

September 17, 2020

Professional Development Plan for Fiscal Year 2021 re: Suzanne Nielsen

Dear Brian Nerney and Dean Rossinow:

I am committed, and not dragging my feet, to return to my role as assistant professor in the creative writing program. This year will bring with it a vast list of challenges through zoom, an online workshop learning tool replacing face-to-face learning.

Last spring when it was announced that we needed to adapt the second half of the semester to an online format I seriously thought it couldn't be done. I sighed in martyrdom. I nearly signed up to go on a humor lecture tour about the insidiousness of flipping online learning. But, when the clock ticks, even without options, I was faced to work with what I had. I had zoom. And, it could be worse. At least I have the option of synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous gives a hint of a sense of community, and in times like this, a community is essential.

Having added my covid update, brief as it is, I do want to again welcome the advantages that my full-time position offers me: dialoguing with colleagues on pedagogical issues; concentrated time to further develop lessons/lectures for students and adapting to covid; meeting on zoom with students during office hours to support publication goals, the power of revision, and to connect one-to-one. And surprisingly enough, I can still benefit from these advantages through zooming.

My priorities for the year are to continue developing a sense of community among CW majors through my teaching and extracurricular activities to include advising the literary magazine, *Haute Dish*, scheduling student readings, promoting and participating in student/alumni writing groups, and by researching possibilities for future course offerings. I'm also eager to continue serving on the Action Committee through the IFO union, as well as being part of the MLS Advisory Committee. In addition I will serve on the LAM Committee and the IFO Women's Caucus, and the Shared Governance Task Force.

Back several months ago now I was accepted as an Equity Champion for Metro State; however I am not certain anything will come of this as Craig Morris the director directing is no longer at Metro. This encompassed improving the hiring process with job searches. It would have been interesting.

Below lists more specifically my fourth-year intensions for continued development as a strong and effective assistant professor within an essential major in the college of liberal arts.

Criterion 1: Effective Teaching

1. I will teach the following courses this fall: *Writers as Readers*; *Short Fiction*; *1000 Words or Less*. I am restructuring all the syllabi from last semester, which requires extensive time during this covid crisis. This alters choosing required texts (three per class) as well as introducing new elements of instruction.
2. In spring, '21 I will be teaching *MLS 620-50: Liberal Studies Explorations: The Graphic Novel*. This class will be synchronous and offered on Saturdays from 9-12. Both of these courses are new courses for me to teach. Several years back I developed a *Topics in Writing* course for a summer class focusing on the Graphic Novel. I had previously taught the graphic novel at MCAD as their Writer in Residence. I am co-teaching the MLS 620-50 course with a huge

mentor of mine, Bev Hill, and I'm really excited about this. I will also be teaching *WRIT 359 01: Creative Writing Boot Camp* on Fridays from 9:00 – 5:00; 1-15-21 to 2-26-21. I have yet to think about my book order for that class but I better get going. I'm excited to teach this course for the first time, although I am not hugely fond of super speed courses and this one is for 8 weeks.

3. I will make a dedicated effort to provide additional feedback to students regarding readings we will not have time to discuss in class..
4. I intend to continue to work with a rubric for *Writers as Readers* focusing on the following components of writing: Ideas/Content; Voice; Organization; Word Choice; and Sentence Fluency/Conventions (adapted from the 6+1 trait writing from the National Education Association. I see this rubric as essential for writers, especially writers' proficiency focusing on a creative writing degree to adhere to the elements of quality writing.
5. Engage students in multicultural texts and assigned readings/discussions for all CW courses.
6. In addition to a class syllabus, I plan to type up weekly agenda sheets for each of my classes as a way to address invisible disabilities challenged by organizational tasks.
7. I will invite throughout the semester a few guest speakers to join our zoom sessions. Lynda Barry and Sarah Cooper both have agreed to visit the MLS class via zoom
8. I will provide prompt feedback for weekly writing assignments the following class meeting.
9. I will evaluate semester portfolios for each student in each of the course I am teaching this year to assist me in determining individual writing processes (in place of a final).
10. Brainstorm and begin developing possible course expansion for the Creative Writing major.
11. Schedule conference calls with various authors we will be studying for my *Writers as Readers* class as well as my *1000 Words or Less* class. The students' express interest in dialoguing with authors.

Criterion 2: Scholarly or Creative Achievement or Research

1. I intend to routinely send creative work (poetry/fiction) to a minimum of 10 journals for ongoing publication. I will also work on editing an essay I am writing for publication in a journal on invisible disabilities. This is for a spring, 2021 publication.
2. I will appear as a guest speaker at St. Kate's as part of my creative work (October 29, '20) to deliver a lecture and a writing exercise to Gay Herzberg's fiction class.
3. I intend to advise *Haute Dish* again this year through regular scheduled zoom meetings with the editorial staff and through attending *Haute Dish* readings both on campus and for our scheduled fall reading on zoom for October 9, 2020 from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm. In March, depending on the covid restrictions, we intend to hold our annual spring reading at Open Book in Minneapolis. I will also be recruiting new editors as well as a managing editor for the school year, 2021-22.

Criterion 3: Evidence of Continuing Preparation and Study

1. Commencement: December, 13, 2020
2. I work hands on with my advising load of 46 students majoring in Creative Writing by attending the following six Advising Workshops over the school year:
9-17: Effective Advising; 10-15: Academic Planning/Registration (part 1); 11-19: Academic Standing; 1-21: Graduation Reviews/Process; 2-18: Advising Tools/Communication; 3-18: Academic Planning Registration (pt. 2).
3. I work hands on as the faculty advisor for Metro's literary magazine, *Haute Dish*
4. I will continue to attend the monthly student writers' group which meets the first Sunday evening of each month throughout the calendar year. This event is open to current students as well as alumni.
5. I will continue writing letters of recommendation for students applying to grad school(s) as well as applying for scholarship funds

6. I plan to be active in the writing community and to collaborate on community literary events promoting Metro State's creative writing program/students
7. I intend to be active in the scheduling of student creative reading events annually for fall semester, '20, and spring semester, '21.

Criterion 4: Contributions to Student Growth and Development

1. I look forward to increasing my advising load of students majoring in Creative Writing.
2. I will work hands on as needed filling my role as faculty advisor for Metro's literary magazine.
3. I will continue to attend the monthly student writers group open to current students as well as alumni.
4. I will continue writing letters of recommendation for students applying to grad school(s) as well as applying for scholarship funds.
5. I plan to be active in the writing community and to collaborate on community literary events promoting Metro State's creative writing program/students.
6. I intend to be active in scheduling student creative reading events annually for fall semester, '20, and spring semester, '21.
7. Support and promote Metropolitan State University Theater in a new, digital storytelling initiative entitled SHELTER AND PLACE, a dynamic video collage that will feature student stories and their unique perspectives on the meaning of home, safety, refuge, and identity.
8. I want to be involved in the Student Journey Project. I like the idea, and I really like the idea of promoting a better understanding of our students.

Criterion 5: Service to the University and Community

1. Serve on the Action Committee
2. Serve on the MLS Advisory Committee
3. Serve on the LAM Committee
4. IFO Womens Caucus
5. Attend professional meetings monthly: SCWA Strategic Planning Group
Fine Arts Meetings/CLA Meetings/SCWA meetings
6. Attend all IFO meetings to work on collaboration with other faculty

I intend to go forward with these qualities in mind: justice, self-control, prudence, humility. . .
Thank you for serving as our dean, and below is how I will define more clearly how covid impacts the upcoming year:

How the Pandemic has Affected my Work:

There's something to be said for leaving it at the office. Due to how I have designed my classes, I hear constant dinging 24/7, meaning assignments come in all day and all night. That's the biggest adjustment I've made during this pandemic. Because I'm recognizably OCD the dinging distracts me, no matter what I'm doing, and therefore I download assignments as they come in using my elaborate filing system.

Three courses: each course has its own folder

Within the folder I have several other folders:

A folder for each individual student

A folder of follow up letters that I send out after each class zoom meeting

A folder of weekly agenda sheets I send via email to each classes roster prior to our zoom meeting detailing what our focus will be for that specific week

A folder with a course number and recent assignments

How this operates fairly efficiently is that students email me their weekly assignments (between 1-6). I then drop them into the folder of recent assignments (according to course number). From there I read them and slip them into their individual writing folders (within their course number that holds all these

folder jewels). And that's working. It gets a bit confusing if I have repeat students in all three classes. How they (students) title their files is also important in staying on top of things (name; course #; assignment title). Not always does OCD have a bad name.

I use my list serves more now than I did before the pandemic. Periodically I get announcements of current contests, submission calls, workshops, etc, and I like to pass this information along to my students. Normally I would make copies of such announcement(s) and pass them out in class. I'm most likely saving money in copying. Although I did need to go and buy a copy machine for my home. I got a PG Color Laser Jet Pro MFP M283fdw. That makes my life easier.

Regarding guest speakers, which I often invite to my classes, the pandemic in a way has made it easier for guests to attend an invite, but less of a connection is made without the face-to-face quality and component that is gained through eye contact. I do notice this. It is not an illusion.

I have also increased my assignment load due to a lack of time being able to discuss assigned and essential readings. Student response is positive. So far 100% attendance; close to 100% in assignments turned in.

There are more likely other ways in which the pandemic has and will continue to affect my teaching. The semester's off to a good start and the students are writing their pencils to nubs.