



MFA IN PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Dear MFA Applicant:

We are delighted to hear of your interest in the WestConn MFA in Professional Writing, the first and only low-residency MFA program dedicated to educating career writers for the contemporary marketplace. You will find in this packet all of the information and materials you need to complete your application. Please also be sure to see our website at <http://www.wcsu.edu/writing/mfa/>. And, of course, I encourage you to contact me should you have any questions or concerns about the program.

The enclosures here include a typical schedule of courses that you will complete in the program. Also enclosed in the packet, you will find a more detailed description of those courses. All students in the program will complete this course sequence, unless one or two of the courses are covered by transfer credit (students are limited to 8 hours of transfer credit). However, as you will quickly ascertain by reading the descriptions, our courses are quite unique and designed to contribute to the creation of a community of writers who are engaged in common issues. We strongly encourage all students to take advantage of the program's full potential by enrolling in all of the courses in the sequence.

Please also find here two application forms, one for the Graduate Studies office and one for the MFA program. The enclosed checklist will help you to coordinate your completion of both applications and the parallel material you are required to submit. In the essay that we request, we are looking for a combination of clarity of expression, logical and creative ability, understanding of our program, and evidence of dedication to (and/or hunger for) the writing life. Please note that the application deadline is February 1. This is a postmark deadline.

As you probably know, the program features a highly reputable faculty of professional writers, creative writing professors, and academics in the Western Connecticut Writing Department, complemented by six Writers in Residence of national reputation and a number of Writing Mentors selected specifically to meet the demand created by your genres of interest. Please check the web site for faculty bios.

Additionally, we have established a Board of Advisors for the program, professional writers, agents, and editors who will advise the program and contribute to residencies and other campus events on an occasional basis. Our growing Board now includes

Norman Pearlstine, Editor-in-Chief of Time, Inc.; David Hartwell, Editor of TOR Books; Dr. Daphne Jameson of Cornell University; literary agent Georges Borchardt; Dean Golembeski, PR Director for the Connecticut State University System; and Mark Sullivan, PR Director for Pratt & Whitney.

We will be adding to the Board and posting Board bios on the web site in the coming weeks.

We plan a full slate of entertaining and informative activities during the residencies with a variety of agents, editors, and guest writers. You have probably realized by now, though, that coursework in the WestConn program is driven and designed by you. We have provided you and your faculty mentors a framework within which to work; it's up to you to decide how best to fill in the details and help create your own educational experience. It's up to you to select your genres of specialization, up to you to design reading lists and work contracts, up to you to design your enrichment project. As always, I will be available to advise you at these and all other stages of the program. Our program secretary, Laurel Richards, at 203-837-8878, will also be able to answer many of your questions.

In closing, let me just point out a few things you'll need in order to participate in the program. First, you'll have to have access to a computer with Internet access. You will use the computer to participate in an online workshop each semester, to conduct research, and most likely to communicate with me, with your student colleagues, and with faculty members. Second, you'll need to be able to set aside a week-long block of time to attend a residency each semester that you are enrolled (one in early August and one in early January). And you'll need the drive and determination necessary to get the most out of a program that you will help to design yourself. Finally, you may be interested to learn that the program is looking into holding January residencies at remote locations such as Florida, Puerto Rico, or The Bahamas, to avoid inclement weather in Danbury. We will inform you of developments. We look forward to receiving your application and hope to meet you at the August 2009 residency, if not before.

Sincerely,

Brian Clements

Coordinator