

Proposal for a Ph.D. Degree Program in English: Practical Writing

Department of English, North Dakota State University

Executive Summary

The English Department at North Dakota State University seeks approval to offer a Doctor of Philosophy in English: Practical Writing. Based on the department's excellence in offering the M.A. for several years, a careful analysis of the market in English, and the English faculty's expertise in writing studies, the faculty agrees that a doctoral degree in English: Practical Writing will fill a viable niche in technical communication, provide students with employable skills, and avoid duplicating the existing Ph.D. program in English at the University of North Dakota.

There are several specializations in the field of English Studies, including literature, linguistics, creative writing, composition, and technical writing. The market for Ph.D.s in these areas of specialization differs greatly: fewer than 50% of those specializing in literature find employment in tenure-track positions in their first year after completion of the degree; the number of Ph.D.s produced each year in composition is commensurate with the number of tenure-track positions available; and in the area of technical communication, the number of positions available surpasses the number of new Ph.D.s produced each year by a sizeable margin. Furthermore, people with advanced degrees in specialized writing often find employment in industry as members of software development teams, as technical editors, or as writing consultants.

The Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing invites students to specialize in writing studies with special emphasis on rhetoric, discipline-specific writing, scientific, and technical writing. Although there are several traditional Ph.D. programs in the upper Midwest, there are only a few professional writing programs (Iowa State, U. of Minnesota, Michigan Tech, Michigan State), and most of them focus intensely on technical or scientific writing, leaving a market niche for the specialist who is firmly grounded in the Liberal Arts tradition but also has the ability to teach writing for various academic disciplines and to write professionally in various corporate, government, or non-profit contexts. We expect to serve the needs of place-bound students regionally and to produce graduates who can compete nationally.

Although there are some costs associated with starting the new program, they are minimal considering the viability and importance of the proposed degree. In the first year, the degree would cost \$41,500 for three doctoral teaching assistants and computer equipment to support their work. Costs can be kept this low because the department of English, with interdisciplinary contributions from Communication, Sociology, and History, already offers the courses needed for this degree. There will be modest budget increases for the next three years as the Master of Arts teaching assistantships are transformed into doctoral teaching assistantships. If the program is as successful as we expect, we will request an additional faculty line and two rotating instructor positions in coming years. Because this program specializes in writing, our teaching assistants and instructors will teach writing, defraying the costs of our new university-wide emphasis on writing in the disciplines. In other words, although there are costs associated with the program, these costs serve a second purpose of improving campus-wide writing instruction.

The Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing will be assessed by several means, including the number of applications and number of students admitted, the placement of graduates, exit interviews, performance evaluations by doctoral committee members, and graduates' professional career paths.

Introduction

The faculty of the Department of English at North Dakota State University has agreed to develop a Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing that would complement and extend its current M.A. program and advance the department in a direction compatible with NDSU's strategic plan to move to Research I status. Our goal is to develop a Doctor of Philosophy degree in English: Practical Writing that will serve students who wish to specialize in writing and to understand it in theoretical and cultural contexts.

The proposed Ph.D. is based on our long experience at the M.A. level. The department currently offers an M.A. program in literature, with parallel tracks in composition and linguistics. It has an enrollment averaging 25 students, of whom 20 have teaching assistantships in the department. The program was begun in 1954, and for the past five years, the department has averaged about 6 M.A. graduates per year, with 40-50% of the students most recently graduated going on to Ph.D. programs at other institutions. Our interest in creating an innovative program focusing on rhetoric and writing, the long-term stability of our M.A. program, the increasing tendency of our graduates to pursue the Ph.D., and the potential availability of place-bound students interested in our proposed program encourage us to seek this next level of excellence.

This proposal continues with the following prescribed sections: A) the need for the program; B) objectives of the program; C) resources and costs; D) accreditation; E) relationship of the program to NDSU, other institutions, and the region; F) relationship to Roundtable recommendations; G) program requirements; H) assessment of the program; I) delivery of the program; J) conclusion, and K) list of appendices.

A. Need

Student Interest

The English Ph.D. Committee surveyed approximately 500 individuals at colleges and universities in Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming (Appendix A). The survey, undertaken during the summer of 2002, was mailed to four target audiences: traditional on-campus graduate students from within the region, including the Tri-College University Consortium; Tri-College teaching lecturers; Language Arts teachers in Fargo/Moorhead and West Fargo; and students in four-year colleges in the region.

The survey suggests that there is a strong interest on the part of our past and current M.A. students, regional secondary school teachers, and Tri-College lecturers to pursue a terminal degree in English Studies. Our survey results show that these students are seeking a program that would enhance their current professional standing (76.9%), allow them to pursue opportunities in both academic and non-academic fields (81.3%), and fulfill their desire for life-long learning (85.7%). The vast majority of those who responded to the survey indicated that location in Fargo was important (32.8%) or very important (41.9%) to their pursuing a Ph.D. Thus, NDSU's program would serve a large group that UND's does not.

From the responses we received, it is clear that there is considerable interest in a traditional literature and composition program, though there are also varying degrees of interest in other areas of English Studies. Although our focus on professional communication will not immediately appeal to some of these students, as they become aware of the job market situation, we believe several will choose to enroll in the program and adapt to the market. It is likely that the number of undergraduate and masters students coming in as resident graduate students full-time is likely, at first, to be small—perhaps 4-6 admissions per year. From our survey of Language Arts teachers in the public schools in the community, we note that there is a pool of 5-8 prospective students who, living and working in the Fargo area, are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. degree at NDSU. We expect that most of the students from this group will be part-time students and possible distance-learning enrollees.

Our market survey shows that initially the bulk of our prospective students from the Fargo-Moorhead area will need to be educated about the market in English studies. However, there are three universities and many high schools here, where teachers operate in an academic setting and often look to graduate school to enhance their employment. The F-M area is growing rapidly, thus opening for employment a variety of professional opportunities requiring writing skills, coupled with a liberal education requisite to most professional positions.

Although our students will undoubtedly be drawn from the immediate region initially, given the profile of our present faculty, we expect to draw students nationally and internationally, especially from Western Europe, Canada, India, China, and other Pacific-rim countries, where some of our faculty have connections. As the comments from reviewers in the introduction suggest, there is a great need for graduates from technical communication Ph.D. programs. Given this market demand, we expect to draw applicants nationally within a year or two.

Career Opportunities

Although the percentage of Ph.D.s in English literature who find employment in tenure-track positions in their first year out is quite low, fluctuating between 40 and 50 percent, (Appendix B), there is a high demand for specialists in writing, especially those who have strong training in theory and experience in teaching various kinds of writing. Whereas more Ph.D.s in English literature are produced each year than the market can absorb, the market for composition specialists is commensurate with the number of Ph.D.s produced, and the market for those who can teach technical writing or writing in the disciplines consistently exceeds the number of Ph.D.s produced.

In a listserv post dated March 2, 2005, Janet Tovey of East Carolina University says, "The last several entry level searches we've done have taken two years--in part because we have waited too long and in part because there are more jobs than QUALIFIED candidates." On the same listserv, on the same day, Kaye Adkins of Missouri Western College laments that they have had three failed searches in the past five years as they have tried to hire in technical communication. Bruce Maylath, past president of the Council for Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication (CPTSC) responded to these comments:

There is an acute labor shortage in the academic tech comm field. Informal surveys of graduate directors at the last few CPTSC annual meetings reveal that the ratio of positions to qualified candidates is approximately 2:1. In this game of musical chairs, many chairs are left open. The chairs that are filled are those that are best endowed. . . . The labor shortage is creating faculty "swirl," a term now popular among higher education analysts to describe the movement of students among institutions as they pursue degrees. Assistant professors in particular are staying only 1-3 years in a position, then jumping to more attractive, empty chairs. The institutions who have had the most success in the past year with hiring in tech comm were those that abandoned the MLA hiring schedule entirely.

According to a recent study, "The Academic Job Market in Technical Communication, 2002-2003," *Technical Communication Quarterly* 13.1 (Winter 2004): 49-71, by Carolyn Rude and Kelli Cargile Cook, for the search year 2002-03, researchers identified 59 advertised positions at all ranks (including 9 instructor positions) for which technical or professional communication was the primary specialization requested. Of the 59 positions, 42 (71%) were filled, 10 were unfilled, and 4 were pending at the time of the survey. Researchers also found that in the previous two years ago, almost half of the successful searches bypassed MLA, evidently to hire candidates before other departments.

Our proposed Ph.D. will provide the specialized knowledge and the pedagogical training in disciplinary, scientific, and technical writing needed to make our graduates competitive on the

academic job market. Furthermore, students within this program will be able to specialize in the kinds of writing needed in business and industry. Graduates from similar programs often choose a non-academic career as a professional writer. For more information about the job market in technical communication, see comments on pages 12-13 of this proposal and in Appendix C.)

Viability

The department anticipates that in the first year of the program (2007-08), the enrollment will be 2-4 students, with the anticipated graduation of at least 2 students per year, possibly beginning at the end of the fourth but certainly by the end of the fifth year of the program's existence.

Our survey of doctoral-granting English departments within three comparable regional institutions (Idaho State University, the University of South Dakota, and the University of North Dakota) found that these institutions had an average faculty strength of 21. Although Idaho State University uses 31 faculty to conduct its Doctor of Arts program, the University of North Dakota and the University of South Dakota sustain more traditional English Ph.D. programs with faculty strength of 17 and 15, respectively. Because our program draws on faculty expertise in departments other than English, we presently have 15 faculty members.

The doctorate in English: Practical Writing relies on faculty expertise both inside and outside the English department, especially on two well-established rhetorical theorists in the Communication department. The program currently has a balance of faculty in all ranks, including three replacement tenure-track faculty who joined the English department in the Fall of 2002, a new department head hired in English in 2003, two new faculty hired in 2004, two new faculty in 2006, and one new faculty member in 2007. We anticipate hiring two new faculty members in 2007-08 to replace two faculty members who have accepted employment elsewhere. The maturity of the senior faculty is thus appropriately complemented by the very current training of recent Ph.D.s.

While the English: Practical Writing program currently has requisite faculty numbers and concentration of expertise to address the needs created by our proposed Ph.D. program, the English department anticipates drawing more interdisciplinary faculty into the program and being given permission to hire additional faculty in the future based on the growth of the program. Because the Ph.D. program will initially be initially, we have the necessary faculty for the program to get off to a good start (Appendix D). Our faculty's record in publishing and securing external grants is good, but in the future we hope to create the conditions under which our research record will be expanded (Appendix F).

Graduate Faculty in English: Practical Writing at NDSU and Areas of Specialization

Professors

- Daniel J. Klenow (Ph.D. 1976, University of Notre Dame) Qualitative methods, theory, medical sociology, aging, the sociology of disasters
- R.S. Krishnan, English (Part-time) (Ph.D., 1981, Nebraska) Restoration and 18th-century British Literature, British Novel, Postmodern Theories, Postcolonialism
- Robert S. Littlefield (Ph.D., 1983, University of Minnesota) Rhetorical Theory and Criticism, Argumentation, Intercultural Communication, Pedagogy
- Bruce Maylath (Ph.D. 1994, University of Minnesota) International Technical Communication, Linguistics, Technical Editing
- Robert O'Connor, English (Ph.D., 1979, Bowling Green State) Romantic Literature, Science Fiction and Fantasy, British Novel, Gothicism
- Dale L. Sullivan, English (Ph.D., 1988, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) History of Rhetoric, Rhetoric of Religion, Rhetoric of Science, Technical Communication

Associate Professors

Muriel Brown, English (Ph.D., 1971, Nebraska) Medieval Literature, Modern Drama, Women's Studies
Elizabeth Birmingham, English (Ph.D., 2000, Iowa State) Rhetoric and Professional Communication, Gender Studies, Pedagogy, Architectural History, Theory and Criticism
Kevin Brooks, English (Ph.D., 1997, Iowa State) History and Theory of Writing Instruction and Administration, Computers and Writing, Marshall McLuhan and Media Ecology
Mark Meister, Communication (Ph.D. 1997, University of Nebraska) Environmental Rhetoric, Communication Ethics, and Rhetorical/critical theory.
Gary Totten (Ph.D., 1998, Ball State) American Literature and Culture 1865-1950, Travel Writing, Multi-Ethnic American Literature, Material Culture, Critical Theory

Assistant Professors

Linda Lizut Helstern (Ph.D., 2001, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale) Native American Literature, 20th-century American/Multi-ethnic Literature, Literature and the Environment
Andrew Mara (Ph.D., 2003, University of New Mexico) Science and Technical Communication
Miriam Mara (Ph.D., 2003, University of New Mexico) Irish, British, World Literatures, Health Communication
Amy Taggart (Ph.D., 2002, Texas Christian) Composition and Rhetoric, Community-Engagement Pedagogies, English Education, Multi-Ethnic Literature

B. Program Objectives

In keeping with NDSU's land-grant mission and in conjunction with the Cornerstones of the Roundtable, the English: Practical Writing Ph.D. will prepare students to be good citizens with productive careers, while cultivating appreciation of the role of writing in various cultural contexts.

Our proposed doctorate will focus on rhetorical theory and the practice of writing in the cultural contexts of academic disciplines and corporate/non-profit environments. The program will offer an emphasis on technical and scientific writing, effective grant writing, and innovative uses of technology in research and teaching. NDSU's new emphasis on a vertical curriculum in writing at the undergraduate level offers opportunities for students in the Ph.D. program to teach discipline-specific writing, such as writing in the sciences, writing for engineers, writing in the fields of business and finance. The vibrant research environment in agriculture, technology, and the sciences at North Dakota State University provides the ideal setting for research in the field. Our students will have ample opportunity to study and to write dissertations on specialized writing in these areas.

Because the Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing will focus on rhetorical theory and writing practice, this degree program will serve the intellectual interests and career needs (academic as well as non-academic) of both the student with and the student without an established professional history. Furthermore, because our program has an English Studies prerequisite, our students will approach the study of rhetoric and writing from within the culture of English departments, an approach that differentiates our program from competing programs in technical communication that often do not have this requirement, despite the field's alignment with English. Although our graduates will be specialists, they will also understand the culture and disciplinary interests of English faculty if they choose an academic career.

Within this focus, professors will employ a variety of means, especially those now available through technology, to help students grow academically, but always with an eye toward professionally satisfying employment. For instance, we are experimenting with synchronous, online courses in the undergraduate curriculum and plan to deliver some of our graduate courses the same way. Our experience with master's degree students shows that we are already preparing people for various types of professional employment, and the Ph.D. will enhance such prospects by giving our students greater status and marketable skills.

C. Cost and Resources

Existing Resources

Current faculty members represent expertise in rhetoric, technical communication, writing, technology as it relates to pedagogy, and literary studies. During the past six years, we have averaged nine graduate classes each semester offered by eight full-time equivalent faculty. The English department is in the process of a major curriculum review, in which the total number of offerings will be reduced so that it can offer all classes in the English curriculum at least once every three years. The proposed Ph.D. program will not require offering a significant increase in the number of classes per semester because many of the English: Practical Writing courses are already offered on a regular basis, and the English: Practical Writing courses in Communication are offered on a two-year rotation presently. All core courses will be offered each year, and all graduate courses in the English: Practical Writing concentration will be offered at least every three years, and most every two years (Appendix H). The proposed rotation of classes would allow students to complete their course work in three years.

Graduate students and faculty can rely upon the collections of NDSU, Minnesota State University—Moorhead, and Concordia College. NDSU library's monograph holdings in the humanities are fairly extensive (almost 50,000), and the two other institutions in the Tri-College have a combined holding of more than 125,000 volumes. In addition, NDSU subscribes to a respectable number of periodicals related to English, including 70 in paper format and over 100 in electronic format. Moreover, NDSU's subscriptions to over 15 indexes in the humanities will add considerably to the research capacity of both students and faculty in the department, as also will the library's interlibrary loan department (ILL), heavily used by both students and faculty. Although the library resources in the metropolitan area are adequate to begin the program, we expect to increase holdings suited to the needs of our program.

Valuable local resources include regional conferences such as the Linguistic Circle of Manitoba and North Dakota and the Great Plains Association of Computers and Writing, hosted by our department every other year. These conferences provide local venues where our students can perform as well as learn from other writers/thinkers. Moreover, the CAHSS-sponsored Lyceum of the Liberal Arts Lecture Series brings to campus internationally-acclaimed scholars and authors, as does the summer visiting scholar program in the Communication Department at NDSU.

Additional Costs

Although the new Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing will not be an expensive program, there are, nonetheless, certain expenses associated with it. Three essential changes are requisite if we are to offer the Ph.D.: (1) graduate faculty in English need a one-course reduction in teaching loads, from 3-3 to 3-2 and from 3-2 to 2-2 when possible; (2) we will need three doctoral teaching assistantships initially; and (3) the director of graduate studies will need a one-course release. These changes can be made simultaneously and can complement one another. Reducing graduate faculty teaching load to facilitate increased research and publication and to free time to work with doctoral students writing dissertations and giving a one-course release to the director of graduate studies will require funds to cover 12 sections of writing a year. At NDSU, we project the cost of covering 12 sections of writing to be \$36,000. However three doctoral teaching assistants can cover these 12 sections (4 sections a year each), and their stipends would be \$12,000 a year each, plus benefits. Therefore, by hiring three doctoral TAs at an additional cost to the department of \$36,000 in the first year, we can reduce graduate faculty members' teaching loads to 3-2 and give the director of graduate studies a one-course additional release. Much of this money will be available internally through redefining lecturers' lines and through an interim period of lower enrollments in service writing classes as the vertical writing program begins. We also want to provide the new doctoral TAs with laptop computers, continuing a program begun Fall 2004.

We expect the number of doctoral TAs to increase by two to three each year. We propose to accommodate this increased number by exchanging MA teaching assistantships for doctoral assistantships as needed. Each time one MA teaching assistantship is changed to a doctoral assistantship, an additional \$4,000 will be required (MA stipends are \$8,000 and Ph.D. stipends are \$12,000).

We would also like to hire two instructors to help cover writing in the vertical writing curriculum. Although their total salary would amount to \$70,000 (\$35,000 x 2), \$24,000 of that money can be made up if we change two of our teaching fellowships to post-docs over a two-year period.

The department expects one faculty member to retire within the next few years, and it is important not only to fill that position and areas left vacant but also to identify and strengthen the areas in which potential graduate students' interests exist. In addition, reallocated department funds will be committed to launching and fostering the growth of this proposed Ph.D. program. Retaining these lines will not increase our budget, although the Provost's supplemental contribution would need to be increased because part of the cost of funding writing at NDSU is paid for from salary savings from a phased retirement. Assuming that the new Ph.D. will be successful, we will request to add another faculty member no later than the fourth year after we admit students. We are satisfied and certain that we can deliver the Ph.D. program in its initial years with the current number of faculty; thereafter, the growth of the program will warrant the growth of faculty.

An increase in funds to add to the library's holdings (paper and electronic) would be necessary to augment the resources currently available, but we intend to solicit the NDSU Development Foundation for assistance in this matter; the Development Foundation has responded positively to similar requests from other departments in the College. With the department's growth, we will also need increased office space, and we eventually hope to have our own computer lab for research and production and a Literacy Center in downtown Fargo to facilitate civic engagement projects. These would provide valuable lab and research space for our doctoral students.

Total anticipated costs for start up: \$36,000 to hire three new doctoral TAs and reduce faculty teaching load. Three new laptops with software, \$4,500. Total for first year = \$40,500.

Anticipated additional costs for second year: \$12,000 for transforming 3 MA TAs to doctoral TAs; \$23,000 to transform one teaching fellowship to one instructorship. Three new laptops with software, \$4,500. Total for second year = \$39,500.

Anticipated additional costs for third year: \$23,000 to transform one teaching fellowship to a instructorship; \$8,000 to transform two MA TAs to doctoral TAs; \$6,000 to transform one teaching fellowship to a doctoral TA (TFs teach 6 sections a year and doctoral TAs teach 2, but both make \$12,000). Three new laptops with software, \$4,500. Total for third year = \$41,500.

Anticipated additional costs for fourth year: \$50,000-\$55,000 for additional assistant professor (professors in the specialized field of technical communication command higher salaries than traditional English professors). \$12,000 to convert three more TAs to doctoral TAs. Three new laptops with software, \$4,500. Total for fourth year = \$61,500. See Appendix G for Budget Table.

D. Accreditation Requirements: None

E. Relationship of the Program

To NDSU and the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences

The proposed Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing will serve North Dakota State University by concentrating study on writing in disciplinary contexts. Complementing the work being done in

the Center for Writers and supporting the University's new emphasis on writing in the disciplines, doctoral students will work with faculty in English and other departments to develop and deliver writing instruction and consultation appropriate to diverse fields of study.

The new Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing will complement new Ph.D. programs offered by the College's departments of Communication, History, and Sociology/ Anthropology. Although it will be housed in the English department, it relies on contributions from Communication, History, and Sociology, making it an interdisciplinary Ph.D. within AHSS. The Ph.D. program will enable students in all three departments to pursue more sophisticated and wide-ranging projects, taking advantage of the interdisciplinary methodologies for teaching and research available within the College.

The Department of Modern Languages has already provided significant support to our M.A. program, and potentially it will add another dimension to our Ph.D. program. In the past its faculty members have helped evaluate both the portfolios and theses of our M.A. students where another language and/or cultural perspective was involved. In addition to the resource capability mentioned above, the ESL program that we run jointly with Modern Languages may provide teaching opportunities for our graduate students.

To the System: Other Institutions

The proposed program will contribute to strengthening the NDUS strategic plan for collaborative efforts between institutions. The SBHE is interested in quality education for our students that leads to professionally rewarding employment, hopefully in the state. The Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing at NDSU is aimed at helping to fulfill such an overall plan. Instruction in rhetoric, writing and culture, with an emphasis on pedagogy and technology, will enhance NDSU, NDUS, and the state as a whole.

The proposed program is intended to complement rather than compete with the program currently offered in the NDUS system. The degree in English: Practical Writing does not duplicate the UND's comprehensive degree in English because it targets the professional communication field directly rather than the areas covered by UND's Ph. D. Opportunities for collaboration exist for all institutions within the region, as well as the entire state, in a number of areas. These include sharing scholars, co-sponsoring summer institutes, and collaborating with faculty at various conferences. By focusing on our area of expertise, we can fully support UND's Ph.D. for those whose interests are not compatible with our degree objectives, and we can provide a place for some of their B.A. and M.A. students who wish to focus on technical writing.

A brief comparison with the UND Ph.D. program may be helpful, to show that they are quite different.

<u>University of North Dakota</u>	<u>North Dakota State University</u>
<p>The Department offers the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy.</p> <p>The University of North Dakota Department of English offers a varied program of studies in English and American literature, writing, and the English language. The academic atmosphere is intimate, class size for graduate courses is small, and students are encouraged to work closely with members of the graduate faculty. The curriculum varies from year to year and includes courses in genres, periods, specific authors, critical theory, rhetoric/composition, interdisciplinary study, creative writing, cinema/film theory, linguistics, and research methods. Faculty in the Department also work in interdisciplinary areas such as American</p>	<p>The Department of English offers a Master of Arts (Literature and Composition tracks) and is proposing a PhD in English: Practical Writing, which invites students to work at the intersections of rhetorical, textual, and cultural studies. Through coursework in technical and professional communication, rhetoric and composition, and literary and cultural studies, students will analyze and produce texts considering their rhetorical dimensions and their cultural embeddedness.</p> <p>Graduates from this program may pursue careers as professors in universities or colleges, as trainers, user-experience experts, and human-computer interaction specialists in industry, or as technical, scientific, or professional writers and</p>

Studies, Peace Studies, Composition Studies, American Indian Studies, and Women Studies. The Department works closely with the University's College of Education and Human Development in the area of English Education. In all areas of work, students are encouraged to utilize a variety of critical and theoretical approaches.	editors in research and development organizations, high tech companies, service/social action organizations, or government agencies.
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The UND graduate program and faculty prepares students in the following areas of English:	The NDSU graduate faculty have expertise in the following areas. Although the PhD will be in professional writing, other areas of English Studies can contribute to the degree by providing students with needed theory and perspective.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural Studies: Dixon, Wolfe, Carson, Koepke, Flynn (new hire, 2007-08) 2. Rhetorical Theory, History, & Criticism: Robison, Donehower, Dixon 3. Rhetorical Pedagogy: Robison, Dixon, Donehower, Wolfe 4. Composition Pedagogy: Robison, Dixon, Donehower 5. Literary Theory: Beard, Wolfe, O'Donnell, Koepke, Robison, Kitzes, Nelson 6. Linguistics: Marshall, Huang, Crawford (emeritus) 7. Textual Studies and Scholarly Editing: Donaldson, Marshall 8. Creative Writing: Harris-Behling, Czerwiek, Williams (new hire, 2007-08) 9. Literary Translation: Beard, Harris-Behling 10. Literatures of the Americas: Nelson, Hampsten (teaching emeritus) 11. Literacy Studies: Donehower, O'Donnell, Dixon 12. Women's and Gender Studies: Donaldson, Dixon, O'Donnell, Wolfe, Weaver-Hightower, Robison, Nelson, Koepke 13. Minority Studies, including African American, Native American, and Chicano/Chicana Studies: Carson, Nelson, Wolfe 14. Literary History, including Theatre: Koprince, Kitzes, Flynn (new hire, 2007-08) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Communication: Birmingham, Brooks, A. Mara, Maylath, Sullivan 2. Technical & Scientific Communication: A. Mara, Maylath, Sullivan 3. International Technical and Scientific Communication: Maylath, Sullivan 4. Digital and Visual Literacies: Brooks, A. Mara 5. Rhetorical Theory, History, & Criticism: Sullivan, Rupiper Taggart, Meister 6. Composition and Literacy: Birmingham, Brooks, A. Mara, Sullivan, Rupiper Taggart 7. Composition Pedagogy: Birmingham, Brooks, Maylath, Rupiper Taggart 8. Writing Program Administration and Assessment: Birmingham, Brooks, Maylath, Rupiper Taggart 9. Writing in Health Professions: Brooks, M. Mara 10. Writing in Design Professions: Birmingham 11. Writing in Sciences: Sullivan, Maylath 12. Linguistics and Editing: Maylath 13. Women's and Gender Studies: Birmingham, Muriel Brown, Helstern, Mara, Rupiper Taggart 14. Literature, Literary Theory, Critical Theory: Brown, Helstern, Krishnan, M. Mara, O'Connor, Totten

History of the proposal and response to UND's concerns

The English faculty at NDSU has devoted considerable effort to developing a proposal for a Ph.D. in the field of English that would benefit the state of North Dakota and not overlap with the Ph.D. degree at the University of North Dakota. A brief history of that process and a response to the concerns expressed by UND are necessary to show that the NDSU English faculty has attempted to cooperate with UND and to show that this degree complements rather than competes with UND's Ph.D. in English.

The first version of the Ph.D. Proposal. The faculty of the Department of English at North Dakota State University began writing a proposal for a Ph.D. in the department during the summer of 2002. At that time, they surveyed the local interest and need, and by the end of academic year 2002-03 had written a proposal for a Ph.D. Originally the administration at NDSU had suggested that the English

faculty focus on technical and professional communication, or some kind of practical writing Ph.D. At that time, however, the faculty proposed a Ph.D. in English Studies, which the English faculty hoped would not compete directly with the Ph.D. in English at the University of North Dakota.

In February 2004, Thomas Riley, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at NDSU, and Dale Sullivan, Head of English at NDSU, visited with Martha Potvin, Dean of Arts and Sciences at UND, and James McKenzie, Chair of English at UND, about the proposed Ph.D. At that time they learned that UND thought the proposal for a Ph.D. in English Studies would overlap significantly with their Ph.D. because it was possible for a student to shape the degree to be one with an emphasis in literature.

Attempts to refocus the degree proposal. Since that time, the English faculty at NDSU has explored alternatives, seeking a focused niche in English that does not overlap with the Ph.D. in English at UND. In the Spring of 2004, they spent President's day in a departmental retreat discussing the Ph.D. and other curriculum questions, and they hired two outside consultants to look at their curriculum, Doug Hesse from Illinois State, and Martin Jacobi from Clemson. These reports were completed in June, 2004. Doug Hesse criticized the English studies proposal: "As intellectually salutary as the English studies courses might be, it would be harder to rationalize them as requirements for professional writers." And Martin Jacobi suggested that "the PhD focus on professional communication, finding a niche in that area that would allow you to compete nationally as well as regionally with U of Minnesota's program, Michigan Tech's program, Michigan State's new program, and so forth." As a result of UND's objections and of outside reviewers' recommendations, the faculty began to think of the Ph.D. in terms of national and regional niche needs rather than on local needs alone.

The new proposal. The English faculty at NDSU developed a Ph.D. in the field of technical communication with special emphasis in writing in the disciplines, scientific writing, and technical writing. Unlike some technical communication programs, this Ph.D. requires a pre-requisite in English Studies to insure that graduates who seek a career in academia understand the culture of English departments where they will be employed in the future.

UND's response to the new proposal. On February 15, 2005, Thomas Riley and Dale Sullivan again traveled to UND to discuss the revised proposal with Sheryl O'Donnell, acting Chair of English at UND, Joseph Benoit, Dean of Graduate Studies at UND, and Bruce Dearden, interim Dean of Arts and Sciences at UND. The UND representatives voiced the following six concerns (the first three expressed by Sheryl O'Donnell, the last three by Joseph Benoit):

1. Although the English department at UND has no desire to go in the direction of technical communication, and although the NDSU proposal "essentially describes a professional and technical communications degree," the inclusion of the word "culture" is added to "attract a wider group of applicants." This wider group overlaps with the English Ph.D. at UND.
2. The proposal misrepresents the Ph.D. at UND to create a "need" for the new program.
3. The proposal does not demonstrate a need for a Ph.D. in professional/technical writing. Instead NDSU should develop an MA in technical communication.
4. The word "rhetoric" in the title overlaps the interests of UND's communication program.
5. The proposed degree may overlap with UND's communication program's desire to develop graduate studies in health communication.
6. The proposed degree is "very thin" and should be reviewed, at least informally, by reviewers from outside the state.

Our response to UND's concerns. The present version of the proposal has been modified to address these concerns where warranted, but the following discussion presents NDSU's response to these concerns directly.

1. The word “culture” in our name. Although our proposed degree was a degree in technical and professional communication, we wanted to name our program Rhetoric, Writing & Culture to position it in the field of professional communication as a degree with a liberal arts approach to professional communication. However, after waiting for over two years, we now believe that having a degree with a marketable name is less important than having a degree. Therefore, to expedite the process of getting the degree approved, we have decided to rename the degree. The new name: English: Practical Writing.

2 & 3. Misrepresentation of UND’s English Ph. D; no need for Ph. D. in technical communication. We acknowledge that UND’s Ph. D. in English is a comprehensive degree in English. We emphasized its claim to literature in earlier versions of the proposal because the initial objections to our degree centered on the possibility of our students shaping the degree to be a degree in literature. That being the case, it is clear that the proposed English Studies Ph. D. may have duplicated their comprehensive degree in some areas. However, our new Ph. D. in English: Practical Writing is now narrowly focused in technical communication and professional communication, an area that UND does not wish to enter in the future.

Because our new proposal is for a degree in professional communication, as they rightly recognize, and because they do not intend to go in that direction, there is a need for such a degree program in the state of North Dakota and nationally. There is a great demand for such teachers in English departments, and we believe our graduates will be competitive for those positions. If we were not attempting to produce future professors, an M.A. in technical writing would meet most local needs in industry, but we are, in fact, targeting the academy as well as industry, and, therefore, the Ph. D. is the appropriate degree.

4 & 5. The word “rhetoric” competes with UND’s communication program and the degree may compete with their future plans for health communication. We have changed our name to English: Practical Writing.

6. The program is thin and should be reviewed outside the state. The new degree proposal calls for an interdisciplinary degree, with contributions from other departments, especially from Communication. We do not agree that this degree is thin. We have already been teaching several 700-level courses in this area in English, and, in cooperation with the communication department rhetoricians here at NDSU, our degree will be able to offer a very strong curriculum. Also, several of our M.A. students in the composition track or in the rhetoric and linguistic track have already written lengthy and sophisticated theses on topics in the field of technical communication, including a thorough analysis of writing in the disciplines at NDSU, a case study of two scientists writing grants, an analysis of email conventions and practices.

Our previous draft of the proposal did not emphasize clearly enough the outside review this proposal has undergone; therefore, we want to surface comments from outside reviewers here instead of leaving them buried in Appendix H. Several leaders in the field of technical communication have read the proposal and have commented on the depth of the program, its focus, and its market niche:

- Paul Dombrowski, first director of Central Florida’s Text and Technology Ph.D. writes, “The proposal for the Ph.D. in [English: Practical Writing] which you are working on looks quite good: solidly grounded in market analysis, soundly argued, and appropriate to your faculty and institutional situation.”
- Robert Johnson, Chair of the Humanities Department at Michigan Tech, where one of the leading technical communication programs in the nation resides, says, “You have positioned the new program to fill a badly needed niche in the field of English studies. Your claims for the

graduates from a program such as yours are quite accurate. Both the academic and corporate environments have great need for such individuals.”

- James Zappen, past president of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication and senior professor in RPI’s technical communication program, says, “I have reviewed the outline of your proposed PhD program and am very impressed by its depth and breadth. You are strong in theory, methodology, and pedagogy, with a special emphasis upon the rhetoric of science and technology. At the annual meeting of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication last October, several program directors observed the increasing demand for new PhD’s with strengths in both theory and practice and the relatively small number of available applicants. . . . your proposal is very timely, and judging by your outline you are well prepared to launch your program immediately.”
- Steven Katz, Professor of English at North Carolina State University, is co-author of the leading textbook for writing in the sciences: “I’ve had a chance to read through your proposal for a doctoral program in Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture at NDSU. It looks like an excellent Ph.D. Program. Its premises and pedagogical goals are grounded in both classical foundations and contemporary theory, and the categories of courses that emerge, like the courses themselves, seem to cover essential and significant elements of composition in the 21st century. In addition to the emphasis on cultural critique that I see underlying the curriculum, one feature of your program that I particularly like is the flexible approach to "professional writing": I think you are right in pointing out that most professional writing programs focus on scientific and technical writing; I think your approach, which gives students different options while still providing them with a solid base in writing theory, is prudent, given the job market locally and nationally, and will be attractive to prospective students who want a more open writing program guided by several axes [of] thought.”
- Teresa Kynell Hunt, author and editor of several books in technical communication and Interim Vice President for Instruction at Northern Michigan University, says, “Your proposal is not only thorough and well-written, but it accurately points out the need for such a program in your region. Indeed, my home institution, Northern Michigan University, is currently seeking a candidate for a position that matches very closely your program description. The emphasis on interdisciplinary course work, as well as concentrated learning in both rhetorical theory and history, makes your proposed program unique in terms of other somewhat comparable programs nationwide. In addition, you isolate and highlight means for assessing the program, always a smart idea given the current climate in both accreditation and program review circles. All in all, I am impressed with the breadth of the program, the care that went into documenting the need for the program, and the general thoroughness of the proposal.”
- Helen Correll, Associate Professor at Metropolitan State University in the Twin Cities, says, “I looked over the proposal and I am quite impressed with the doctoral program you are planning. This program would be very exciting for our Metropolitan State students--it is interdisciplinary, yet allows the students to concentrate their studies in various areas of writing and rhetoric. I am particularly excited about the technical communication and environmental communication aspects of the program. As you and I both know, jobs in those fields are plentiful, but the qualified people to fill them are few.”
- Russel K. Hirst is Associate Professor of English at the University of Kentucky and is actively involved with the Society for Technical Communication: “Because I’m a panelist for the session on academic programs in scientific and technical communication (upcoming at the next international conference of the Society for Technical Communication), I’ve lately been looking at the structure and track record of many grad programs. The program you propose strikes me as

very well conceived and well targeted. I have no doubt it will be well received by students, by your colleagues at large, and by the marketplace.”

- Gerald J. Savage, from Illinois State and past president of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, says, “The proposed PhD in Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture looks very strong to me. I am impressed with the interdisciplinary aspects of the program . . . and the proposal's recognition of the opportunities for careers in technical communication.”
- Nancy Allen, Professor of English at Eastern Michigan and member of the executive board and ethics committee of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, and of the executive board of the Conference for Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication, says, “I'm glad to see that you're developing a Ph.D. program in Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture. There are so many departments looking for qualified candidates for positions related to those emphases and so few programs graduating candidates with solid backgrounds in these areas. Your program seems to offer strengths in each of the areas of rhetoric, writing, and culture, which will serve well for schools that emphasize writing and discourse programs.” (See Appendix H for more comments.)

Given these very strong reviews of the proposed program and our clarification of our name and focus above, the English faculty at NDSU believes that our degree program does not compete with any of UND's degrees or proposed degrees, that our degree would be very strong, and that it would attract national attention in the near future.

To the Region

There is no identical program in the region. Although several universities have traditional comprehensive Ph.D. programs in English many with emphases in literary studies (University of North Dakota, U of Minnesota—Twin Cities, University of Nebraska, University of South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas—almost all major state universities) and a handful of technical and professional writing degrees (U of Minnesota—Twin Cities, Michigan Tech, Iowa State, Utah State). Therefore, the program will have no nearby competitors. Most of the competitors emphasize research, while we intend to emphasize practical applications to the world of work, be it academic, entrepreneurial, or otherwise. Opportunities for local students to pursue a terminal degree in English: Practical Writing are non-existent. By providing a small but excellent program, the department hopes to attract students from the region, from the nation, and from overseas, thereby contributing to the quality of life in the region (Appendix H).

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that Fargo and Grand Forks are rapidly becoming a high tech and research center for the upper plains. The second largest Microsoft campus is in Fargo, and the research park associated with NDSU provides opportunities for grant writers and other documentation specialists, both in internships and in permanent employment.

F. Relationship to Roundtable Recommendations

1. **Cornerstone #1** of the SBHE's roundtable **Recommendations/Expectations** addresses “Direct connections and contributions of the University System to the economic growth and social vitality of North Dakota.” The main purpose of NDSU's proposed Ph.D. Program in English: Practical Writing is to develop students' advanced writing skills and their knowledge of the liberal arts, so that they can provide leadership in the business and educational worlds while remaining flexible in regard to their professional opportunities. Since our goal will be to educate our students with such employment in mind, the program in English: Practical Writing directly addresses **Recommendations and Expectations 1 and 3**, in that we intend to produce “graduates with technical education knowledge,” who may look to opportunities in “businesses and industry.” Our current faculty expertise includes professional and technical communication,

delivery of web-based courses, and writing in its various forms, all of which are geared towards graduating students with extended disciplinary and cutting-edge knowledge.

Furthermore, **Recommendations/Expectations #15 of Cornerstone #1** encourages campuses “to maximize the potential, to the institution, students, North Dakota, and the World, of the ‘global’ market place.” We are connected to international networks through our faculty, our students, and courses offered on the literatures and languages of other cultures. We continue to receive inquiries from international students (from India, China, etc) who are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. degree in the department. We intend to make use of the Skills and Technology Center, the Center for Writers, and our ESL program, all on the NDSU campus, as basic support systems for our Ph.D. program, especially for our international students.

2. **Cornerstones #2 and #3.** Our proposed program meets the major themes outlined in **Cornerstones #2 and #3**, namely, “Educational Excellence” and the need for “a flexible and responsive system.” The proposed program will not only meet the needs of students wishing to teach and currently employed faculty needing a terminal degree but also serve to educate students for a wide variety of professional employment opportunities. Moreover, even as we maintain “educational excellence,” we intend to be “flexible and responsive” in our delivery of instruction, using both traditional classroom teaching techniques and non-traditional methods (e.g. web-based courses and instruction, interactive video conferencing, summer sessions and week-long seminars presented by visiting scholars). The English: Practical Writing Ph.D. requires 6 credits of experiential learning. Students who expect to work as professors may choose to use those credits as mentoring opportunities in disciplinary writing. Those who expect to work outside the academy may opt for internship experience instead.
3. **Cornerstone #4** addresses the need for an “Accessible System,” and **Theme #1** calls for “a reasonable driving distance to the campus or learning center” for students wishing to access a particular type of education. Those living in the F-M area, as our survey testifies, will find attending NDSU ideal for obtaining a Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing.

In summary, the **Six Cornerstones** set down by the SBHE will be integral to the Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing at NDSU: the program will promote economic growth in North Dakota (#1), provide quality education and skill development opportunities (#2), respond to entrepreneurial needs in flexible ways (#3), and be more accessible to students in the F-M area than any programs at other institutions (#4). Funding will be facilitated by increasing enrollments and by hiring at the assistant professor level to replace retiring full professors (#5). All in all, the English Department at NDSU envisions a doctoral program that assures a new and valuable service for students, the university system, and the State of North Dakota in the 21st century (#6).

G. Program Requirements

Admission Requirements

In most cases, applicants to the Ph.D. program must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in an earned bachelor’s or master’s degree in order to be admitted with full graduate standing. Applicants shall be required to provide a statement of goals that succinctly outlines the applicant’s area(s) of interest and reason(s) for seeking a Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing. Additional requirements will include submission of a substantial writing sample that demonstrates the applicant’s ability to engage in research, evaluate primary and secondary sources, interpret and synthesize source material, and communicate clearly and saliently; all undergraduate and graduate transcripts; and three letters which attest to the applicant’s aptitude for Ph.D. studies. Students admitted to the program should have a combined score of 1000 or above on the verbal and analytical sections of the GRE aptitude test; those students whose native language is not English should have a score of 600 or above in TOEFL for admission consideration, and 650 for consideration for a teaching assistantship. Complete applications are due February 1, with a residual deadline of April 1.

Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. program will require 90 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. Students admitted with a masters degree must earn a total of 90 graduate credits but may transfer in up to 36 credits.

Core, 9 Credits

- English 760: Graduate Scholarship
- English 755: Composition Theory
- English 764: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Assistants

Research Methods, 6 Credits

Students select, in consultation with their adviser, two of the following.

- English 762: Critical Theory
- English 756: Composition Research
- Other methods classes may be taken from Communication, Sociology, or History.

Didactic Courses, 30 Credits

A. Didactic Courses: Rhetoric and Writing, 18 credits. *Students select six; two must be from English, and two must be from Communication.*

- English 656: Literacy, Identity, Culture
- English 659: Researching and Writing Grants and Proposals
- English 753: Rhetoric and Poetics of New Media
- English 754: Rhetorics of Science/Technology
- English 758: Topics in Rhetoric and Writing
- English 759: History of Writing Instruction
- Other didactic-A courses may be taken from Communication, History, or Sociology

B. Didactic Courses: Electives, 12 credits.

Students may take any graduate-level class not listed elsewhere on their degree schedules, if approved by student's adviser. Here are some examples:

- Sociology 624: Feminist Theory and Discourse
- Sociology 723: Social Theory
- History 650: Ancient History
- Anthropology 680: Anthropological Theory

Comprehensive Exams are taken when 45 credits above are complete; Dissertation Proposal submitted after successful completion of Comprehensive Exams and prior to completion of Experimental Learning.

Experiential Learning, 6 Credits

Teaching Mentorship (0-6 credits) may be taken twice. Students work with faculty to read theory and co-teach 200, 300, or 400 level class.

-----And/or-----

Internship (0-6 credits) may be taken twice. Students work outside or inside academy in administrative, editing, consulting, or writing roles.

-----And/or-----

Life-experience Credit (0-6 credits). Students may petition for lifetime learning experience credit based on experiences comparable to those above, such as teaching college classes beyond the first-year sequence or extensive professional experience as a professional writer.

Dissertation, 15 credits

Total: (66 credits)

Students must show *proficiency in English studies*. They may do so by transferring 24 graduate credits in this area or by taking English 6xx and 7xx literature and linguistics classes not listed as part of the English: Practical Writing Ph.D. These credits are either prerequisite or co-requisite with the Ph.D.

Students admitted to the Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing are required to demonstrate reading *proficiency in one foreign language* by the time they begin to write the dissertation.

Students must take a minimum of 30 credits at the 7xx level.

Program Fields

The proposed program offers several specialized courses in rhetoric and writing. At least 18 credits in rhetoric and practical writing courses will be required of all students. Students, however, will be able to craft their degree to meet their special interest within the field. The 15 credits of electives create this flexibility. For instance, those interested in rhetorical theory can take a deeper concentration than in that area, and those who do not want to pursue an academic career can build up expertise in business or computer science. Nevertheless, because of our firm commitment to the liberal arts, all graduates of the program will demonstrate a proficiency in English studies by meeting the pre- or co-requisite requirement in that area. The degree requirements are designed to provide students grounding in areas determined to be necessary, based on market survey, and to best utilize areas of expertise of the graduate faculty. Focusing faculty expertise on the study of academic, disciplinary, and professional writing will offer maximum opportunities for development of student interests. Our audience surveys as well as the available positions identified in the most recent MLA publications support this belief.

Supervisory Committee

The student's Ph.D. supervisory committee will consist of at least four faculty members who are also full members of the Graduate Faculty at NDSU. The student's dissertation director must represent the student's major field of study and will be the primary reader for the dissertation. The second and third readers of the student's dissertation may represent the student's field of study, but the third reader will be appointed in consultation with the dissertation adviser and the department Graduate Committee. Before the dissertation is approved, the three representatives from the English: Practical Writing faculty must agree that it is acceptable. The fourth (outside) member of the committee will be an appointee of the Graduate School.

Examinations

Comprehensive Exams (written and oral) are taken when 45 credits are complete; a dissertation prospectus is to be submitted after successful completion of Comprehensive Exams and prior to completion of Experiential Learning.

Dissertation

Prior to writing the dissertation, students will submit a prospectus (10-15 pages) on an original topic to their dissertation director and supervisory committee, and both must approve it. Students must write a dissertation based on substantial research that develops an original thesis and then defend it before the supervisory committee.

Residency

At least one academic year (two continuous semesters) or its equivalent in residence on campus is required. Resident students may qualify for teaching assistantships. Courses offered by distance education or by computer or other electronic means may require students to meet with the professor in person on campus. This residency requirement may be waived in appropriate situations as determined by the Graduate Committee.

H. Program Assessment/Evaluation

The Ph.D. program in English: Practical Writing will be assessed by several means:

- The number of applications and number of students admitted;
- Student progress toward the degree and number of students completing the degree;
- Exit interviews with students;
- Evaluations of performance by committee members after comprehensive exams and defenses of dissertation;
- Program reviews conducted by the university on a regular basis;
- Placement of our graduates.

I. Program Delivery

The required core seminars will be scheduled every year, and the methods and didactic courses will be offered on a three-year rotation. Availability of graduate courses in English that are not designated as part of English: Practical Writing may vary from year to year according to the needs of the students. The department proposes to review and revise its existing graduate courses and develop new courses to fulfill the needs of its Ph.D. program. In doing so, the department also expects to put in place a regular cycle of course offerings that would allow students to identify and take courses in keeping with their plan of study, to enable them to complete their degree requirements within a specified time frame. Completion of all degree requirements should take five years.

J. Conclusion

The Department of English at North Dakota State University is both energized about and committed to its Ph.D. program, as it views such a program as not only benefiting the university, its surrounding community, and the region, but also as a means to advance the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to a higher level of excellence. The new Ph.D. in English: Practical Writing also offers an opportunity for the department to complement its already strong undergraduate and graduate programs, to offer much needed technical and scientific communication expertise in the emerging research and development environment of the state, and to give students interested in being English professors a specialized and marketable degree in a vibrant and growing specialty within English departments.

K. Appendices

- A. Tabulated Survey Results/Survey Responses
- B. MLA Career Information Sheet
- C. Career Opportunities for English: Practical Writing Ph.D.s
- D. Program Comparison Chart
- E. Letters of Support from Industries/Professions
- F. Faculty Curriculum Vitae
- G. Budget
- H. Existing Courses for Ph.D. Program