

Dear Students,

As you know, over the last three years we have lost two faculty in creative nonfiction and are left with no faculty specializing in that area. In general, since state funding for MFA and MA programs was cut relative to PhD programs, the University support for our MFA program has been reduced. We currently have only one faculty member in poetry and two in fiction. Further, we now have confirmed full support for only 5 new students each year, which we have to split up and share between the 3 genres.

It seems unlikely that in the near future we will return to a level of funding and faculty hires that are needed to sustain an MFA program in three genres.

This situation has forced CW faculty to consider the direction of the MFA program. In consultation with the Department chair, CW faculty have decided to refocus the program in a way that makes use of the strengths of present faculty and the limited student funding that is available to us, to create as strong a program as possible.

For the present time, when there are opportunities for hiring, we will seek writers with strengths in more than one genre. To replace Prof. Johnston on sabbatical, for example, we will seek a fiction writer with a secondary strength in nonfiction. Other than cnf applications that may already be in progress, we will suspend applications in that genre.

We hope this will be temporary. Nonfiction is an art form and a worthy academic pursuit. If we get a PhD in CW--which CW faculty support and will pursue--there will be opportunities to expand the program in the future and, we hope, to offer full resources in all areas. However, until there is a PhD program in CW, it's unlikely that we will hire in CNF a professor who has the publications and experience in CNF of Prof. Livingston.

We are committed to working with current CNF students, including incoming students, to ensure that they can complete all graduation requirements, including thesis and comps. We will not be reducing course offerings in nonfiction as long as students currently in the program need them, and CNF courses will remain a part of the MFA program.

Students will continue to be encouraged to expand their growth in any one genre through the practice of the other two, and will have ample opportunity to do so.

Sincerely,
Cary Holladay