

## DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE WRITING

### TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY

#### REQUEST FOR FUNDS (March-June, 2000)

The Department of Creative Writing would like to initiate a Publishing Laboratory to complement its current courses in Book Publishing, to provide students with hands-on experience with the new technologies of publishing, and to work in collaboration with the other sixteen campuses of the UNC system to publish an annual anthology of award-winning North Carolina student writing.

Every year, the Department of Creative Writing offers courses, both at the graduate and undergraduate level, in the history and current state of book publishing. Professor Stanley Colbert, who has had a lifetime of experience in the world of publishing, would teach these courses. As a literary agent he shepherded such important books as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* to publication. Among his many positions in the world of publishing, he served as CEO of Harper Collins Canada. In Professor Colbert's courses, students learn about the historical development of book publishing, the current state of the industry from the standpoint of editing, acquisition, production and marketing. Such courses are invaluable for students of creative writing, for it educates them about the industry where they seek to place their own work. It also prepares them for possible positions in editing and publishing as they continue their development as writers. This preparation constitutes one of the major ways the Department of Creative Writing contributes, in quantifiable terms, to the university's mission of providing students with technological proficiency.

The department would now like to provide students who have taken these courses with hands-on experience in the new technologies of publishing. In recent years, the process of producing, editing and marketing the written word has inexorably altered. Gone are the days of pen and typewriter; writers now compose on computers and virtually every publisher, by contract, insists that writers submit their manuscript on a disk as well as a printout of the manuscript. A modem connects writer to editor, between whom words, chapters and entire manuscripts are transmitted in seconds. Back and forth a manuscript flows in edited and re-edited drafts that graphically reflect corrections, additions, deletions and queries until a finished version emerges. A computer program then is manipulated to select type and design the words into finished pages that can be viewed on the computer screen. Still in disk form, the finished pages are again transmitted via modem to a device where, in multiples of thirty-two pages, film is produced from which the book is ready to be manufactured.

From the information on the computer disk, a book may be transmitted to a printing press or a photoduplicating machine. From either, a beautifully designed book may emerge, in economically small quantities or in large printings. Photo-duplicating machines, once limited to copying a single page at a time, can now copy, collate and bind entire manuscripts. This development, together with technological refinements in modern printing, has dramatically altered the quantity requirements that traditionally constrained the process of determining the advisability of publishing a work. A publisher today can literally print to order, in small quantities or large. A buyer can view a catalog page or read an excerpt of a book on a vendor's web page. By entering a keyword or identification number on an order form, the buyer can order a book to be shipped or downloaded from a host computer in quantities from a single copy to thousands.

What is most exciting about these technological developments from an educational standpoint is that students, provided with modest technological support, would be able to engage, in a Publishing Laboratory, in the full-scale process of publishing—from the acquisition and editing of manuscripts to their production, marketing and delivery. Students would learn to work with the latest technological

developments in the world of publishing and would receive advanced training in the most commonly used programs, such as PageMaker and Quark, which dramatically conform manuscripts to the appearance of the printed page. Students would also learn PhotoShop and Illustrator; web-page design; editing on a disk; incorporating art work and charts into a manuscript; preparing indices; and other publishing skills.

We would like to initiate our Publishing Laboratory this semester by having Professor Colbert train two graduate students in our M.F.A. program to work as research assistants in these new technologies. In addition to the guidance provided by Professor Colbert, we would like to invite a consultant, an editor with a major publishing house, to provide a two-day seminar in how these new technologies are used in publishing. The first project of the Publishing Laboratory will be a textbook for our new foundation course, CRW 201: Introduction to Creative Writing. Each section of the textbook will be written by a member of the department faculty writing about his or her area of expertise and will include student writing to illustrate various genres, forms and styles of creative writing. The book will be planned, edited and produced by the students in the laboratory, then printed by a computerized publishing service. It will then be sold, at a modest price, to students taking CRW201, as their textbook for the course. Profits from book sales would then help support the Publishing Laboratory in future book projects.

It is in these next publications that UNCW's Publishing Laboratory would work in coordination with other branches of the UNC system. Student editors at UNCW would, in effect, be "publishers" for the most talented student writers in North Carolina. They would solicit award-winning manuscripts from all sixteen campuses, select the finest student writing in the genres of poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction, then edit, publish and market an annual state-wide anthology of award-winning university student writing. Future projects would also include a regional anthology of Southern poetry and a national literary magazine.

At most universities, even those with excellent creative writing programs, the only experience students gain in editing and publishing comes through production of a campus literary magazine. At UNCW, with Professor Colbert's guidance, students in Creative Writing already receive an extensive introduction to the complex world of book publication. With modest technological and financial support through this grant, our students would be able to take a laboratory course where they would gain hands-on experience with the actual process of publication in today's computerized world. A Publishing Laboratory course would be a central part of the learning process in the Department of Creative Writing. Built around sound publishing principles, creative management and implementation of the best and most practical electronics and technology, the publishing laboratory would require only a modest startup cost. The directors would be able to control operating costs; to realize income from book sales; and to increase the number of students involved and the number of books produced year by year. Such a laboratory course would complement our current introductory courses in Book Publishing and would further prepare students with the knowledge and skills for success, whether as full-time or part-time writers or as future members of the publishing industry or its adjunct fields. Equally important, a Publishing Laboratory will mark our department, as well as the College and UNCW, as primed for the technology of the twenty-first century.

The most tangible outcome of the project will be the publication of a book that will be edited and printed over the course of the semester and summer so that it will be ready for purchase by students enrolling in CRW 201 next year. The next major outcome will be the coordinated effort with other campuses to produce an annual anthology of award-winning writing by UNC students. More immediately, however, two of our graduate students will receive hands-on training in the new technologies of book publishing from Professor Colbert and a consultant who is currently working as an editor in a major publishing house. These students can then pass this training on next year to another group of students, graduates as well as undergraduates, who will enroll in a course in the Publishing Laboratory and work on other magazine and book projects. Each year the number of students involved in the Publishing Laboratory will grow, as will the number of projects that emanate from it.

## **BREAKDOWN OF COSTS**

### **OPERATING EXPENSES:**

Publication/copies 1,000

Software 500

Color Laser Printer 2,000

**TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: \$3,500**

Stipends for Two Research Assistants 5,000

Publishing Consultant and Readers' Honoraria 4,750

Contracted Services (Free-lance Designer Fees) 1,500

Summer I Salary Support for Professor Colbert 5,000

**TOTAL BUDGET REQUESTED \$19,750**

The Department of Creative Writing will provide secretarial support, supplies, duplicating, mailing and other expenses for this initial phase of the Publishing Laboratory project.