

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
MASTER OF FINE ARTS PROGRAM IN SPANISH CREATIVE WRITING**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish a new Master of Fine Arts Program in Spanish Creative Writing in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College.

Executive Summary: The proposed program will offer new opportunities for students to develop their talent as writers in Spanish. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to “provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The proposed two-year graduate program is designed to be a terminal degree that qualifies graduates to teach creative writing at the community college as well as university level in the United States and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. The proposed program will allow graduate students to develop and hone their writing skills as writers in Spanish while working with established writers from the Spanish-speaking world. The program will have two primary areas of emphasis – Prose and Poetry. Students will be required to complete a minimum of 48 semester hours and participate in several outreach workshops in the community. Students will also be required to do a final public reading during the spring semester of the second year. A thesis is required for program completion.
- ◇ **Relationship to existing programs at SUI.** The proposed program will build on the experience of other well-established initiatives on the campus, such as the Writers’ Workshop and the International Writing Program. The University of Iowa has achieved artistic and intellectual prestige among Spanish American universities and among U.S. Latino/academic communities as a result of its International Writing Program. The proposed program would enhance both writing programs by attracting writers and students to campus and the community.
- ◇ **Unique features.** The significance of Iowa City as an international cultural center (recently recognized as a UNESCO City of Literature) makes the University of Iowa an appropriate location to house the proposed program. The unique qualities of the university and Iowa City, and the creative faculty in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese are likely to establish the proposed program as the premier program in Spanish Creative Writing in the United States.
- ◇ **Duplication.** The proposed program does not exist elsewhere in the state of Iowa or the Big 10 consortium of universities. New York University is one of a very small number of U.S. universities that offers such a program.

- ◇ Student demand. The increasing demographic population changes in the United States and in Iowa point to the need for the proposed program. In 2004, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that there were more than 40 million Hispanics residing in the U.S.; three-fourths of this population spoke a language other than English at home. By July 2008, the estimated Latino population in Iowa was 4.2% of the state's total population and the state's largest minority population. The Latino population is increasing at an accelerating rate; the growing population of children will continue to seek educational opportunities in Iowa and elsewhere in the U.S. The proposed program will address this rapidly growing segment of the population and will likely attract those students who wish to pursue creative writing opportunities in Spanish. The need for future teachers of Spanish Creative Writing stems from the focus on creative writing in Spanish at the undergraduate level at the university and elsewhere.

- ◇ Workforce need/demand. The U.S. Census Bureau newsroom release "Facts for Features" in July 2010 described the growing Hispanic population in the U.S.¹ In recognition of the growing market for domestic Hispanic cultural products, a growing number of U.S.-based publishing firms (such as Santillana USA and Random House's joint agreement between Random House's Vintage Español and Random House Mondadori) have launched trade book series in Spanish. Spanish language editions of traditional publications continue to prosper. The proposed program will graduate well-trained writers to serve these expanding markets.

- ◇ Resources. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese currently has four tenure-track faculty who will be actively involved with the administration, teaching, and advising for the proposed program. A visiting professor who is a distinguished writer of fiction or poetry will be appointed to teach at both the MFA and undergraduate levels. Other faculty members in the department will participate as appropriate. Spanish-speaking participants in the International Writers Program will be invited to collaborate with the proposed program while they are in residence in Iowa City. No new tenure-track faculty, facilities or equipment will be required to offer the proposed program.

- ◇ Cost. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has agreed to reallocate funds to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for the proposed program. A total of \$136,177 will be reallocated in Year 1 to fund five teaching assistant lines; a .5 FTE visiting professor appointment; and a budget for speakers, advertising, and recruitment. The anticipated cost of the proposed program will be \$172,307 by Year 7.

Upon approval of the proposed program, the department plans to apply for grants and encourage students to apply for funding. Potential sources of grants and fellowships include the National Endowment for the Arts; Fulbright Scholarships in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, and Spain; Fulbright Hayes Scholarships; Javits Fellowships; William Randolph Hearst Scholarships; International Women American Association Scholarships; and Hispanic Scholarship Fund – McNamara Family Creative Arts Project Grant.

¹ http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_features_special_editions/cb10-ff17.html.

- ◇ Projected enrollment. The projected enrollment is 15 graduate students in Year 1, increasing to 30 students by Year 7. Students who were introduced to creative writing in their undergraduate programs in Spanish will likely be attracted to the proposed program. Concentrations in creative writing in Spanish already appeal to students. Other anticipated sources include the recruitment of students by faculty members nationally and internationally. The department plans to have a wide distribution of pamphlets and posters following approval of the proposed program. A web page will be created to disseminate information about the program, including deadlines, requirements, and supporting materials.

- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The University's 2010-2016 Strategic Plan emphasizes "New Frontiers in the Arts" and recommends the development of arts synergies to complement the rebuilding of the arts campus. The proposed program would promote and advance those synergies.