

February 19, 2001

President Diana Natalicio
University of Texas at El Paso
Suite 500
Administration Building
CAMPUS MAIL

Dear President Natalicio:

Here is the proposal the creative writing faculty would like to discuss with you in our forthcoming meeting at 2 p.m., February 28th.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 351-1877 or to e-mail me at lex@utep.edu.

Respectfully,

Lex Williford
Asst. Professor
Enclosure (1)
LW



CREATIVE WRITING MFA PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR SHORT-TERM FUNDING

MFA WEBPAGE: WWW.UTEP.EDU/CW:

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
BILINGUAL MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING**

OPENING NEW WINDOWS TO LANGUAGE:
A WRITING PROGRAM IN ENGLISH, SPANISH, OR BOTH,
UTEP'S GRADUATE WRITING WORKSHOP IS THE FIRST
OF ITS KIND TO OFFER A BILINGUAL OPTION TO STUDENT
WRITERS, DESIGNED TO EXPLORE AND CELEBRATE THE
LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY TRADITIONS OF THE AMERICAS.

ENGLISH ESPAÑOL DEGREE PLANS LITMAGS STUDENTS
CHACÓN RAMOS SAENZ ULLMAN WILLIFORD

DESIGNED BY LIZ WILLIFORD

UTEP MFA Program Proposal for Short-term Funding

Introduction

We are the only bilingual MFA program in Spanish and English on the American continent. In addition, we have many strengths: an excellent faculty, relationships with universities and cultural organizations throughout Mexico, Latin America and North America, and the advantage that we serve a growing Hispanic population in the largest city on U.S./Mexico border. Even so, every year since the inception of the UTEP MFA program, the English Department has lost its top applicants to programs with greater financial resources, and the Spanish Department has lacked sufficient faculty, better stipends for its Teaching Assistants and other essential resources to build a program at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Unfortunately, the UTEP writing program is not likely to be competitive and attract the best students when:

- 1) We have not been able to meet our graduate students' most basic financial needs as other programs have,
- 2) we have a smaller faculty than most programs, and
- 3) we have no visiting writer or reading series.

In the long-term, we would like to be a highly ranked, autonomous or quasi-autonomous bilingual and bicultural writing program with students from all across the Americas. Such a program would **1.)** bring together students from different literary traditions who would nurture each other's development as writers, **2.)** adequately fund students through fellowships and teaching assistantships competitive with those other institutions offer (See **Addendum 1: U. S. News and World Report** Rankings of Writing Programs and **Addendum 2: A Comparison of Tuition Costs and Waivers, Teaching Assistantship Salaries and Fellowships**), **3.)** expose students to writers from various and diverse literary traditions through a high-profile visiting writer series and **4.)** offer English students hands-on editorial experience as the UTEP Spanish program offers with *Revista de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea* and as many other writing programs in English offer across the U.S. (See **Addendum 3: A Sampling of Writing Program-Sponsored Literary Magazines**). We must also meet the needs of a changing market by expanding into other disciplines such as writing for children, screenwriting, playwriting and literary translation (See **Addendum 4: Programs with Literary Translation**). And, finally, in the near future we want to offer a minor in creative writing in Spanish.

In the short-term, however, we must address several pressing needs, most of which require additional funding through at least the next five years:

- I. **An additional line in Spanish** for a creative writing professor with wider expertise to free Luis Arturo Ramos to become the bilingual MFA program director (See **Addendum 5: Proposed Organizational Structure of the UTEP Bilingual M.F.A Program**), with sufficient funding for the following:
 1. Appropriate salary for the director
 2. A course reduction to one course per semester
 3. Office space for the bilingual MFA program
 4. Support personnel, including a bilingual secretary and a Work Study assistant
 5. A budget to cover publicity, travel, recruitment, promotion and advertising.

II. Increased funding for

1. **Additional Teaching Assistantships in Spanish**, including a minimum \$2,000 increase in stipends.

The only way we can recruit Latin American students, who cannot lawfully be employed by other means, is to offer them assistantships sufficient to live on in the U. S.

2. **A minimum \$2,000 raise for English MFA Teaching Assistants** to cover the equivalent of a tuition waiver.

The country's most competitive and reputable MFA programs, including the University of Texas (fully funded by the Michener Foundation), offer their students not only Graduate Assistantships in creative writing but also full tuition waivers. (See **Addendum 2.**) When talented students who can build the reputation of an MFA program make their decisions, they respond to these better offers.

III. Bilingual/ Bicultural Reading Series

We also request five years of funding to begin a series that would bring four to six writers to campus per year to give public readings and to interact with our students through additional talks or workshop visits. Half the writers would be from the U.S., and half from Latin America.

Ideally, with the help of in-house translations, some portion of each reading would be bilingual. To this end, we propose a new bilingual course in which MFA students would translate work by our visitors and then present it themselves. We also would like to partner our students with each guest reader so that one student could read briefly from his or her own work at the start of each reading; NMSU has implemented such a program with considerable success for many years.

In addition to offering necessary enrichment to our bilingual/ bicultural M.F.A program, this series would appeal to the interests of Border Studies, Chicano/a Studies, and Women's Studies, all of which stand to benefit from the interdisciplinary approach that our program, in keeping with UTEP's mission, takes towards education on the border. We would also work through contacts in the public schools, the Community College, and Arts Resources to make these events open to the community-at-large.

Our proposed budget:

Honorarium	\$1,200
Transportation	\$600
Lodging	\$300
Reception	\$300
Meals	\$100

\$2,500 per writer, \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year

Addendum 1:
U.S. News and World Report Rankings of Writing Programs

Rank/School	Average reputation score (5 = highest)
1. University of Iowa	4.5
2. Johns Hopkins University (MD)	4.2
2. University of Houston	4.2
4. Columbia University (NY)	4.1
4. University of Virginia	4.1
6. New York University	4.0
6. University of California–Irvine	4.0
6. University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	4.0
9. University of Arizona	3.9
10. Boston University	3.8
10. Cornell University (NY)	3.8
10. University of Massachusetts–Amherst	3.8
10. University of Montana	3.8
10. University of Washington	3.8
10. Washington University (MO)	3.8
16. Brown University (RI)	3.7
16. Indiana University–Bloomington	3.7
16. University of Arkansas	3.7
16. University of Utah	3.7
20. Arizona State University	3.6
20. Emerson College (MA)	3.6
20. George Mason University (VA)	3.6
20. Hollins College (VA)	3.6
20. Sarah Lawrence College (NY)	3.6
20. Syracuse University (NY)	3.6
20. University of Florida	3.6
20. University of Maryland–College Park	3.6
20. University of Pittsburgh	3.6
20. Warren Wilson College (NC)	3.6
30. University of California–Davis	3.5
30. University of Southern Mississippi	3.5
30. University of Texas–Austin	3.5
33. Iowa State University	3.4
33. University of Missouri–Columbia	3.4
33. University of Oregon	3.4
33. University of Southern California	3.4
37. Bennington College (VT)	3.3
37. CUNY–City College of New York	3.3
37. Florida State University	3.3
37. Ohio State University	3.3
37. Ohio University	3.3
37. Penn State University–University Park	3.3
37. University of Alabama	3.3
37. University of Denver	3.3
37. University of North Carolina–Greensboro	3.3
46. San Francisco State University	3.2
46. University of Cincinnati	3.2
46. University of New Hampshire	3.2
46. Western Michigan University	3.2
50. American University (DC)	3.1
50. Colorado State University	3.1
50. Eastern Washington University	3.1
50. Georgia State University	3.1
50. New Mexico State University	3.1
50. Saint Mary's College of California	3.1
50. San Diego State University	3.1
50. Southern Illinois University–Carbondale	3.1
50. Temple University (PA)	3.1
50. University of Colorado–Boulder	3.1
50. Virginia Commonwealth University	3.1

UTEP MFA Program Proposal for Short-term Funding

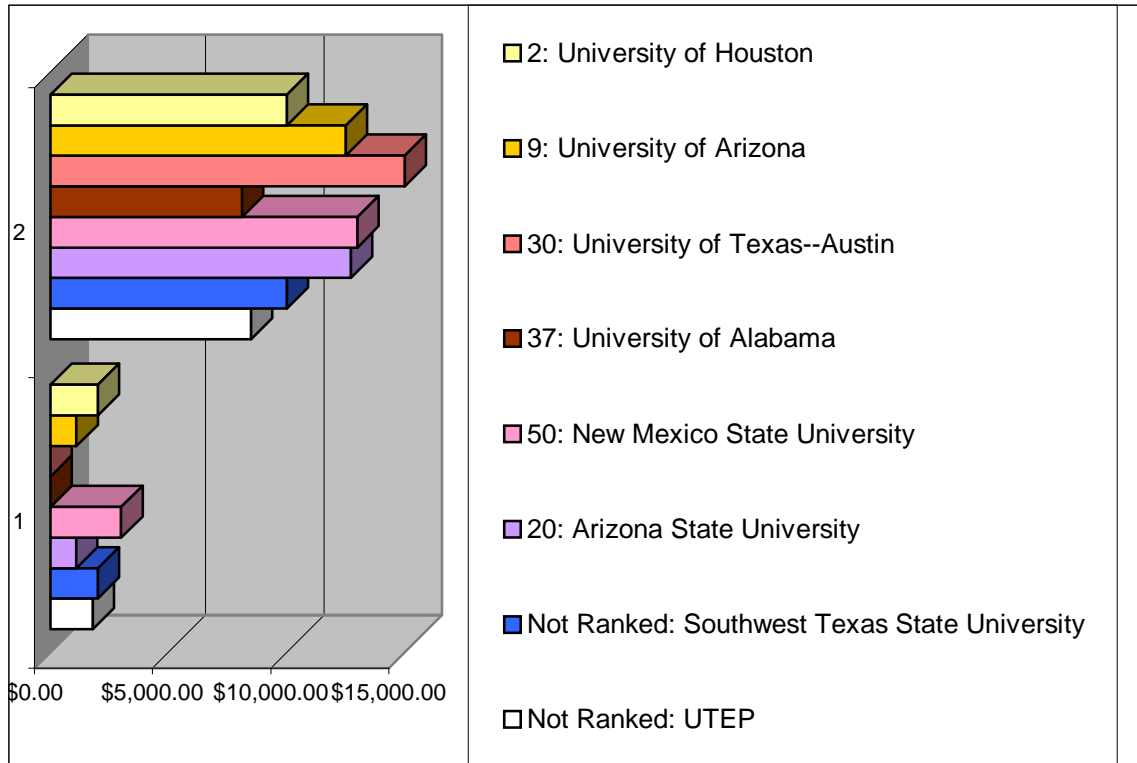
50. Wichita State University (KS)	3.1
62. Brooklyn College (NY)	3.0
62. California State University–Fresno	3.0
62. Mills College (CA)	3.0
62. Purdue University–West Lafayette (IN)	3.0
62. SUNY–Albany	3.0
62. University of Georgia	3.0
62. University of Hawaii–Mano	3.0
62. University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign	3.0
62. University of Minnesota	3.0
62. Vermont College of Norwich University	3.0
72. Binghamton University (NY)	2.9
72. Bowling Green State University (OH)	2.9
72. Cleveland State University	2.9
72. Kansas State University	2.9
72. Michigan State University	2.9
72. Old Dominion University (VA)	2.9
72. University of Alaska–Fairbanks	2.9
72. University of Illinois–Chicago	2.9
72. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2.9
72. University of New Mexico	2.9
72. University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	2.9
83. Goddard College (VT)	2.8
83. Miami University (OH)	2.8
83. New College of California	2.8
83. Oklahoma State University	2.8
83. Rutgers (NJ)	2.8
83. School of the Art Institute of Chicago	2.8
83. University of Kansas	2.8
83. University of Miami	2.8
83. University of Missouri–Kansas City	2.8
83. University of Notre Dame (IN)	2.8
83. University of San Francisco	2.8
83. University of South Carolina–Columbia	2.8

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Addendum 2¹:

A Comparison of Tuition Costs and Waivers, Teaching Assistantship Salaries and Fellowships

USNWR Ranking: University	1. Annual Cost of Tuition after Waiver	2. Annual TA Salaries	Notes:
2: University of Houston	\$2,000.00	\$10,000.00	Ehrhardt, Mitchell and Inprint Fellowships are all \$10,000; Michener Fellowships range from \$11,000 to \$17,000
9: University of Arizona	\$1,100.00	\$12,500.00	The \$1,100 is for in-state fees.
20: Arizona State University	\$1,094.00	\$12,720.00	Salaries for TA's with Master's degrees. For TA's with BA's salaries are \$11,560. The \$1,094 is a "registration fee."
30: University of Texas--Austin	\$0.00	\$15,000.00	The Michener Center for Writers is fully funded, offering students ten \$15,000 James A. Michener Fellowships per year, which pay tuition and fees. Accepted students do not teach.
37: University of Alabama	\$0.00	\$8,100.00	UA also offers Teaching/Writing Fellowships and Graduate Council Fellowships and Editing Fellowships for <i>The Black Warrior Review</i> (each \$8,100 annually) to supplement TA salaries. The GTA salaries are low here because there are 50 MFA students, all students have Teaching Asistantships, and no TAs pay tuition.
50: New Mexico State University	\$3,000.00	\$13,000.00	The higher tuition costs include full health benefits.
Not Ranked: Southwest Texas State University	\$2,000.00	\$10,000.00	Assistantships include in-state tuition and full health benefits.
Not Ranked: UTEP	\$1,800.00	\$8,500.00	Assistantships include in-state tuition and full health benefits.



¹ *The Associated Writing Programs Guide to Writing Programs* and e-mails and phone calls to program directors.

Addendum 3²:
A Sampling of Writing Program-Sponsored Literary Magazines

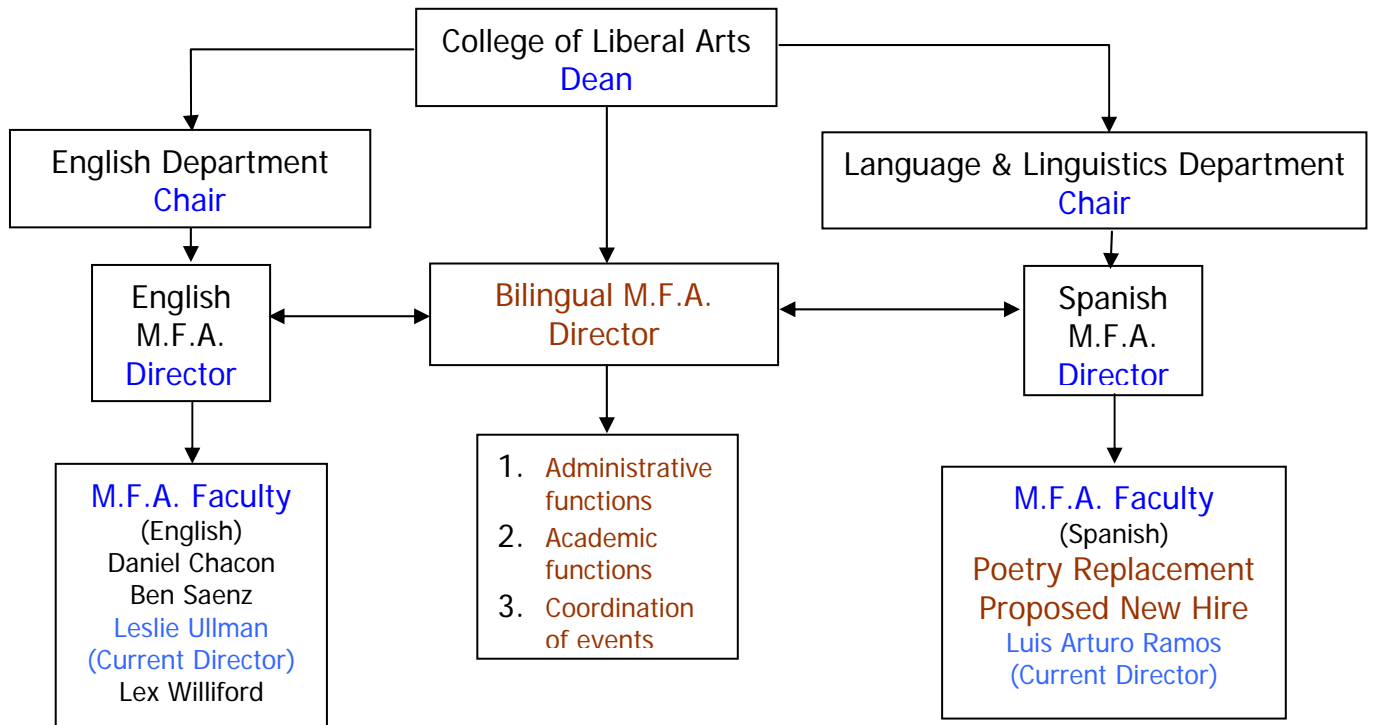
<i>Alaska Quarterly Review</i>	University of Alaska—Anchorage
<i>American Literary Review</i>	University of North Texas
<i>American Short Fiction</i>	University of Texas—Austin
<i>Bellingham Review</i>	Northwestern Washington State
<i>Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingue</i>	Arizona State University
<i>Black Warrior Review</i>	University of Alabama
<i>Blue Mesa Review</i>	University of New Mexico
<i>Callaloo</i>	University of Virginia
<i>Conjunctions</i>	Bard College
<i>Crab Orchard Review</i>	Southern Illinois University
<i>Epoch</i>	Cornell University
<i>Fiction</i>	New York University
<i>Florida Review</i>	University of Central Florida
<i>Greensboro Review</i>	University of North Carolina—Greensboro
<i>Gulf Stream</i>	University of Houston
<i>Hayden's Ferry Review</i>	University of Arizona
<i>Indiana Review</i>	University of Alabama
<i>Iowa Review</i>	University of Iowa Writers' Workshop
<i>Kenyon Review</i>	Kenyon College
<i>Michigan Quarterly Review</i>	University of Michigan
<i>Mid-American Review</i>	Bowling Green State University
<i>Mississippi Review</i>	University of Southern Mississippi
<i>Missouri Review</i>	University of Missouri—Columbus
<i>New England Review</i>	Middlebury College
<i>Ohio Review</i>	Ohio University
<i>Ploughshares</i>	Emerson College
<i>Prairie Schooner</i>	University of Nebraska—Lincoln
<i>Quarterly West</i>	University of Utah
<i>Southern Review</i>	Louisiana State University
<i>Sundog: The Southeast Review</i>	Florida State University
<i>Sycamore Review</i>	Purdue University
<i>Willow Springs</i>	Northeast Washington State

² *The AWP Guide to Writing Programs.*

Addendum 4:
Programs with Literary Translation

<i>U.S. News and World Report Ranking</i>	University
4.	Columbia University (NY)
16.	University of Arkansas
We are still researching potentially competitive translation programs in the Americas.	

**Addendum 5:
Proposed Organizational Structure of the UTEP Bilingual M.F.A Program**



1. **Administrative functions:** Grant writing, fund raising, advertising and promotion of program (s), recruitment of students, coordinate joint projects, student advising for "Bilingual M.F.A., facilitate communications between both departments, etc.
2. **Academic functions:** Enable the student to intercross courses offered by the M.A. and M.F.A. in English as well as those offered by the M.A. and M.F.A. in Spanish if allowed by the respective departments to enhance the bilingual and bicultural aspect of program. Develop a translation component and a bilingual/bicultural curriculum.
3. **Coordination of events:** Oversee bilingual publications, lectures and readings, workshops and guests speakers.