Annual Academic Planning Self-Study Update 2014:
Matching the Class Schedule and Faculty Assignments to the Educational Mission

Due to Nancy Geourantas (casdean@bu.edu) by Friday, October 10

The Project: Introduction and Purpose

A core mission of the Boston University College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences is to provide the highest quality undergraduate and graduate education to our students. The curricula we design – the majors and minors, general education program, and the like – constitute the frameworks of study we provide as departments and programs, a college, and a university, to structure that experience. They also constitute implied promises that we will offer the courses necessary to complete our academic programs in a timely way, led by faculty whose knowledge and pedagogical skills help them fulfill those promises. Boston University is a premier research and teaching university, and in all of our communications with potential students and their families, we promote the idea that our students work with a superb faculty of nationally and internationally recognized professors who are engaged in work at the forefront of their fields. Of course, we pursue this mission in a manner that uses our financial resources as efficiently as possible and that represents the fairest possible sharing of the obligations our curriculum poses among our faculty.

The CAS Annual Academic Planning Self-Study is designed to ensure that we manage these complicated tasks well at the department, program, and College level by developing proposals for course offerings and staffing in anticipation of the next three academic years that reflect our promises and obligations as far as possible. It is also designed to ensure that we distribute our teaching responsibilities appropriately and fairly among the faculty.

The Academic Planning Self-Study is principally an exercise of a) updating the previous year’s text and amending it to reflect any changes in curriculum, curricular obligations, resources, faculty, or other things that affect planning outcomes, and b) extending it to cover the new third year out. At the same time, this is not simply an administrative exercise. It should reflect the best, updated judgments of your faculty about how to fulfill the educational mission of your department or program. Arriving at these judgments requires that department and program faculty regularly discuss your progress in fulfilling the department, College, and University Strategic Plan; changing norms in your field; changes in your faculty composition and their interests and expertise; and changes in the interdisciplinary linkages between your program or department and others.

This annual self-study update, required of every department and program, and Arts & Sciences as a whole, brings into high relief the curricular needs, work distribution, and budgetary considerations that should guide preparation of your proposed 2015/2016 Class Schedule and Teaching Assignments, FY16 Budget Requests, new curricular and course proposals, and proposals for faculty recruitment later in the year.

All CAS units with academic programs are responsible for completing the annual Academic Planning Self-Study. Even if someone other than the Chair/Director completes the forms, the Chair/Director of the unit is responsible for ensuring the report is accurate and complete, and must sign off. The Self-Study should be submitted electronically with the Class Schedule and Budget Requests by Friday, October 10, to Nancy Geourantas, Executive Assistant to the Dean. Please do not submit materials, or copy them directly, to the Dean or any of the associate deans. We will assume that the principles and core decisions embedded in these self-studies have been discussed among the faculty.
Overview of the Self-Study

Because annual proposals should be driven by curricular needs, we are providing the following template to help you assess your unit’s curricular needs in the context of the degrees and minors you offer, the obligations to College and University curricular needs that all departments and programs share (for example, general education, the Writing Program, the Core Curriculum, Kilachand Honors College) and the needs of other programs your curriculum serves. The self-study invites thinking about your department’s educational mission as a complex of responsibilities, aspirations, and priorities for students’ undergraduate (general, specialized, professional, interdisciplinary, elective, co-curricular) and graduate (master’s and doctoral level) learning. The self-study asks you to specify how, over time, your department plans to fill the specific course needs that are driven by these obligations. This information will help us understand what changes would help us provide academic programs of the quality to which we aspire, what resources are needed, and where they should be placed. This exercise will require careful consultation and discussion at the departmental level.

The self-study asks you to respond to four basic questions:

1. What are the degree programs and requirements for which your department takes sole or shared major responsibility?
2. In what ways should your department contribute to curricular needs created by College and University programs (e.g. the Core, the Writing Program, Kilachand Honors College, general education) or those generated by the curricula of other schools, departments, and programs?
3. What courses, as a function of those requirements and needs, must be taught, and with what frequency, to ensure that the full range of students you serve can both adequately explore options and make timely progress to their degrees, but also to ensure that we are not devoting resources unnecessarily to running courses with little demand?
4. How, going forward, will your department develop a sustainable plan for covering those essential courses that equitably and effectively deploys your full complement of faculty?

This self-study captures the same basic information for all CAS/GRS departments and programs, while acknowledging that each department brings a distinctive mix of instructional responsibilities and resources to our common task of balancing diverse curricular needs. This form is constructed as a common template. Adapt it to the purpose of providing the information you and we need to fulfill the purposes of the exercise at both the department/program and College levels.

The annual update of this study, in most cases, necessitates department-wide discussion of curriculum and the distribution of teaching duties. All members of your faculty should be encouraged to participate. At the same time, unless your department or program has undergone dramatic changes in curriculum or enrollments in the past year or has experienced substantial turnover in faculty, updating the basic study should not be arduous. The main tasks are to update the text where necessary, update the three-year plan in Step III, and in Step IV summarize the major changes to the text made this year.

Specific instructions follow. Please feel free to ask questions as you go through this exercise. This survey looks long and involved; it’s not as bad as it looks.
STEP I. THE CURRICULAR CONTEXT
Throughout this self-study, please add any explanatory notes you believe will help us understand the situation.

A. Degrees, Minors, and Certificates offered by your program, individually or jointly

1. List all undergraduate and graduate degrees offered by your program (i.e. BA majors, Master’s degrees, doctoral degrees) and all joint degrees for which your program is responsible.
   MFA degree in Creative Writing (fiction and poetry)

2. List all undergraduate minors offered by your program.
   The Creative Writing Program (CWP) does not offer an undergraduate minor; however, students can complete a Concentration in Creative Writing (three courses) in COM. There is currently no minor or concentration in Creative Writing (CW) for CAS English majors.

3. List all certificate programs for which your program is responsible or shares responsibility.
   None.

B. Undergraduate majors offered by other departments and programs that depend on coursework in your program

1. Undergraduate Majors in CAS: Using the listing of BA programs at http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/programs/ to ensure completeness, list all CAS majors other than those administered individually or jointly in your department whose requirements (as spelled out in departmental sections of the bulletin) include coursework in your department.
   Courses available to CAS students to be counted toward the English major (subject to the same rules as other English Department courses) include the following: CAS EN 304 (Writing of Poetry), CAS EN 305 (Writing of Fiction), or CAS EN 405 (Advanced Writing of Fiction); in the past, these courses have sometimes been taken more than once, by undergraduates (if the course is with a different instructor). On very rare occasions, gifted undergraduates have been admitted to 500-level graduate MFA workshops. Please note: the possibility of changing Creative Writing course designations from EN to CR or CW has been discussed; were the designation to change, crosslisting of CW courses with English Department courses would be important to both programs. Our hope is that it might be possible to create a CW concentration within the CAS English major.

2. Undergraduate majors and degrees outside CAS: Using the list of BU Schools and Colleges at http://www.bu.edu/academics/ to ensure completeness, list all non-CAS undergraduate degree programs whose requirements include coursework in your department.
   COM students may complete a concentration in CW by taking three of the following courses: CAS EN 304 (Writing of Poetry), CAS EN 305 (Writing of Fiction), or CAS EN 405 (Advanced Writing of Fiction). Please see note about CW course designations in B. 1 above.

3. Undergraduate minors: Using the listing of minors at http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/programs/, list all (CAS and other) minors whose requirements can be fulfilled by required or elective coursework in your department.
   The English minor consists of three courses numbered CAS EN 300 or above; because CW courses are currently designated EN, they may count toward the minor in English (subject to the same rules as other English Department courses). In the event that the designation changes, the hope is that CW courses would still count toward the English minor.

C. Graduate programs offered by other departments and schools that depend on coursework in your program
1. GRS Master’s Programs outside your department. Using the list at http://www.bu.edu/academics/grs/programs/, list all Master’s degree programs whose requirements (as spelled out in departmental sections of the bulletin) include coursework in your department.
   None.

2. GRS Doctoral Programs. Using the list at http://www.bu.edu/academics/grs/programs/, list all doctoral programs whose requirements (as spelled out in departmental sections of the bulletin) include coursework in your department.
   None.

3. Non-GRS Graduate Degrees. Using the list of Schools and Colleges at http://www.bu.edu/academics/, list any non-GRS graduate programs whose requirements include coursework in your department.
   None.

D. College Requirements and Programs: Writing, Foreign Language, Math, Core Curriculum, Divisional Studies

In general, all departments and programs have responsibilities for selected aspects of the CAS curriculum that go beyond the major. Describe your department’s typical role in any of the following in which it has participated. (In what ways has your department contributed? To what extent?) For any aspect in which your department (including through individual faculty) has not played a recent role, enter “None.”

1. Core Curriculum
   None.

2. Kilachand Honors College
   None.

3. Teaching seminars toward fulfillment of the College Writing requirement
   Current MFA students and MFA alumni teach CAS EN 202 (Introduction to Creative Writing); MFA alumni also teach EN 304 (Writing of Poetry), EN 305 (Writing of Fiction) and EN 405 (Advanced Fiction Writing). It would be possible for MFA students to teach other CAS writing courses (e.g. Writing 100 or Writing 150) in addition to these.

4. Implementation of the foreign language requirement
   Discussions are under way with Modern Languages and Romance Literatures about the possibility that CW Professor Karl Kirchwey would teach the Translation Seminar (XL 560). This course does not fulfill any part of foreign language requirement, but does count as a senior seminar for majors in Comparative Literature.

5. Offering Divisional Studies courses that also serve as gateways to your major(s)
   None.

6. Offering Divisional Studies courses that do not also count toward majors in your department or division
   None.

7. Offering selected courses that are not important for fulfilling requirements for your major(s) or minor(s), but are in very high demand by students because of their interests
CAS EN 202 (Introduction to Creative Writing) is a very popular course with undergraduates, as are the upper level CAS EN 304, 305 and 405 courses. CAS EN 202 is offered in eight sections per semester, with up to fifteen students per section, for a total enrollment of approximately 200 students per year.

8. Any other aspects of the CAS/GRS curriculum you want to mention

The curricular relationship (including listing of courses) between Creative Writing and English is important to both programs. The Translation Seminar (XL 560) and summer courses at BU are an important resource for CW MFA students.

Additional Comments:

The current structure has been described as “pyramidal,” with EN 202 as a gateway course at the base, EN 304, 305 and 405 as intermediate courses, and the graduate MFA seminars at the apex, to which Professor Leslie Epstein has on rare occasions admitted particularly talented undergraduates. This is a logical arrangement, providing CW MFA students with invaluable experience in teaching undergraduate creative writing and providing BU with qualified and gifted teachers of its undergraduate courses. Some undergraduate creative writers at BU may also choose to apply to the MFA program after graduation.
STEP II. ASSESSMENT OF CURRICULAR OBLIGATIONS AND NEEDS

In updating this assessment, you should be guided in large part by past enrollment patterns — both high and low demand — and what these imply about patterns of demand over time. Point to evidence from past enrollments to make predictions about projected demand for courses. In this step of the self-study, you will identify the courses your department or program ought to offer regularly for curricular reasons and determine how often they should be offered.

Please note that CAS undergraduate courses need minimum enrollments of 10 and graduate courses need minimum enrollments of 8 in order to be considered sufficiently in demand to be offered; courses that have attracted fewer students will be considered for possible cancellation.

A. OBLIGATIONS TOWARD UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION. For any degrees or minors we offer (listed in STEP I), their list of required courses implies an obligation to offer these courses on a regular enough basis to allow students to complete their degrees in a timely way. In addition, every department and program also ought to offer a wider set of courses that enrich the educational program, take advantage of faculty expertise, etc. Taking into account your department’s obligations in undergraduate education as specified in Step I above, indicate the frequency with which your faculty should offer specific courses (number and name) and course types (e.g., 2 Core sections, 2 upper-level electives in subfield X) in order to serve students well in allowing them to finish their degrees in a timely way:

We propose to maintain course offerings as described in Question 1, section D. 7 above.

1. Which courses and course types should be offered every semester?
   CAS EN 202 (Introduction to Creative Writing), eight sections
   CAS EN 304 (Writing of Poetry)
   Note: in the event that course CAS EN XXX (Advanced Poetry Writing) were created, CAS EN 304 would be offered in the fall semester and CAS EN XXX would be offered in the spring.

2. Which courses and course types should be offered annually?
   CAS EN 305 (Writing of Fiction) (fall semester)
   CAS EN 405 (Advanced Fiction Writing) (spring semester)

3. Which courses and course types should be offered every other academic year or every third year?
   None.

B. OBLIGATIONS TOWARD GRADUATE EDUCATION. Taking into account your department’s obligations in graduate education as specified in Step I above, list specific courses (number and name) and course types that your faculty should offer in order to serve students well in allowing them to finish their degrees in a timely way. Every department and program also ought to offer a wider set of courses that enrich the educational program, take advantage of faculty expertise, etc.

1. Which courses and course types should be offered every semester?
   CAS EN 505 (Poetry Workshop I and II)
   CAS EN 507 (Creative Writing: Fiction)
   CAS EN 508 (Creative Writing: Poetry)

2. Which courses and course types should be offered annually?
   CAS EN 503 (Fiction Workshop I: Revision) offered in the fall
   CAS EN 504 (Fiction Workshop II: the Novella) offered in the spring
Note: in order to cover sabbatical leaves for Leslie Epstein (fall 2015) and Ha Jin (spring 2016) and one accompanying leave replacement, the usual order will be reversed and CAS EN 503 will be offered in spring 2016 and CAS EN 504 will be offered in fall 2015.

3. Which courses and course types should be offered *every other academic year or every third year*? None.
STEP III. PLANNING FOR EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE COURSE STAFFING

The core of the process of developing a course roster requires starting with the course rotation needs identified in Step II of this document. Although we develop course rosters from one year to the next, the exercise really requires curricular planning over a longer time period that takes account of the shifting availability of specific faculty and other constraints.

This section of the self-study asks you to devise a plan for staffing your core course rotation needs over the upcoming three-year period. The most straightforward way to do it is to list each course (or type of course, where multiple courses could cover the requirement) for which your department or program has indicated a core need and indicate how your department proposes to cover the obligation over the next three-years (2014/2015, 2015/2016, 2016/2017).

Examples:

Dean Studies 101, needed every semester: Dean Sapiro will teach this every fall, and one of the associate deans will be committed to teach it on a rotational basis every spring.

Dean Studies 102, needed once a year. This is a skills course for which we have a very good lecturer we would like to continue to hire to teach this course.

Dean Studies 201, needed once a year: Associate Dean Thacker and Associate Dean Kaiser will alternate turns, with each taking a two-year stint, so Thacker will teach it in 2014/15 and 2015/16, and Kaiser will teach it in 2016/17.

Dean Studies 301, needed once a year: At the moment we have no faculty member able to teach this, so we would like to employ one of our advanced graduate students as a Lecturer/Senior Teaching Fellow for next year. In the meantime, Associate Dean Jackson is developing this course for her repertoire.

Dean Studies 302, needed once a year: Associate Dean Hughes usually teaches this, but he is hoping to be on sabbatical in 2014/15. We are doing faculty recruiting his year and expect the new faculty member to be able to rotate into this course.

Dean Studies contributes one faculty course to the Core Curriculum each year.

SMG requires all their best MBA students to take Dean Studies 555; Associate Dean Cooper is planning on offering this once a year.

Further notes for developing your plan:

1. The quality of the educational experience for both undergraduates and graduates is of prime concern. For undergraduates the first-year experience has a major impact on the likelihood that they will succeed and flourish through their academic experience. Wherever possible, faculty should be involved in students’ academic experience of their first years at college as well as their later ones.

2. All faculty should participate in sharing the core elements of the curricular obligations of the department.

3. Faculty workloads should be distributed as equitably as possible in terms of sharing core elements of the curricular obligations of the department. An individual faculty member’s teaching should normally include courses of various sizes and course levels (introductory, advanced, graduate). Account should also be taken of significant differences in graduate student and undergraduate advising loads. New assistant professors should be given consideration in being able to repeat courses while developing a full repertoire of courses, and more senior faculty are not exempt from developing the ability to share in new curricular obligations.
4. Faculty should not “own” particular courses; if a new faculty member has core expertise in an area that has been taught repeatedly by someone else for many years, develop a plan for rotation.

5. Recent years’ enrollments will be useful in developing both this three-year plan and the specific roster of courses you compile in any given year. Courses that have recently enrolled very few students should be taught less often. Departments with relatively few majors should stretch to serve more College and University curricular needs.

**Creative Writing Program Three-Year Staffing Plan 2015-2018:**

**CAS EN 503 (Fiction Workshop I: Revision)**
To be taught by Sigrid Nunez or other part-time Lecturer in spring 2016, fall 2016, fall 2017

**CAS EN 504 (Fiction Workshop II: the Novella)**
To be taught by Professor Ha Jin in fall 2015, spring 2017, spring 2018

**CAS EN 505 (Poetry Workshop I and II)**
To be taught by Professor Robert Pinsky each semester, fall 2015- spring 2018

**CAS EN 507 (Creative Writing: Fiction)**
To be taught by Professor Leslie Epstein each semester, spring 2016-spring 2018; in fall 2015 this course will be taught by Visiting Professor Jayne Anne Phillips, covering Professor Epstein's sabbatical.

**CAS EN 508 (Creative Writing: Poetry)**
To be taught by Professor Karl Kirchwey each semester, fall 2015-spring 2018, with the exception of fall 2016 or spring 2017, when a part-time Lecturer will replace Professor Kirchwey while he is on sabbatical; also, if Karl Kirchwey teaches the Translation Seminar (XL 560) in spring 2016, then a further replacement will be hired for him to teach EN 508 in that semester.

Please note: CAS EN 584 (Studies in American Literary Movements: Literature of the Migrant) is normally offered by Professor Ha Jin in the fall semester of each year. He will not offer this course in fall 2015; English will decide how to replace the course.

**STEP IV: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF UPDATES AND TEN-YEAR PLANNING**

1. **UPDATES:** Please list all major updates that you made to this document this year.

   We have made no major changes to this document this year. Visiting Professor Jayne Anne Phillips will teach CAS EN 507 to cover Leslie Epstein’s sabbatical in F15; Ha Jin will not teach CAS EN 584 in F15 so that he can teach CAS EN 504 in that semester; Sigrid Nunez will then teach CAS EN 503 in S16 to cover Ha Jin’s sabbatical. We would like to explore the possibility of creating an-upper level undergraduate poetry workshop (CAS EN XXX, Advanced Poetry Writing) corresponding to the existing Advanced Fiction Writing course, CAS EN 405. And we would also like to discuss with the English Department the possibility of creating a concentration in CW for CAS English Majors.

2. **GOALS AND PLANNING:** With continuing reference to the three preceding sections of this Self-Study, please discuss significant changes, beyond those already documented above, that your unit is planning or that you
foresee occurring over the next three years, and assess the potential impact of those changes on the scope and quality of academic programs.

A. The Curricular Context: How will your unit’s set of commitments and priorities in undergraduate and graduate education evolve (include enrollment projections in cases where you foresee a substantial change in student numbers)?

Karl Kirchwey’s arrival at BU as Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing, after Leslie Epstein’s long and distinguished directorship, affords the program a chance to examine its current curriculum, funding and size. Features differentiating BU’s program from those of its major competitors at the moment include the following: (a) It is the only full-time one-year (two- to three-semester) MFA program in the country, and offers a particularly intensive combination of workshops and literary seminars. This feature undoubtedly attracts students (including older writers, working professionals and international students) who would be unable to participate in a two- or three-year MFA program. (b) It offers each student a Global Fellowship upon completion of required coursework and the thesis, allowing two to three months of travel anywhere outside of the United States. This feature is also related to the opportunity given MFA students to take XL 560, the Translation Seminar.

The overall size of BU’s MFA student body—ten each year in fiction, and eight to ten in poetry—is small compared with programs like those at New York University (96 students) or Columbia (184 students), but approximately equal to class sizes at programs such as Johns Hopkins (four poets and four fiction writers each year, to make a total cohort of sixteen in a two-year program). Application numbers to the BU MFA program are very robust—in 2013, 122 poetry applications and 267 fiction applications were received—suggesting that the two- to three-semester program is attractive to many applicants. BU’s application deadline is also later than that at other competitive programs, and anecdotal evidence suggests that this late application deadline widens the application pool as well.

The relationship between graduate and undergraduate creative writing at BU is a highly-symbiotic one, whereby MFA students acquire invaluable teaching experience by offering popular creative writing workshops to BU undergraduates, who may progress from EN 202 (Introduction to Creative Writing) through the upper-level undergraduate CW courses and indeed eventually apply to the MFA program upon graduation.

The fact that BU’s is the only remaining one-year MFA program in the country simultaneously invites the CW faculty to compare the funding, curriculum and opportunities currently offered students in such an intensive and compressed program with opportunities made available by other leading two- or three-year MFA programs, not only to preserve the current excellence of the BU program but in order to consolidate and build on that excellence for the future. Information-gathering for such a comparison is now under way, and the CW faculty will discuss all available information as part of preparing a full Strategic Plan due on December 19, 2014.

List any academic programs that you are currently proposing/developing/reviewing/revising or planning to propose/develop/review/review, either within your department or in collaboration with other units of the College and University.

Please see response in preceding section.
Please take advantage of this opportunity not only to think about new initiatives and growth areas, but also to assess the costs and benefits of any degree programs or minors currently offered or staffed by your unit that enroll fewer than 20 students.

As indicated above, the BU MFA program enrolls a total of eighteen-twenty students per year, and in doing so is roughly on a par with other leading MFA programs in the United States.

Note: The future of low-enrollment programs will be a particular focus of our follow-up discussions with you this year.

B. Specific Course Needs: In what significant ways will the changes listed in “A” above affect the courses (kind, size, format, offering patterns) you will need to offer?

Existing courses are adequate for the current two- to three-semester MFA program at BU. A two-year MFA program would require additional courses, including some different from those currently offered, and information about the curricular differences and innovations currently available at longer MFA programs will be discussed by the BU MFA faculty.

C. Course Staffing: How do you see the next ten years of turnover and renewal affecting the composition and profile of your faculty? Please think especially of how you will use replacement positions to build areas of new or continuing high priority in research and teaching. How will these changes affect your planning for the implementation of current and future curricula?

The faculty of the BU MFA program has now been stabilized, with Professors Leslie Epstein and Ha Jin in fiction and Professors Karl Kirchwey and Robert Pinsky in poetry. Assuming that curricular offerings do not expand, replacement positions will be particularly important in balancing the gender of the MFA faculty (as the presence of Sigrid Nunez and Jayne Anne Phillips will do in the 2015/16 year, for example).

Thank you for taking the time to engage in this exercise. It will help us serve our students and faculty better. We will take account of the responses in responding to specific proposals, requests for temporary lecturers, and requests for new and replacement faculty positions. We will also use the self-study as one basis for continuing discussions in the College about strategic planning.