however, there are minimum monthly repayments. Please refer to the above website for information about the loan program.

**MFA GRANT.** Grants are awarded on the basis of the student's Estimated Family Contribution (EFC), as determined by the FAFSA, which assesses the student's resources toward the Cost of Education (COE): tuition, on-campus room and board, plus an estimated average for books/supplies, transportation, housing and miscellaneous related expenses.

**LARRY LEVIS FUNDS.** These scholarship funds are awarded to entering students who demonstrate both extraordinary merit and unusual need. They are given at the discretion of the Program Director.

**THE RONA JAFFE FOUNDATION GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP.** Thanks to the generous support of The Rona Jaffe Foundation, one fellowship is available annually to one incoming female student in fiction or poetry. The fellowship covers two consecutive semesters' tuition and the fees for two residencies, plus a \$4000 stipend to cover books, travel to residencies, child care, or loss of income while attending each residency. The student must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the U.S. and must demonstrate need via the FAFSA.

Admitted students will be considered as fellowship candidates only at the time of application to the Program; no additional application is required. This opportunity cannot be deferred or repeated. Recipients will not be eligible for MFA grants during their tenure in the Progra

Thanks to the generosity of Friends of Writers, Inc., the Program also offers the following scholarships:

**HOLDEN FUND FOR DIVERSITY.** The endowed **Holden Minority Scholarship** provides full tuition and residency fees for an eligible student of color and is awarded at the time of admission. Those wishing to be considered for the Holden must state eligibility on the application form. The Holden Scholar is responsible for any late fees, transcript fee, travel, books, living and/or miscellaneous expenses. **Holden Opportunity Grants**, for eligible students of color, are non-renewable grants which cover fees for a single residency. This fund also provides the **Holden Residency Scholarship**, covering tuition and fees for a single residency for a non-matriculating student of color in either genre.

**BARNHARDT FAMILY FUND.** The generosity of the Mary Barnhardt family has made possible these grants which cover residency costs for the Program's neediest students.

**GRANTS FOR CHANGE.** The most recent initiative at Friends of Writers, this fund provides single-semester grants in varying amounts for students of color.

**RODNEY JACK SCHOLARSHIP.** Named in honor of 1999 graduate, Holden Scholar and Joan Beebe Teaching Fellow Rodney Jack (1964-2008), the Rodney Jack Scholarship will provide \$1000 per semester to two students concurrently, renewable for three additional semesters; preference will be given to LGBTQIA or Same Gender Loving students with financial need. Applicants indicated eligibility on the Submittable application form.

**THE LISEL MUELLER SCHOLARSHIP** This endowed fund provides an annual, nonrenewable scholarship to enrolled students with small children.

**CAROL HOUCK SMITH SCHOLARSHIP.** The Carol Houck Smith Scholarship directly supports fiction students completing a thesis manuscript in an Extra or Final semester.

**THE ELLEN BRYANT VOIGT SCHOLARSHIP.** Established in honor of our architect and founder, this scholarship covers tuition for a poet in an Extra semester.

**THE RENATE WOOD SCHOLARSHIP.** Established in memory of an outstanding MFA alumna and poetry faculty member, this scholarship provides an additional \$200- 400 per semester to poets with high need, as determined by the FAFSA.

## PROCEDURES

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Once a student is admitted into the MFA Program, the Program will obtain FAFSA results from the College's Financial Aid office. MFA grants are awarded at five levels, based on the estimated family contribution (EFC) determined by the FAFSA. The largest MFA grant covers approximately 60% of tuition. Federal Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loans (maximum \$10,500/semester) or a Federal GRAD PLUS Loan may be available through the Financial Aid office.

All institutional financial aid awarded a student upon enrollment, including but not limited to MFA Grants, the Holden Minority Scholarship, Levis Funds, the Rodney Jack Scholarship, and the Renate Wood Scholarship for Poets, will be renewable for four semesters, assuming the student earns academic credit each semester, progresses toward completion of the degree, and continues to demonstrate financial need through the FAFSA. For all students making satisfactory academic progress, Title IV loans are available for the first five semesters of enrollment (see below).

Financial Aid is not available for students attending only a residency. Funds are reserved for students enrolled in semester work and are made available through the Program's operating budget, the Mitchell Toney Scholarship Fund, and Friends of Writers, Inc., a non-profit foundation. The Program makes every effort to maintain its commitment to enrolled students by appropriate increases in financial aid whenever fees increase.

### SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS STANDARDS

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Students receiving **Title IV federal funds** are required by federal regulation to make Satisfactory Academic Progress toward a degree or certificate in order to maintain eligibility for this aid. In reviewing a student's progress, these standards are applicable regardless of whether or not financial aid has previously been received. (See *Award of the Degree* for complete graduation requirements for the Warren Wilson Master of Fine Arts degree.) In our graduate degree program, it is possible to complete a semester without receiving credit (failure to meet course requirements—see *Award of Credit*). It is also possible that one additional semester would be needed for completion of either the analytical essay and/or the thesis manuscript.

Satisfactory Academic Progress will be evaluated at the end of each six-month semester. Students who accumulate two consecutive semesters without academic credit will automatically lose eligibility for Federal aid, such as the Federal Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan or the Federal Direct GRAD PLUS, for the following semester. This will include completing studies without credit and withdrawals. Both semesters attended without earned credit and the following semester of ineligibility will count as part of the “five-semester” maximum. Approved Leaves of Absence will not be included.

Taking the above in consideration, a maximum of five semesters of full time enrollment in the Program (including semesters without academic credit) will be allowed for continued participation in the Title IV federal programs. In other words, a student is eligible for Title IV aid for only the first five semesters of enrollment in the MFA Program, not including leaves of absence or residency only. No federal aid will be awarded after the fifth semester of enrollment, regardless of whether or not aid was received for any of the previous semesters.

Neither federal loans nor institutional grants are available for students attending the Program as "Residency Only" participants.

*“Satisfactory Academic Progress” is subject to change if necessary to remain in compliance with Federal Regulations. 01/27/2012*

## VERIFICATION POLICY FOR FINANCIAL AID

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Warren Wilson College must verify the accuracy of FAFSA data under the financial aid program rules of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 Subpart E of 34 CFR Part 668 “Verification of Student Aid Application Information” regulations.

For those students selected for verification by the U.S. Department of Education, completion of this process is required prior to disbursement of Title IV funds. However, all financial aid applicants are subject to verification to correct discrepancies.

*Minimum verification* for those students selected requires the following:

- IRS tax data transferred from the IRS to your FAFSA through the FAFSA’s “IRS Data Retrieval Tool”, a copy of each of your and your spouse’s W-2s and a completed Verification Worksheet available on the WWC Financial Aid Office web page: <http://www.warren-wilson.edu/admission/financialaid/forms>.” **OR**
- An official copy of your current IRS Tax Return Transcript which you will have to request from the IRS, a copy of each of your and your spouse’s W-2s and a completed Verification Worksheet available on the WWC Financial Aid Office web pages under “<http://www.warren-wilson.edu/admission/financialaid/forms>.”

Other information may be required as determined by the Financial Aid Office at WWC. To ensure accuracy of the FAFSA data, verification takes place prior to finalizing an award or certifying a loan request. The verification process is complete when the student has submitted all requested documentation to the WWC Financial Office and, if necessary, the FAFSA has been reprocessed.

The Award Letter will show a breakdown of the aid sources (loan and grant, if eligible). An original award is subject to revision if other aid is received or inaccuracies are discovered with the FAFSA or data entry.

**DEADLINES/GRANTS:** The FAFSA must be processed no later than March 1 for a July-December award and September 1 for a January-June grant award.

**DEADLINES/LOANS:** Verification must be complete no later than November 1 for the current semester of July-December so that loans can be disbursed no later than December 1 (disbursement within the same semester). Verification must be complete no later than May 1 for the current semester of January-June so that loans can be disbursed no later than June 1 (disbursement within the same semester).

*This Verification Policy is subject to change if necessary to remain in compliance with Federal Regulations.*

**Please see *Leave of Absence* policies.**

## GUIDELINES: GRADUATE CLASS

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The MFA Program for Writers requires that all graduates prepare and present a class for their peers, not as an in-service teacher training but, like the annotations and the essay, as an occasion and a lens for focused study and articulation of the critical inquiry. Thus, the topic should be of immediate relevance to the student's own creative work, and should be incorporated into the overall plans of the semester's reading and study. At the same time, graduates are, in these residency classes, also providing a service to their community, sharing discoveries they have made and introducing their fellow writers to particular ideas or bodies of work which have had significance in their own development.

Topics are discussed with the final semester supervisor, developed in the early part of the semester, and approved by the Director. While the class topic may be an outgrowth of to the student's Degree Essay, it should not be a duplication of its findings or a public presentation of the essay. Nor should the topic be predicated on what the graduate feels will address some need in the residency curriculum or will be attractive to other students. Rather, final semester students are expected, as in their previous semester projects, to be actively engaged in critical inquiry that is directly linked to craft issues in their own work; and they are encouraged to develop reading lists, and undertake annotations, that overlap productively with preparation for the residency class. Graduating students are asked at mid-term to submit "course proposals" describing the class and outlining any prerequisite reading. Once approved by the Director, these will be distributed to the other students in the pre-residency mailing.

The function of the class is essentially introductory—to stimulate interest in a craft topic or a particular writer or group of writers. Students may choose either a lecture or discussion format and will be assigned 1 hour during their final residency in which to teach the class. In addition to the ongoing critical inquiry during the semester, graduates also have several weeks following the submission of the thesis at semester's end in which to complete preparation of their classes in detail—the class should not eclipse the importance of the semester's focus on the thesis manuscript; at the same time, supervisor resources should be used, in the preparation for the class, as needed. Graduate classes are necessarily cross-scheduled in order to keep the number of participants manageable.

Lectures should be carefully prepared in advance and submitted in draft form to the project supervisor. Note: a lecture is not an essay but a separate form that requires a different sort of pacing, illustration and structure. The lecture option is best suited for those graduates who have developed a detailed thesis which needs to be outlined, and illustrated, without interruption; even then, some time at the end for questions and discussion is always recommended.

Graduates who choose a discussion format, to allow greater participation, should remember that the class represents a kind of "iceberg effect"—that the graduate knows a great deal more about the subject than can be presented coherently and clearly in one hour of class time. Thus, students should plan to spend at least 15-30 minutes at the beginning of the class outlining pertinent theoretical assumptions and developing the

topic, and to revisit these assumptions as the class unfolds. The body of the class should consist of the presentation of illustrative examples; an allegiance to clarity should be paramount--one or two well-chosen examples will function far more effectively than a flurry of individual texts which must be hurried through. As with the annotations and the essay, students are reminded of the importance of dealing directly with individual texts.

The graduate-teacher's primary role is to be helpful. After close study on the topic, one always has many exciting insights to impart, but reiteration and clarification are also important for class-members coming new to the topic. Some skill is required, also, in keeping discussion focused, and the graduate should not hesitate to on the prepared agenda. A successful discussion class requires a careful outline of the points to be made, the amount of time to be spent on each example, and a focused summary or conclusion, perhaps suggesting ways in which the student may pursue the topic with further study.

Handouts should be prepared in advance and brought with you to the residency. Remember your own experience with residency exhaustion—while you want to provide sufficient texts for illustration, students who are overwhelmed by the amount of material provided are learning less than they might.

The residency schedule is always full, and the sheer number of scheduled events means a high percentage of events which are passive, the student absorbing information; thus, active participation and student response to handouts are always welcomed. On the other hand, you will be the expert in the room, the one who has thought long and hard about this topic, and your peers will welcome your insights. You will probably never again have students with the particular and exhilarating combination of high interest and motivation, intelligence, and the wish to see you succeed. Your audience be your peers who have watched you grow into full realization of your talent and the newly-arrived students for whom you'll serve as an example and inspiration; think of your class as a graduation gift to them.

At the residency, a faculty member interested in your topic will be assigned to attend and evaluate the class. After graduation, the office will email to you copies of the evaluations submitted by the faculty member and your peers; the faculty evaluation is also reproduced as part of your narrative transcript.

## GUIDELINES: PROJECT PREFERENCE FORM

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The primary asset of the MFA Program for Writers—even more than its pioneering structure or its individual attention to students—is its diverse, highly qualified faculty: their commitment to teaching is legendary. Recognizing this, we hire faculty members only after thorough research and evaluation, and the Program genuinely believes, as a result, that any student could work with any of its faculty to great advantage.

Nevertheless, since students have only one supervisor during the six-month semester, the Program also recognizes the importance of (and anxiety about) supervisor assignment. Thus, we have evolved a procedure of decision-making that combines student preference, individual faculty judgment, and the collective wisdom of the teaching staff.

The student is asked to provide a description of the goals of the semester: this is the most crucial piece of information in the entire process. If the student has a detailed plan in mind, it should be summarized on the Preference Form; if not, they should report their intention as general as it seems to be. Continuing students, of course, have the advantage of recommendations from the previous supervisor, as well as increasing clarity about areas of aesthetics and craft to investigate. Meanwhile, if a beginning student has in mind to start his/her/their tenure by completing an existing project, rather than enter into new work, with new goals, as is expected, it is important that this request be clearly articulated on the Preference Form. It is also important to remember that the Semester Faculty may decide the student would be better served by putting aside that project (e.g., a novel in its third draft, an almost-finished collection of poems, or linked stories based on historical research) for other, more enlarging or promising or instructive projects, and they will assign a supervisor accordingly. Until the student nears the end of his/her/their apprenticeship, the Program gives precedence to a student's education, and to the student's development as a writer, over the polished production of particular pieces.

Remember, too, that the Preference Form is NOT the Semester Plan: the Project goals will be refined during the residency, with the supervisor's direction and advice, and sometimes with Board recommendations. The Preference Form is simply an early, rough articulation of the student's hopes and concerns for their writing, used only to locate the most appropriate teacher at that time. It is provided to the faculty approximately two weeks in advance of the residency. Faculty will have already read the worksheets, a brief summary of your application materials or previous semesters, and proposed essay topics (any changes in those topics since the end of last semester need to be indicated on this form and revisions attached).

There is a place on the form for the student to list any experience he/she/they would find advantageous in a supervisor for the semester—for instance, experience with translation, proficiency with email, flexibility in the correspondence schedule. And there is also an opportunity for students to cite preferences among the faculty resources. Many students leave the selection of supervisor in the hands of the faculty, taking advantage of their collective experience and insight. These students make possible the fullest consideration

of who can best serve the goals of the semester, allowing an assignment based on faculty interest in, and aptitude for, the project—a prerequisite for a successful experience, and not always something students can intuit by reading their published work. This openness about preferences is particularly important for the essay semester, when the supervisor needs to be engaged with the topic and familiar with the proposed texts—qualifications that students cannot always assess. Program administration and faculty have become quite adept at this procedure. Some of our students go through their entire tenure in the Program without specifying supervisory preferences, amazed each time at the “perfect” match.

Other students, however—often those in their last semesters, but sometimes someone newly arrived—can’t help but choose rather than be chosen, and these students prefer to submit preferences for supervision. Students with preferences should list those names; we can’t hope to guess at withheld information. However, the student must list **no fewer than 3 potential new supervisors in your genre, available for the semester**; otherwise, your request will be disregarded. The reasons for asking for three plausible alternatives are not arcane. An adamant choice makes it awkward for some other faculty member to establish a supportive and useful relationship with that student for the semester. A requested faculty member may lack enthusiasm for that student’s project, or may not feel they are the best resource for the student at this time. Faculty loads must be balanced in regard to essays and thesis obligations, and essay supervision requires familiarity with the texts proposed. Finally, it is important to remember that the Semester Faculty is charged with providing each student an appropriate supervisor. The names a student lists are seen as suggestions, not imperatives.

Students have sometimes asked to work with the same supervisor for more than one semester. This can be arranged when it is pedagogically sound, but most often it is not. Although we want you to continue what is productive and perhaps unfinished, we balance that concern against the benefits a new approach and angle of vision can bring to the work. The primary concern of the Program is that each student develops his/her/their own voice/style/fingerprint, a sense of vision you will pursue and develop and change long after graduation. Our belief is our students can do this this best when reminded of an almost infinite number of options. Thus, the Program expectation is that a student will work with a different supervisor—and be exposed to a different aesthetic, a different teaching method—every semester. If requesting a semester with a previous supervisor, **a student must list 3 ADDITIONAL names**. Otherwise, the request will be disregarded.

No decisions about supervisors are made in advance of the faculty meeting; students should not lobby the faculty, nor should they make cases for these pairings on the Project Preference Form. In addition, assignments are not open to reconsideration or appeal. These decisions are made on a professional, pedagogical—not a personal—basis. If one student is assigned the same supervisor for a second term and another’s is not; if one student’s list of “choices” is honored and another’s is not—these are not the results of partiality or disaffection in individual faculty members but carefully-considered, collective faculty judgments. Which is to say: part of the advice that each student has come for.

## GUIDELINES: THESIS INTERVIEW

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The Interview is not a "defense," nor an exam, nor an occasion for "performance" by either students or faculty, but a chance to provide reader response to the manuscript as a volume of polished work, rather than for "workshop" response to individual pieces in process. Each interview will have its own agenda, prompted by the thesis itself, but in every case, thorough preparation in advance of the interview is crucial. Graduates particularly appreciate receiving a letter at the end of the session from each committee member since the level of critical discussion is so high. The interview itself typically begins with the readers undertaking to describe, to the writer, the manuscript. Pertinent issues are:

- stylistic characteristics of the collection;
- primary thematic concerns of the collection;
- how the manuscript coheres as a volume;
- professional presentation (clean type, consistent margins, no typos or grammatical errors, restrained front pages, effective title);
- questions about/suggestions for the order of individual poems or stories.

Committee members preparing for the interview might also consider the following:

- Does the manuscript show consistent high quality throughout?
- Would you suggest that particular poems/stories/chapters be omitted? For a novel, has there been sufficient synopsis as prologue?
- Having read some of these pieces previously, can you comment on how they have been revised? Have your readings of them been changed by their context?
- What suggestions do you have for expanding/revising the thesis into a full-length volume of poems or stories or a novel? For reading? For new work?

Remember, however, this is meant to be a dialogue. During the interview, committee members might pose the following questions to the writer (and the graduate should feel free to query committee members during the session as well):

- What problems did you encounter in ordering the poems for your collection? What was the most difficult part of that process? Did ordering the pieces prompt further revision or close it off?
- What other writers (faculty excluded) have most influenced your own work?
- Do you have any sense of direction yet for your next project?
- How did your essay influence your creative work?
- What relationship do you see between the course you've prepared and the thesis?
- What happens to Character X at the end of the novel?
- What poems/story/chapter are you planning for your reading?

In short, respond as you would to any first book manuscript written by someone you know: with description of its effect, constructive criticism, and praise whenever warranted. The session should be balanced between the particular manuscript in hand and the graduate's upcoming task, be it revision, expansion, or a new project, and the committee's role is that of helpful readers.

## GUIDELINES: WORKSHEETS

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Approximately two months before the residency, students submit 4 pages of poetry or 15-20 pages of fiction for the Worksheets. (Submission Guidelines will be communicated to all students a month in advance of the deadline.) Poetry should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, single-spaced, as the poet would like it printed, with no more than one poem per page; fiction should be double-spaced and a novel excerpt prefaced by a synopsis of what has preceded it. The pages should be numbered and the author's name should appear the top of each page, in the right hand corner. Margins must be 1.5 inches on either side, 1 inch at top and bottom. **Electronic submission is required.** New students may resubmit application material for worksheets. Manuscripts are collected, collated, and distributed to members of the workshop and the faculty with the pre-residency mailing, about six weeks in advance. PDFs of the full set of student worksheets will be available for those who are interested on the password-protected student-access area of the program website. Students who miss the deadline for workshop material will be assessed a late fee (see *Deadlines* and Deadline Schedule).

The “best” workshop experiences usually happen to students who submit work for which candid response is genuinely desired. Workshops, with their close focus on craft, are most efficacious with work that is literally in-progress. However, early-draft material is usually not near enough to an embodiment of its intent to communicate that intent to readers, and discussion may describe a confusing range of possibilities. Remember, too, that worksheets are read by the faculty and are one of the elements by which decisions about supervisor assignments will be made.

In choosing worksheet material, poets have the advantage of the shorter form; many students submit two poems that are fairly close to realization as a context for two more problematic or tentative poems to be discussed—usually, one poem thoroughly and the second more cursorily during the student’s allotted time. Poets working on a sequence, or fiction writers who tend to write in longer forms, may find choice of worksheet material more difficult, but it is essential to observe the page limitations indicated. If it isn't possible or useful to choose work of a length congenial to workshop discussion (one-page poems, or a story of 20 pages), then submit an excerpt and provide synopsis for the rest.

**EXCESS PAGES WILL NOT BE PRINTED IN THE WORKSHEETS.**

## GUIDELINES: WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

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The workshop is an opportunity not merely to receive response but also to give it--a sustained *practicum* in criticism. At Warren Wilson, the eclectic nature of the student body also challenges and stretches one's own aesthetic assumptions.

Because of the pace of residency, students and faculty should read carefully and make notes on all of the material for one's workshop IN ADVANCE OF RESIDENCY, as well as reserve some time the evening before in which to review the work of the two students being discussed the next day. For this reason, students are NOT ALLOWED to distribute replacement sheets (revisions or substitutions) at the residency.

When preparing worksheet material, participants should try first to discover the work's intention, setting aside for the moment one's own tastes and preferences; toward the end of the discussion hour one could raise doubts about the intention--i.e., why would the poet want to make this a sonnet; wouldn't a third person narrator be more efficacious for the thematic intent; is the convention chosen too great a limitation--but at least initially, the reader should try to describe rather than evaluate, and be open to the premises of the work. Often, a first reading will provoke more questions than comments--one pleasure of workshop is when your questions are answered simply by the perceptions of other readers. A second level of engagement with the task is to locate those passages/devices/choices that seem most effective in pursuit of the work's intent, or core. Often the most useful response a writer can receive is indication of what is successful. A natural extension of this engagement is identifying passages/devices/choices that seem at cross-purposes with the rest of the work, or not as fully realized, clear, detailed, or graceful as they need to be. Finally, workshop groups can be useful in speculating about change or additions--again, though, not in blind application of the reader's own taste or preference but in light of the work's deepest purposes.

At all these levels of consideration, comments need to be precise and detailed, offering evidence from the text for their assertions. A workshop should not be a poll; it is insufficient to say "I like the first stanza of this poem," or "I wanted to know more about the narrator"--comments should be supported by analysis and should be as descriptive as possible, without sliding into jargon.

The paired faculty members serve not only as active participants but as discussion moderators; they usually wait for students to initiate the conversation but may intervene to focus or redirect it. They also try to maintain a balance among an agenda most helpful to the piece, one most suggestive for future work by the author, and one (perhaps more speculative) most instructive to the group. Pairs rotate among the groups in order to embody the diversity of aesthetic positions that leaves room for the students' own choices.

It is extremely important, as well, that students monitor themselves in the crucial balance between active participation and domination. Some checkpoints might be:

- Begin the talk not with a small editing point or a broad challenge to the basic premises of the piece, but with that first level of engagement: description of the poem or story's intention/plot/central conflict and chosen formal means.
- Don't ALWAYS be the first one to speak. New students in particular might be well advised to listen at first for the tone of these conversations. At the same time, students who never speak deny themselves the chance to learn through articulation, and show a lack of generosity to fellow students who speak about their work.
- While preparing the manuscript your comments are addressed to the author or to yourself, but the discussion hour is a dialogue. Members of the group should respond to one another as conversation unfolds yet not belabor points already covered thoroughly.
- Comments should be about the work at hand and not about the person who wrote it--writers, above all others, should be most vigilant about the power, privileges and protection of the imagination.

The etiquette of the workshop requires that the author not speak during the discussion, unless called upon to supply some necessary information, not only to avoid "defense" of the piece but also to insure that the author hears what readers take from the page (or have failed to take). At the end of the hour, he/she/they may wish to ask questions of the group or request a brief summary of the response. A workshop may be frustrating if there has been wide disagreement or if you feel especially attached to/vulnerable about the piece. The "buddy system" often helps--singling out some other member of the workshop to ask, over lunch or in the dorm, for a summary of what was said—or reviewing the criticism with one's new supervisor, during residency or in correspondence. Remember this is not the only "airing" of the poem/story/chapter—the pieces often reappear, reworked and strengthened, at the Student Reading or Graduate Reading or in the Thesis Manuscript. Remember, that is, it goes back, after workshop, appropriately to the student's desk. Sometimes a comment recalled later will open a window, suggest a new way of thinking about the piece; sometimes, the group has misnamed but nevertheless located a weakness, and this prompts the student to a greater clarity of purpose; most often, what is learned from the discussion will be made manifest less in the piece discussed but in new work, a furthering.

Our Program is particularly proud of the tone of the workshops: supportive but rigorous, analytical but not judgmental, noncompetitive, vigilant against workshop jargon or preferred aesthetic. Participants should always feel free to question what seem weaknesses, poor choices or inadvertent missteps, but should also recall that the piece has been snatched from the desktop, that some of its awkwardness may be the absence of authority that attends most work-in-progress, that it does not seek to represent the author's best or finished work. Workshop is not an occasion for merely congratulating the author or "fixing" a flawed piece. As with all other parts of the Program--in the residency classes, during the exchange with your supervisor, undertaking the essay--the importance of workshop is the chance to enlarge one's capacity for strong work.

## Addendum to the Workshop Guidelines: 2020

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We consider the MFA Program for Writers a work in progress. Similar to the way we ask students and faculty to evaluate the semester's work and every aspect of the residency, the Academic Board continually re-examines the program's policies and procedures. In the past, significant changes to the residency have included removing graduating students from workshops (allowing them to focus on thesis interviews) and introducing bookshops. In 2019, we experimented, in a few groups, with a different approach to workshops. After considering student comments and soliciting input from representative faculty in both genres, we've decided to continue to experiment with our workshop practice more uniformly, informed by these revised guidelines.

Preparation for workshop remains as described in *Guidelines: Workshop Participation* in the Program Handbook. We continue to believe that it is helpful for the author to hear initial responses to the work as it is on the page, without additional commentary or information from the author. Those initial responses should begin by attempting to recognize and articulate the intention of the work, as well as its most significant features—aspects of the work that seem particularly striking, interesting, necessary to its form, etc. (One way to approach this is to imagine what you would focus on if you were to annotate the work, and why.) This initial response should not be supplied by just one member of the workshop, as in nearly every case readings will vary, possibly even contradict one another.

At this or at any other point in the discussion, if readers seem distracted by a particular reference, an apparent inconsistency, or some other matter of content, faculty should invite the author to clarify. The author should also feel free to offer such clarification on their own initiative, while keeping in mind that it can sometimes be helpful to hear where readers are confused or uncertain.

*After these initial responses, which are likely to lead to productive conversation, and no later than halfway through the allotted time, the author should have the opportunity to pose questions to the group.* This is more than what has, in the past, been informally called “the redirect”; this could be a single question about the work or a series of questions. At this point the author is choosing how to make the most of the assembled readers. While it might be useful to offer some clarification, this should not take the form of a “defense” of the piece, and it shouldn't direct the group away from a discussion of the specific poetry or fiction at hand. Appropriate questions might be inspired by readers' initial expression of the work's intention; they might also concern the effectiveness of particular choices or passages, or potential revisions.

Once the author's questions are addressed, faculty will encourage further discussion of the work, including passages or elements that seem particularly effective and opportunities for consideration in the drafts ahead. *This part of the discussion might also include questions posed to the author; the author has the option, but is not obliged, to respond.* At the end of the discussion, the author should have the opportunity to pose a final question.

## BRIEF GUIDE TO RESIDENCY

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### WHY YOU'VE COME

The residency sessions are designed to serve students in two basic ways. First, these 10-day sessions are important and exciting times because of the contact with other writers (both faculty and peers), exposure to various aesthetics, direct criticism of your manuscript, and stimulation for writing. The classes, workshops, conferences and readings make each session a unified and intensive period. Second, each residency closes a non-resident semester and initiates another, thereby complementing the independent work. The schedule includes opportunities to share and evaluate completed work, to receive counseling about one's plans, and to formulate a new project. Similarly, while the non-resident semester is a time for highly focused, individualized study with a single supervisor, the residency offers a broad context, with many resources, for that study.

### WHAT TO BRING

Everyone must bring the volumes of worksheets you have received in advance and the book used in your Bookshop seminar: these are your residency texts.

All students bring laptops or tablets for notetaking, form completion, access to documents, and reference; the residency evaluations and Semester Project Plans, completed during the residency, must be submitted electronically. During the summer residencies, computers and printers are available in the Spidel computer lab; computers and copiers are also available in the Library. We have no computer center at Blue Ridge Assembly, but the MFA office on both campuses has a printer/copier/scanner. All documents will be available, of course, on the program website.

Linens are provided at both campuses, but some people like to bring (or ship ahead) bedding, pillows, or other amenities to augment the rather Spartan dormitory accommodations. **We encourage everyone to bring a water bottle and coffee mug**, as we are committed to reducing residency waste, and don't provide disposable cups at any event. We recommend that you bring a flashlight for hiking around the mountainous campus at night. It's best to always pack clothes you can layer. Winter in the mountains is quite unpredictable: we've had Januaries in the 50s, and others with blizzards and ice storms. You should bring a heavy winter coat, hat, scarf, gloves, boots, and an umbrella. Summer days can be hot and humid, nights often cool.

Warren Wilson College and Blue Ridge Assembly are located near the Black Mountain range, a part of the southern Appalachians. There are excellent hiking trails on both campuses and in the surrounding area; access to the Blue Ridge Parkway is just a few miles to the west. With so much intense thought going on during the day, physical activities become important. Both campuses have a gym and weight rooms. We arrange for yoga sessions every residency, so bring along whatever apparel and equipment you

might need. Music is a welcome non-verbal activity, too, with a long tradition in this program after hours and as entertainment during our graduation banquet.

### **HOW TO GET HERE:**

The best route to the College is to exit Interstate 40 east of Asheville on ramp #55 or #59 (Exit 55 is the Oteen exit and 59 is the Swannanoa exit) and take Route 70 to 701 Warren Wilson Road. Take the **South Entrance** past the library and turn left; Boon Hall (where you'll check in) is ahead on your right. Dormitories, as well as the gym and pool, are on the other side of Warren Wilson Road (see the map on page 77).

Blue Ridge Assembly is accessed from either Exit 59 (Swannanoa) or 64 (Black Mountain) on I-40 east of Asheville and is located at 84 Blue Ridge Circle. Parking is available in front of and behind Eureka Hall, where you'll check in (map is on page 78).

Students traveling by plane or bus into Asheville will be contacted by the MFA office to make arrangements to be brought to campus by a moderately-priced shuttle.

### **WHEN YOU ARRIVE**

New students are encouraged to arrive on campus by early afternoon (2:00 p.m.) on the first day of residency in order to get settled in their dorm rooms, to receive a packet of residency materials and review them, and to register and pay any remaining fees. The Director and Board Chair will conduct a 4:30 p.m. orientation meeting with new students. Returning students are expected to arrive on campus on the first afternoon of the residency, in time to register and attend a reception and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Upon arrival in July, come to Boon Hall, where the MFA Program offices are housed, to pick up your room key and information packet (see map on page 77). Winter check-in is in Eureka Hall (see map on page 78).

If you plan to arrive a day before residency begins, we cannot provide a dorm room prior to the residency dates but the MFA Office will be happy to supply suggestions for hotels and motels in the area.

### **A NOTE ABOUT BLUE RIDGE ASSEMBLY**

The Program moved its winter residency to Blue Ridge Assembly in January 2019, due to a change in the WWC academic calendar which shortened the undergraduate holiday break. While this YMCA conference center is not an academic institution, it allows us to preserve the retreat atmosphere essential for our close-knit community. Of special note is the fact that this was the original location, in the 1930s, of the renowned and influential Black Mountain College—whose multidisciplinary, progressive, experimental ethos helped inform the vision of our founder, Ellen Bryant Voigt, and with which we feel deep kinship.

## WHERE YOU'LL BE

All students are given single rooms, with a preference for quiet or more social dorms, special needs due to physical impediments, etc. Bed and bath linens are provided. WWC dorms have self-service laundry facilities, and kitchens, which are not equipped for serious cooking but fine for an alternative to the dining room. The Owl's Nest, a small café in Sunderland, is in operation during much of the July residency. Usually, someone in your dorm will have a car for trips to local grocery stores. Laundry services are available at an additional charge at Blue Ridge Assembly; Eureka Hall has a refrigerator but no kitchen. Typically, a limited number of cabins (3 bedrooms, 2 baths, a kitchen) will be available, first-come first-served, to our students, but a minimum of 3 students must stay in each cabin.

All meals are provided at the Gladfelter cafeteria/ Blue Ridge Assembly dining hall or as catered special events. Both cafeterias provide ample options for vegetarians and vegans; please make sure the MFA office is aware of any dietary restrictions in advance. Students also like to go into Asheville or Black Mountain to eat at one of their many fine restaurants.

The mandatory Residency Fee (see current Fee Schedule) covers all meals during the residency period from dinner the first day through lunch on the last day, as well as receptions, catered meals, and the graduation banquet. The residency fee also covers lodging, administrative costs, and use of facilities.

Your dormitory on either campus is allocated to the exclusive use of the Program. Any non-program personnel should be wearing identification. You will be given a room key upon arrival and are advised to keep your room locked when you aren't in it, and to keep your car locked. The room key must be returned before you leave or you will be assessed a fee. At the college, students are issued ID cards at registration which also provide entry into the dormitories. **Please do not prop dorm doors open** and thus jeopardize the security of the building.

There is very little custodial help available for the WWC dorms, so please be responsible for your own room, the common areas and kitchen. Also, we try to honor all requests for quiet rooms; do not ask for a quiet dorm unless you genuinely mean to maintain the quiet. If noise becomes a problem you should not hesitate to insist that quiet be maintained.

Although MFA students are on campus for a very short period of time, and are impressively busy with their academic work while they are there, it is important that you pick up after yourself—in the classroom, lecture halls, and dorm rooms—and please be cordial to the student-workers in the cafeteria line or wherever you might encounter them. This goes for Blue Ridge Assembly as well, of course, which does have full-time cleaning and maintenance staffs.

There are three College regulations which should be strictly observed:

- **No pets** on campus. Service animals are permitted at Blue Ridge Assembly.
- **No smoking *anywhere*** except in designated areas.
- **No cars parked in front of the dormitories.** This is a violation of fire regulations; your car will be towed. Parking is available next to the gym and

behind Kittredge. At Blue Ridge Assembly, ample parking is available near Eureka Hall. Please see *Residency Policies*, in this volume, as well as the information booklet provided in residency packets.

The Program administrative offices are on the second floor of Boon Hall at the College, and in Eureka Hall at Blue Ridge Assembly. Staff will email students with important information/ updates, and will provide a table for incoming letters/packages. Students take their outgoing mail to the campus post office in lower Gladfelter or in the Blue Ridge Center.

Hours for the DeVries Physical Education Center, the Blue Ridge Assembly gym and weight room, and WWC pool (once reopened) will be noted in the information packet in your residency packets. The tennis courts behind DeVries Gym are open for first-come, first-serve use.

### **WHO YOU ARE**

Because of the low-residency design of the Program, new students are often surprised by the strong, non-competitive community that greets them at the residency session. There are no doubt many factors which contribute to this supportive atmosphere: the College itself, with its beautiful mountain setting and its commitment to service; the tone set by the Director and the faculty who are all serious writers and dedicated teachers; the careful planning for each residency schedule, which is attentive to student suggestions; the low (1:3) faculty/student ratio which guarantees individual attention; the Program's encouragement of a variety of aesthetics; the relationship between the collective residency sessions and the work accomplished individually during the non-resident semesters. But a chief factor surely is the nature of the student body—mature writers who are eager to develop their gifts.

Acceptance into the Program is highly selective. Students come from all parts of the country, some in transition from undergraduate study, some established in jobs and a wide range of professions. Some of you have only been writing seriously for a few years, others have published books and received grants, but all of you have indicated a serious intention for your work to grow and change. For some of you, the Program is an enrichment of existing local resources—access to readings, bookstores, workshops and other writers. For others, this Program is the community, the stimulus, the support and direction you have been eagerly awaiting.

## COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

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The MFA Program for Writers values diversity and the wide variety of human experience in reading, writing, and conversation. We are committed to honest dialogue at our residencies and in our correspondence about the effects of both published work and works in progress. But some words or behavior may offend others. A sincere commitment to diversity and inclusion requires the willingness to engage in difficult conversations when one or more members of the community are offended. The following is intended as guidance for these interactions.

### *Problematic Content*

What is objectionable to one member of the community may not be to another. We support every community member's right to express objection, and we believe every community member should be open to listening to those who are offended. Such conversations are often difficult; it may be useful to keep the following in mind.

- Words and texts resonate differently to different people.
- For a variety of reasons, a community member might choose to include a piece of writing in a class, lecture, reading, or workshop even though they are aware that it might cause offense to some readers or listeners. In such cases, placing the writing in context, and explaining why it has been included, can help to keep the focus on the valid reasons for presenting the work.
- Work containing graphic or explicit descriptions of violence or abuse has the potential to prompt a traumatic response from a reader or audience member. When such work is presented, it can be a sign of consideration for the audience to provide a content warning.
- If objectionable material is presented without explanation, a reader or listener should feel free to raise the issue (at the moment or later), remain silent (no one is *required* to share their opinions regarding content they find offensive), or remove themselves from the situation (which could mean leaving the room).
- Judging the intention of work in progress can be especially challenging, as such work is by definition not fully formed; its tone and purpose are evolving. With that in mind:
  - Begin as a generous reader. Ask questions with concern, rather than assuming a writer meant to offend.
  - In preparing for discussion, be alert to content that may be objectionable to some readers, and prepare to discuss the passage in an open, respectful way.
  - In discussion, raise the difficulty with the content, while also recognizing that, in the end, it is the writer's privilege to make the final decisions about their writing.

### *If You Have Been Offended or Witness Objectionable Behavior*

- If possible, speak to the person who behaved objectionably. Silence is often interpreted to mean *everything is fine*. This might be easiest when you can speak to that person alone. Choose a neutral space where you feel comfortable. You may choose to be accompanied by a fellow student or faculty/staff member.
- When speaking out, be clear about how words, actions, or mannerisms gave offense.
  - Try to avoid attacking the individual. We all misspeak; it doesn't mean we are bad people.
- At any point (before, after, or instead of talking to the person who gave offense), the incident can be brought to the attention of the Program Director, a member of the Academic Board, or the Academic Board's Representative for Diversity and Inclusion. The Director, Board, and Board Representative bear responsibility for maintaining a climate in which students, faculty and staff members may do their best work.
- If someone has demonstrated a pattern of biased and/or prejudiced behavior, we urge you to bring the matter to the attention of the Program Director, a member of the Academic Board, or the Academic Board's Representative for Diversity and Inclusion.
- No community member is *required* to speak out. There are valid reasons for choosing not to.
- If *for any reason* you do not want to or feel you cannot raise the issue with the person who offended you, ask for support from a friend or colleague.
- An offended individual does not need to apologize to the person who gave offense. Rather than say, "I'm sorry to bring this up," you might say, "I don't know what you intended, but your words were hurtful because..."
- While discussing the problem with friends or close colleagues is natural, this rarely *solves* an issue. Be mindful of the outcome you're seeking. If you're in need of empathy and understanding, a friend, taken into confidence, can offer that. If you want the person who offended you to understand the offense, or to change, a different action is needed.

### *If You Are Told You Have Caused Offense*

- It's natural to want to defend or explain your words or actions. First, though, be a good listener. Do not speak until the person who approached you is finished. This is an opportunity to see from their perspective.
- The person who raises an issue may not want to take part in a long discussion and is under no obligation to do so. If you don't understand the comment, you can ask for clarification; if you feel the matter warrants further discussion, ask if the person who approached you is open to that. Respect their answer. Should you offer an apology, try not to over-apologize.
- Consider the power dynamics in this conversation; it likely took great courage for the person to speak to you. They are probably as anxious as you are. A good practice is to thank the person for bringing this to your attention.

- Even if you feel you've been misunderstood, it is a sign of consideration to listen and try to understand the thoughts and feelings of the person offended.
- Let the person know that you were unaware of the effect of your words or actions, that they've given you something to think about, and that this will inform your actions in the future.
- Don't make jokes or be dismissive. The fact that the matter was important to a fellow writer should make it worth your serious attention.
- Faculty are especially encouraged to follow these guidelines—to acknowledge their power and to model respectful behavior.

## THE EXTENDED COMMUNITY

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The Program has provided two opportunities to return to the mountain, post-graduation:

The **JOAN BEEBE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP**, initiated in 1997, but currently suspended indefinitely by the College, has been offered by Warren Wilson College annually to a Program alumnus/a, providing the opportunity of a year's teaching in the undergraduate Creative Writing department, and campus housing at a reduced rate. A highlight of the Beebe Fellow's experience is leading a small group of undergraduates through the public events of the January residency, during which they meet separately to discuss the lectures and have individual conferences with MFA mentors. It's our hope that this Fellowship will resume in the near future.

The **ALUMNI RESIDENCY FELLOWSHIP** is another way to re-connect with the Program, available after one or more years following graduation. The Alumni Residency Fellow records lectures and readings throughout a residency and assists the office staff; the fellowship, which provides a \$1000 toward travel and expenses, along with room and board, is an opportunity to reconnect with the community and, ideally, an opportunity to write. Those who wish to apply should send a letter of interest to the Director, specifying availability for upcoming residencies.

The annual AWP conference also provides an opportunity to reconnect, through volunteering at the Program's Bookfair, and attending the reception jointly hosted by the Program and Friends of Writers, Inc. Check the FOW blog in the month before the conference for location and time details.

### FRIENDS OF WRITERS, INC.

Friends of Writers enriches American poetry and fiction by cultivating new and vital literary voices. It accomplishes this by raising funds to support writers as they seek and fulfill their potential through graduate study. FOW values rigorous writing programs that encourage the development of the individual's finest work, and also values the

diversity—in aesthetic, ethnicity, gender, age, occupational, geographic, and economic background—that will ensure American writing reflects the entire nation.

Incorporated in 1991 in the state of Vermont as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit foundation, Friends of Writers, Inc. is a central source of support for our Program: it solicits, manages and disburses scholarships in order to preserve and extend the MFA writing community. It has overseen the production of seven faculty anthologies, published by the University of Georgia Press, the University of Michigan Press, Trinity University Press, and W.W. Norton. FOW works with the MFA office to maintain the Alumni Directory and Bibliography.

The Friends of Writers blog, which features news and achievements of our faculty and alumni, is updated regularly at [www.friendsofwriters.org](http://www.friendsofwriters.org). The website also provides information about alumni opportunities and fundraising events, and a webstore which offers downloadable faculty lectures from decades of Program residencies. All proceeds from the anthologies and lecture downloads benefit Program scholarships.

Toward alumni support: FOW facilitates and provides scholarships for the annual Alumni Conference. The Conference is not a typical reunion but a working session of peers, restricted to Program graduates, who conduct readings, classes, workshops, and manuscript review for collections, continuing the Program's commitment to rigor within a supportive community. It convenes for 5-10 days each summer at various colleges and universities across the country. Additionally, FOW supports alumni through the Levis Stipend, awarded annually to a graduate in each genre toward the completion of a first book.

As noted on page 55, Friends of Writers is the source of numerous scholarships for enrolled students in the MFA Program for Writers, including the Barnhardt Family Fund, the D'Amico Scholarship, Holden Fund for Diversity, the Carol Houck Smith Scholarship, the Rodney Jack Scholarship, the Lisel Mueller Scholarship, and the Renate Wood Scholarship for Poets. FOW provides emergency assistance, as well, through the Amy Grimm Emergency Fund for Students and the Steve Orlen Fund for Faculty.

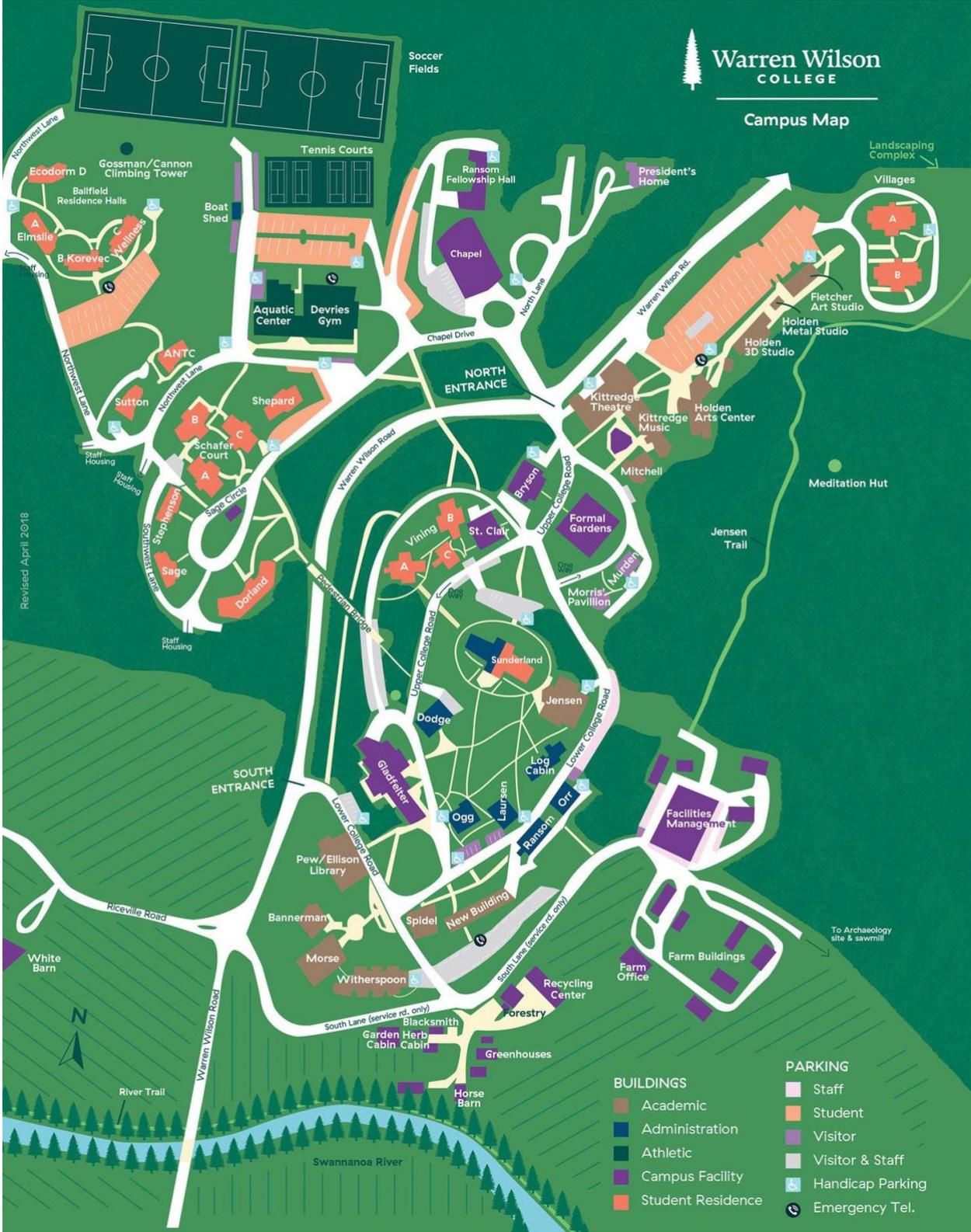
Tax-deductible contributions may be made to the general funds of Friends of Writers, Inc., or specified for any of the above restricted funds via the FOW website or by check to:

Friends of Writers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 677  
Montpelier, VT 05602

The Program and FOW work jointly to plan anniversary events every five years. It's fitting to conclude with the words of our founder, Ellen Bryant Voigt, offered at the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011:

*What we celebrate collectively every five years is a remarkable community of writers. What we honor continuously is the achievement of its individual members, their indelible, distinctive poetry and fiction.*

Campus Map



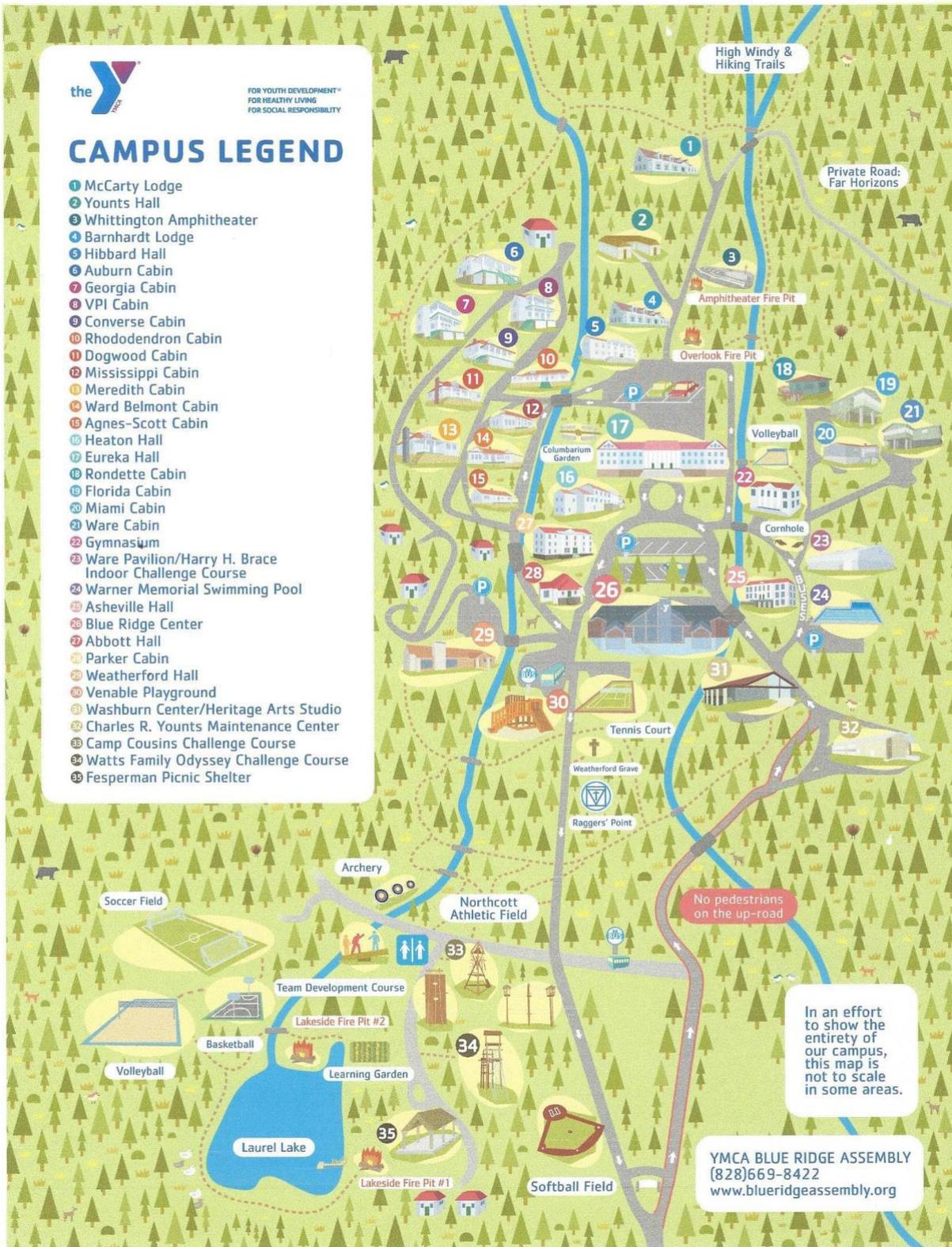
Revised April 2018



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# CAMPUS LEGEND

- 1 McCarty Lodge
- 2 Younts Hall
- 3 Whittington Amphitheater
- 4 Barnhardt Lodge
- 5 Hibbard Hall
- 6 Auburn Cabin
- 7 Georgia Cabin
- 8 VPI Cabin
- 9 Converse Cabin
- 10 Rhododendron Cabin
- 11 Dogwood Cabin
- 12 Mississippi Cabin
- 13 Meredith Cabin
- 14 Ward Belmont Cabin
- 15 Agnes-Scott Cabin
- 16 Heaton Hall
- 17 Eureka Hall
- 18 Rondette Cabin
- 19 Florida Cabin
- 20 Miami Cabin
- 21 Ware Cabin
- 22 Gymnasium
- 23 Ware Pavilion/Harry H. Brace Indoor Challenge Course
- 24 Warner Memorial Swimming Pool
- 25 Asheville Hall
- 26 Blue Ridge Center
- 27 Abbott Hall
- 28 Parker Cabin
- 29 Weatherford Hall
- 30 Venable Playground
- 31 Washburn Center/Heritage Arts Studio
- 32 Charles R. Younts Maintenance Center
- 33 Camp Cousins Challenge Course
- 34 Watts Family Odyssey Challenge Course
- 35 Fesperman Picnic Shelter



In an effort to show the entirety of our campus, this map is not to scale in some areas.

YMCA BLUE RIDGE ASSEMBLY  
(828)669-8422  
[www.blueridgeassembly.org](http://www.blueridgeassembly.org)