

September 1, 2023

Dear Dean Dunaway and Dr. Brian Ballentine:

In accordance with the provisions of [Board of Governors Rule 2.2](#), the Program Review Appeal Hearing for the Department of English was held on August 30, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

The Appeal was of the following Preliminary Recommendation(s):

- BA English: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- BA English/Secondary Education: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- MFA Creative Writing: Discontinuance
- MA Professional Writing and Editing: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- PhD English Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.

The members of the Program Review Appeal Committee for this unit were:

- Paul Kreider, Vice Provost
- Lou Slimak, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment
- Evan Widders, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
- Valerie Lastinger, Associate Dean, Eberly College
- Rebel Smith, Associate Dean, Chambers College
- Robin Hissam, Associate Dean, Statler College
- Scott Wayne, Faculty Senate representative

The following individuals participated in the presentation of the Appeal for the unit: Brian Ballentine and Mark Brazaitis. These individuals and/or this unit submitted additional documentation and information in advance of the Hearing.

### ***Result of the Program Review Appeal***

Taking the information presented into consideration, the Committee has made the following determinations:

- Grant the appeal of the discontinuance for the MFA Creative Writing by a vote of 7 to 0.
- Grant the appeal of the reduction of the number of faculty positions in the unit from the current number to 26 by a vote of 6 to 1.
  - Recommend to reduce the number of faculty positions in the unit from the current number to 28 by a vote of 6 to 1.

The key components that led to the Committee's determination(s) include the following:

- Sustained decline in enrollment in the undergraduate program;
- Decrease in student credit hour production;
- Low student-to-FTE ratio;
- Discontinuation of the MFA Creative Writing and the elimination of the associated graduate teaching assistants would have impacted the unit's ability to deliver its service courses;
- Unit presented a plan to increase faculty workload by one course per year for all tenure-track faculty;
- Unit presented a plan to improve instructional efficiency; and
- Unit presented a plan to merge the MA English with the MA Professional Writing and Editing.

### ***Review by the WVU Board of Governors***

As a result of the [Board of Governors Rule 2.2](#), the Program Review Process and Appeal Hearing, the following Provost's Office Final Recommendation(s) will be placed on the Public Agenda for the September 15, 2023, Board of Governors meeting for a vote by the Board.

- MFA Creative Writing: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- Reduce the number of faculty in the unit from the current number to 28.

The following recommendations will also be presented to the Board of Governors as they are listed below:

- BA English: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- BA English / Secondary Education: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- MA Professional Writing and Editing: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- PhD English Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
  - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.

Additionally, the unit will:

- Adjust its tenure-track faculty workload by increasing one course a year for all tenure-track faculty as presented in the appeal; and
- Explore the development of a cooperative program between the MA English and the MA Professional Writing and Editing programs.

### ***Reduction of Faculty Positions***

Through this process and as a result of the Appeal decision(s), the Provost's Office has determined that the number of faculty positions in the unit should be reduced from its current number to 28.

If this recommendation is approved by the Board of Governors, the Provost's Office, in consultation with the dean's office and the chair (where applicable), will develop the Reduction in Force Plan, which will determine the specific faculty members who will be retained or subject to a reduction in force / non-renewals for this unit. Additionally, that process will include discussion of which faculty positions can be eliminated as of May 9, 2024, and which positions may be needed for one or two years beyond May 9, 2024, for teach-out programming. Faculty will learn on or around October 16, 2023, whether their positions will be eliminated or retained, or if they will be asked to stay on for a longer period of time to complete teach-out programming.

### ***Providing Comments to WVU Board of Governors***

Individuals have two opportunities to provide comments to the Board of Governors in advance of the September 15 vote. First, they can provide a written comment about a Provost's Office Final Recommendation or about WVU Transformation generally by completing this [comment form](#). To ensure that the Board members have appropriate time to review any comments received, we ask that they please submit comments at least two days in advance of September 14.

Second, if they wish to sign up to speak at a Board meeting, they may do so by completing [this form](#). If possible, individuals should try to submit their request to speak at least two days in advance of September 14. However, they will still be able to sign up in-person in advance of the start of the September 14 meeting. Depending on the number of individuals that sign up to speak, the Board may limit the number of speakers who may address a particular topic. The time that each speaker can speak will also be limited based upon the number of speakers.

### ***Notifying Your Faculty and Staff***

You must notify the faculty and appropriate staff within this unit of the Provost Office's Final Recommendations by forwarding this email and CCing Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment Lou Slimak ([Louis.slimak@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Louis.slimak@mail.wvu.edu)). This notification should occur **immediately after receiving this letter**.

### ***Additional Resources***

The Provost's Office is currently working toward securing services with a career outplacement organization to assist faculty and staff who are affected by the current non-renewal or reduction in force processes. Specific details about this service and how to participate will be forthcoming.

Additionally, the WVU Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) is a free, confidential resource for all active and retired faculty, staff and their dependents (i.e., spouse or child). It is a safe place where employees can talk about any struggles or concerns they are facing and determine the best way to address them. To utilize FSAP, call their office at [304-293-5590](tel:304-293-5590) or email [fsap@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:fsap@hsc.wvu.edu) to schedule a free appointment with a counselor.

Finally, information on the process and timeline is available at: <https://transformation.wvu.edu/resources>.

Sincerely,

WVU Office of the Provost