

BCCAT Creative Writing Committee

**MINUTES
BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS &
TRANSFERS (BCCAT)**

**University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
(Online- via Zoom)**

Friday April 29, 2022

9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Chaired by: Graham Pearce

Minutes Taken: Jasreen G Kang

- **Welcome from Graham Pearce, Chair**
- **9:00 AM meeting commenced**

Introductions/welcome

In attendance: Nancy Holmes (UBC Okanagan); Renee Harper (Selkirk College); Rob Budde (University of Northern BC); Kristine Kerins (Camosun College); Heather Simeney MacLeod (Thompson Rivers University); James Gifford (Fairleigh Dickinson University); Tamar Harris (University Canada West); Graham Pearce (College of New Caledonia); Adele Barclay (Capilano University); Nathan Dueck (College of the Rockies), Jasreen G Kang (Yorkville University), Roger Semmens (Langara College) ; Cynthia Watson; Robert Fleming (Executive Director and Co-Chair, BCCAT)

Regrets: Leesa Dean (Chair); Corinna Chong (Okanagan College); Alexandra Tsardidis (UBC School of Creative Writing)

Robert Fleming- BCCAT Executive Director and Co- Chair addressed the attendees at 9:00 AM

Some of the key issues that were discussed are as follows:

- The Potential for Reverse Transfer in the BC Transfer System
<https://www.bccat.ca/pubs/Reports/ReverseTransfer2022.pdf>
- Research practices in terms of inclusivity: Pathways Partnerships with Indigenous Institutions
<https://www.bccat.ca/intro/PathwaysPartnerships2021>
- Exploring Students' Motivations for Credit
<https://www.bccat.ca/intro/StudentMotivations2021>

- Accumulation Micro-Credentials: Trends in Credit Transfer
<https://www.bccat.ca/intro/MicroCredentialsReport>
- Credentialing COVID-19 and Transfer
<https://www.bccat.ca/intro/CovidandTransfer2021>

Following links were also shared:

BCCAT Spring Update: <https://www.bccat.ca/pubs/Resources/ACUpdate202204.pdf>

BCCAT's Engage newsletter <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=a0d07b41d98e4cf5ff3b39e3a&id=8ebdee24ad>

1. Transfer matters: Successes, Desires, Disappointments

- Any issues to discuss?
- Any transfer news?

Graham Pearce:

- Success: Transfer requests worked very smoothly
- Most of the relationships have been very productive
- Transfers have been very successful UNBC, especially with associate degrees
- Within the associates degree, an agreement was made that students could take 6 more course/18 more credits of English and transfer into the third year at UNBC.
- Registrar's office and articulation officers can help understand the functionality of transfer credits.

Nancy Holmes:

- Disappointment: Block transfer agreement with Okanagan college (Associate Degree in Creative writing) hasn't come to fruition.

Robert Fleming:

- If you've got information and don't know how to proceed further, contact Robert or Mike and it will be taken care of.
- Suggestions/complaints can be sent and will be followed up

2. Pandemic Teaching.... Still

- Challenges and successes of pandemic teaching
- Best/worst practices

Nancy Holmes:

- September classes were on campus, however, in January went back to online teaching for about 5 weeks due to the surge in Covid cases. There has been a mask mandate – whole campus was masked all the time. The big takeaway was everybody was happy to be back on campus
- What was found out was that 2nd year students were like 1st year students- group projects were not so successful.
- Some students prefer online courses, so some courses will still be offered online. Example, if there are 2 sections of a course one of them will be offered online.

Graham Pearce:

- Creative Writing Non-fiction was offered online. Students who took the course were social worker sand preferred online classes. Interesting to note that it was very successful- at the end of the year public reading took place which was much appreciated
- It's proven that for some courses online/hybrid models have a place
- Online classes filling faster than face to face, not just for creative writing but for English courses as well

James Gifford:

- Completely remote in September except for some hybrid courses. Creative write was on Zoom but synchronous
- In January, it was asynchronous; synchronous zoom meetings were offered but were not mandatory. It was interesting to see that almost all students opted for asynchronous learning and the level of engagement was unexpectedly very high
- Online courses fill faster, students are gravitating towards it

Roger Semmens:

- During pandemic, online workshops held for Creative Writing Courses and they were successful
- During the transitioning phases students preferred online classes over face-to-face classes

Kristine Kerins:

- Face-to-face since September, however online classes were popular and were being waitlisted
- Poor attendance for face-to-face classes (English and Creative Writing), but the ones who are attending are profoundly engaged

Renee Harper:

- Three different versions of Creative Writing courses
- 1. High flex version in Nelson which was partially face to face. Face to face as much as possible
- 2. Online lectures: activities that could be done online, so if someone had Covid they could engage online
- 3. Second year hybrid was partially in person, but ended up switching it back to online permanently because the engagement was higher and for reaching out to wider region
- Enrollments have been steady

Jasreen G Kang:

- Face-to-face model working very well since September, lot of engagement in the class. Group work/ interactions are good, enthusiasm in classes.

Rob Budde:

- Return to face to face was very exciting, enthusiastic, and engaging

- With online classes also there are numerous benefits; physical accessibility, neurodivergent students benefit from online teaching

Tamar Harris:

- No going back for the cohort that has experienced online learning
- Must be a balance between what's good for the instructor and what the students prefer
- Hybrid could be a solution for now

Nathan Dueck:

- Sometimes accessibility off the chart: internet issue
- Benefits are enormous with online/hybrid learning: student engagement is high, getting great education

3. Current Classroom Practices

- Craft in the real world/anti-racist writing workshops
- Indigenization in the classroom
- Work integrated learning

Renee Harper:

Work integrated learning at our institution:

- Leesa Dean took up the funded release for work this year, and the institution has since developed partnerships with publications locally.
- Leesa also mentored students as they got on the job experience: one student got to be a journalist for a day, and more than a day to go out and interview people and then published her first article. The student was also the managing editor at the Black Bear Review Literary magazine
- Running a podcast which gives students real world experiences there.
- Lot of student engagement, collaboration with digital art students

Nancy Holmes:

- Co-op program, UCO, for art students and creative writing.
- Some good placements: students been working at the art gallery in the museum, writing copy and content for their websites, blogs, ETC.
- Developed a third-year course called writing and the racialized writer

Heather McLeod:

- 17 or 18 new courses that have been introduced across English and Communications departments that address Metis literature or indigenous narrative studied in Canada.
- Decolonization and indigenization faculty committee at the University
- Create concrete ways of indigenizing the material

- Learning to indigenize could be a lifelong learning process- multigenerational
- Learning to authentically deliver a land acknowledgement is part of indigenizing

Rob Budde:

- University recently hired a Vice President of Equity Affairs
- University needs to address issues on equity, reconciliation, and anti racism.
- In the English department, 'The collective for anti-racism' group addresses the issues on equity
- Description of the department on the website and in materials includes an equity statement and the statement recognizes equity work and community work; this has changed the scholarly expectations. So, it is a support to the 'BIPOC' faculty as Tenure and Promotion committee looks at it

Roger Semmens:

- English department had the first JEDI committee
- Faculty Association itself is going through an entire detailed process, moving towards diversity and inclusion (bottom-up approach rather than top-down approach)

Graham Pearce:

- Equality of opportunity works better with students than equity which comes from business
- True indigenization: when a student invited her family to a reading session and faired really well

James Gifford:

- Core curriculum back in 2015 integrated- taken by all undergraduates, all programs, all campuses.
- Integrated a number of indigenous authors and a comparative unit on the TRCS of South Africa, Chile and Canada- students who were indigenous from other places were excited about the same.

4. Presentation of Institutional Reports (Detailed reports are available on BCCAT Creative Writing Moodle page)

Graham Pearce:

- How are you balancing compassion with rigour?

Jasreen G Kang:

- Supporting them by familiarizing them with Student Success Centre
- Helping students reach out Mental health and Wellness department.
- Acting as an intermediary- writing emails to the department and fixing appointments for students, tackling anxiety issues of students
- Helping them make schedules as part of University Studies course
- Helping them seek support through 'Studiosity'- Live tutoring and feedback on assignments

James Gifford:

- The Humanities minor is now available on the Vancouver campus, as well as a Humanities specialization in the BA in Individualized Studies
- Building the Humanities minor and domestic recruitment is the extent of plans for Vancouver this coming year
- FDU-V began hosting the Poet's Corner reading series a few weeks before the pandemic
- MA in Creative Writing and Literature for Educators (based on the Madison, NJ campus) may begin offering one of its short residencies on the Vancouver Campus to better serve enrolled students in the Western USA and Canada

Heather McLeod:

- The Department of English and Modern Languages is being combined with the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts; a new name for the combined departments is under review.
- Rebecca Fredrickson's "Greyson Scale: Forgiveness" placed first in Geist's Short Long Distance Writing Contest
- Heather Simeney MacLeod has published poetry in The Antigonish.
- Robin Nichol is a member of the mom's The Word Collective and the collective is writing and will be performing a show at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver in 2021.
- A Major in Theatre and Creative Writing is forthcoming.

Tamar Harris:

- Role of a counsellor and a psychologist to students during pandemic
- Sticking to rules has been difficult
- One must draw the line out of fairness when it comes to exam extensions and assignments.
- Same thing goes with plagiarism. If you're super kind and flexible, it becomes problematic
- Teaching creative nonfiction to the students and teaching fiction are two different ways of writing as well as it feels like the difference really needs to be taught

Graham Pearce:

- Teach 3 creative writing courses (Poetry, Fiction and Creative Non- Fiction)
- Pandemic enrollments have been a little less, although enrolments are pretty good for these courses
- Interesting to note that creative non-fiction, an online course, filled up right away while the face-to-face courses took a while to fill up.
- Provincial government has given colleges the right to explore what are called applied degrees; administration interested in Applied Degrees in Creative Industries
- As far as compassion is concerned, it is important, and it is good to go over the classroom covenant that sort of guides us in terms of behavior along with making concessions when need be

Kristine Kerins:

- 7 different first year creative writing courses
- Associated degree in Creative writing was discontinued
- Reinitiated discussions with administration about building a one-year Creative Writing certificate.
- In future: 'Creative sample plate' that combines the Fine Arts department, the Music Department, Creative Writing and Digital Communications
- January offering of CRWR 159 normally births literary journal, *Beside the Point*. Students from all CRWR courses contribute content to this print and online journal, and those in our Editing and Publishing course are responsible for selection, editing, organization, layout, and publicity, as well as event-planning for the launch.
- Everyone has become more compassionate in the past 2 years- compassion and generosity is required in these hard, trying times

Renee Harper:

- In terms of the Black Bear Review, there is reliance on partnership models. So, there is a partnership with the Digital Arts and New Media program and the students work on the design and event.
- Paired with Eastern Washington University to hold their writers symposium at the institution.
- Leesa Dean's novella in verse, *The Filling Station*, is forthcoming this fall with Gaspereau Press. She is in her sixth year on the Elephant Mountain Literary Festival committee and also helps plan Oxygen Arts' Author Reading Series
- Compassionate in these times: deadlines are extended; list of phone numbers on desk and pamphlets to walk students to counseling
- Whole range of resources hat Selkirk has developed for international student support and writing support

Roger Semmens:

- Writing Lives will eventually be given its own course number. Continue to run W49, Strangers on a Train (which has been virtual since the pandemic began), and the postcard story contest
- Trevor Newland's new book *The Atheneum* was recently published; Sarah Richards' novel *China White* was released as an audio book in 2021; Peter Babiak has an essay in Anvil Press' book *Resonance: Essays on the Life and Craft of Writing*; Jill Goldberg will be listed as a co-author on Sam George's forthcoming residential school memoir *The Fire Still Burns*.
- Decolonization of pedagogy

Rob Budde:

- Dr. Dee Horne is retiring July 2022. A new hire is in the works for a replacement to teach Fiction Writing and Indigenous Literature.
- *Thimbleberry Magazine: Art + Culture in Northern BC* has now released its 6th issue. Co-editors Rob Budde, Kara-lee MacDonald, and George Harris continue in their roles
- Tried a new model in the 4th year poetry writing class and used a method called ungrading; engage with the process and the feedback. At the end of the course partly self-evaluation but

partly just a conversation about what went well and what didn't.

Nathan Dueck:

- Experimented with ungrading for a portion of the assessment for 1st year students and it worked very well, found students were more engaged. It reintroduced the students to the real world

Adele Barclay:

- The English Department has two exciting initiatives in progress—the BA in Writing & Literature and a Screenwriting Concentration in collaboration with MOPA (Motion Picture Arts.)
- Introduction to Screenwriting (new course in development, ready for Senate Curriculum Committee approval)
Leah has been overseeing is an anthology of work written by Capilano students and then edited by Capilano students
- BA Writing and Literature integrates literary study and creative writing within a single major, while also offering distinct applied and experiential program elements, the Major in Writing & Literature is a potential pathbreaker and destination degree attracting students from both within and beyond the region and province.

Nancy Holmes:

- Offer a Bachelor of Arts major in Creative Writing, a combined major with several other programs, as well as a minor in Creative Writing. We also offer an MFA in Creative Writing.
- Huge influx of students in the first-year creative writing course.
- Students continue to publish an annual review of Creative Writing work *Paper Shell*, and do many creation/production projects in classes.
- Faculty members continue to publish- we had two new faculty books, two books published by MFA students, two new faculty publishing contracts, and at least two publishing contracts for our MFA students, and a feature film in development.
- This year Naben Ruthnum was our Writer-in-Residence; he met with 12 students and members of the public, gave a reading and judged our Short Story Contest. Had a successful Okanagan Short Story Contest again, with Manjinder Sidhu winning the first prize. Kevin Chong ran an Anti-racist Book Club with a grant from UBC with Katherena Vermette and Ian Williams. We had a book launch for two MFA students, Brianna Ferguson and Umar Turaki, and for faculty members Matt Rader and Nancy Holmes. Matt Rader gave the annual Sharon Thesen Lecture.

5. Envisioning the Future of this Committee

- sub-committees (i.e.- for cataloguing learning outcomes)?
- discussion forums and/or resource sharing throughout the year?
- rotating chair?

Next year discussion point: Monitor enrolment trends from online to face-to face