Intent to Plan for a New Program
South Dakota Board of Regents
Academic Affairs Forms

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Use this form to request authorization to plan a new baccalaureate major, associate degree program, or graduate program; formal approval or waiver of an Intent to Plan is required before a university may submit a related full proposal request for a new program. The Executive Director and/or their designees may request additional information. After the university President approves the Intent to Plan, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the System Academic Officer through the proper process. Only post the Intent to Plan to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director, System Academic Officer or designee. This form is meant to capture critical elements for stakeholders to review prior to a full proposal.

University	BHSU - Black Hills State University
Degree	BFA : Bachelor of Fine Arts
Name of Major	BCWR : Creative Writing
Specialization Required?	No *Note: If the new proposed program includes specific specializations within it, complete and submit a New Specialization Form for each proposed specialization and attach it to this form. Since specializations appear on transcripts, they require Board approval.*
College/Department	6A : BHSU College of Liberal Arts/BHUM: School of Humanities
Intended Date of Full Proposal	Fall 2027
Planned CIP Code	23.1302

Program Description

1. Provide the working program description that may appear in the university catalog.

The major in creative writing program provides students with a deep understanding of writing styles and techniques for producing works of fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and script writing. Creative writing courses are generally small with a focus on craft, peer review, and mentoring. Other courses provide foundational understanding of the literary tradition and criticism. The BFA in Creative Writing would allow the student to create sustained writing projects in their chosen genre and to select courses in other disciplines related to those projects.

Strategic Impact

2. Describe how the program fits in with the institutional mission, strategic plan, existing institutional program array, and academic priorities.

As a comprehensive state institution, BHSU is committed to offering students a range of academic programs to match their interests and goals. And, as an institution in the Black Hills, we are uniquely able to attract students in creative fields, who seek inspiring locations for college. Our request for this new program would build on our growing strength in the arts. BHSU has long had a successful music program; in the last 10 years it has successfully established BFA programs in studio art, graphic design, and photography. With the full renovation of the main theater, we expect to boost our theater minor. Finally, our creative writing minor (initiated in 2018) is well established with 39 students. We believe the timing is right to launch a new major (BS and BA). Concurrently, we wish to propose a BFA in creative writing. It would strengthen the existing BFA's, creating a robust educational opportunity for all students of the arts west of the Missouri River.

Goal 2: of the current strategic plan includes the objective to "pursue several new or substantively modified graduate, major, minor, or certificate programs" (Objective 3) It also emphasizes the need to "grow the number of educational opportunities for students through service learning, community projects, international studies, honors work, and student academic and professional organizations" (Objective 4) The innovative nature of the proposed program would help us meet both objectives.

Finally, an institutional priority as expressed in the strategic plan and the strategic enrollment plan is to increase enrollment. This program would set BHSU apart from other universities, enhancing recruitment opportunities in surrounding states. It would allow us to attract students who would not otherwise choose to come to South Dakota for their education.

If the program does not align to the strategic plan, provide a compelling rationale for the institution to offer the program.

3. How does the program connect to the Board of Regent's Strategic Plan?

In general, the proposed program would support the BOR strategical goal of increased access, Goal 1. BHSU is the only comprehensive institution in the western half of the state, so this program would provide better access to arts and writing education for students in this region and at an institution with a growing interest in the arts. More directly, it supports Goal 3, academic excellence, in at least two ways: by contributing to sustainable academic programming (The creative writing minor is highly successful) and by increasing proposals that contain high-impact practices. According to a review and analysis of existing research (Calvin D. Smith & Chi Baik. "High Impact Teaching Practices in Higher Education: A Best Evidence Review." Studies in Higher Education. 46.8: 2021), the four most effective of these practices are, in order, structure (creating goals and steps), alignment (of goals, activities, and assessment), collaboration, and problem-based learning. While any good course would provide structure and alignment, a creative writing program—with its emphasis on peer response, revision, and mentoring—has collaboration and problem-based learning at its core. We have found no studies of retention based on major, but we can reasonably assume that a program that follows the highest of high-impact practices will support retention and student success. Finally, we would embed job readiness into the curriculum with instruction on skills-based resumes, job searches, and interview readiness. Career building would be an overt part of the capstone of the curriculum for a variety of jobs.

Program Summary

4. If a new degree is proposed, what is the rationale?

This question refers to the type of degree, not the program. For example, if your university has authorization to offer the Bachelor of Science and the program requested is a Bachelor of Science, then the request is not for a new degree.

No new degree is proposed. BHSU offers BS, BA and BFA degree programs.

5. What modality/modalities will be used to offer the new program?

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On Campus	Yes	Fall 2027

	Yes/No	Location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off Campus Location	Yes	TBD-workshops as needed	Fall 2027

	Yes/No	Delivery Method(s)	Intended Start Date
Distance Delivery	Yes	D2L-Yes, for any future growth. At the start, the classes will be face-to-face.	Fall 2027

	Yes/No	Identify Institutions
Does another BOR institution already have authorization to offer the program online?	No	No other BOR institution has this major. USD and SDSU have a creative writing specialization in the English major.

6. If the program will be offered through distance delivery, identify the planned instructional modality:

Not Applicable : Program will not be offered through distance delivery.

Academic Quality

7. What peer institutions and current national standards will be referenced to develop the curriculum for this program? Include links to at least 3 comparable programs at peer institutions and links to national or accreditation standards, if any.

There are no creative writing majors at our peer institutions at the undergraduate level. We believe our program would provide BHSU with distinction, especially since we have exemplary creative writers already on staff who are generating interest in the program.

The few related programs among our peer institutions are the following:

Wayne State and Minot State have integrated literature and writing majors.
https://clas.wayne.edu/english/programs/study/creative-writing
https://www.minotstateu.edu/english/coursework.shtml

Eastern Oregon University has an MFA in the field. https://www.eou.edu/mfa/

Montana State—Billings offers creative writing as part of the English major.
https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/courses/crwr/

A review of top undergraduate writing programs provides a lose standard structure, which is creative writing courses in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, advanced courses in these fields as well as select others, and supporting literature classes.

The University of Evansville (Indiana) is a regional institution listed as having one of the top programs in the country for Creative Writing. We would follow a similar model for the BS/BA with introductory and advanced courses for writing in each genre and supportive literature courses. Their course work on editing and publishing might serve as models for our program for future growth.
https://www.evansville.edu/majors/english/major-programs.cfm

8. What program accreditation is available, if any?

We do not know of any program accreditors for Creative Writing at the undergraduate level.

9. Will the proposed program pursue accreditation or certifications?

No

If no, why has the department elected not to pursue accreditation for the program?

Because undergraduate creative writing programs are not accredited, except through university accreditation with, for example, the Higher Learning Commission.

Duplication and Competition

10. Do any related programs exist at other public universities in South Dakota?
A list of existing programs is available through the university websites and the RIS Reporting: Academic Reports Database. If there are no related programs within the Regental system, indicate ***none.***

Within the SD BOR system, USD and SDSU have writing specializations within the English major. None have stand-alone majors.

A. If yes, defend the need for an additional program within the state, Include IPEDS enrollment data and additional data as needed.

N/a

B. If yes, would this program be a candidate for Regental system collaboration?

N/a

11. Do any related programs exist at any non-Regental college or university within 150 miles of the university?
List those programs here:

None.

A. If yes, use IPEDS to identify the enrollment in those programs.

N/A

B. What evidence suggests there is unmet student demand for the proposed program, or that the proposed program would attract students away from the existing program?

N/A

Market Demand

This section establishes the market demand for the proposed program (eg Regental system need, institutional need, workforce need). Use the following sources for your data:

- South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation
- O-Net
- US Department of Labor Projections Central
- SDBOR Workforce and Degree Gap Analysis Report

12. What is the expected growth of the industry or occupation in South Dakota and nationally?

Include the number of openings, as well as the percentage of growth when possible.

Below is a study of related fields in which graduates of our creative writing graduates would seek jobs.

a. Writers and Authors

South Dakota labor projections indicate an upcoming 3.65% increase.

b. Technical and professional writing, publishing:

In South Dakota the demand is expected to increase 6.09% between 2022 and 2032.

c. The arts and community work:

In SD the demand for art directors is projected to increase 7.75%

For project management 11%.

d. Artificial Intelligence:

Since students trained as creative writers will be critical to the development of AI, we include the relevant assessment from current employment projections (2024-2034) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics in this field.

Demand for artificial intelligence (AI)-based systems, data processing, software development, research services, and associated consulting services are expected to drive the need for workers in both the professional, scientific, and technical services sector (+7.5 percent) and the information sector (+6.5 percent).

https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nr0.htm#:~:text=Demand%20for%20artificial,sector%20(%2B6.5%20percent).

South Dakota labor projections don't yet specify creative occupations needed in development of AI applications. However, we could reasonably expect to follow national trends. occupational_projections_2022_2032_statewide_south_dakota.pdf

13. What evidence, if any, suggests there are unfilled openings in South Dakota or nationally?

There is evidence there will be unfilled openings especially in emerging field of Artificial Intelligence. The next stage of AI development will require those who can write prompts to generate needed information and assess and improve AI-written text. A creative writing major would be equipped to fill jobs in AI that are not computer science.

Linked is an overview from the Bureau of Labor statistics of jobs for which creative writers would be specifically trained: copy writing, screen writing, editing, blogging, and research writing, for example.

In addition to preparing students for these jobs, the proposed program provides the so-called soft skills most in demand nationally and globally. The Future Jobs Report for 2025, published by the World Economic Forum, indicates that the non-technical skills most in demand are those related to critical thinking, self-efficacy, and collaboration. These findings are consistent across industries and geographical regions. In a typical creative writing program students work closely together in writing groups in which they analyze each other's work, communicate their ideas about the work, and articulate their own thought processes. This sustained and rigorous process not only improves their writing but strengthens personal resilience. Thus, a major in creative writing is also a major in soft skill development for the job market.

The US Department of Labor cites the 17 skills most needed in the job market in the next ten years. Among those, the following eight are addressed directly and continuously in creative writing courses: adaptability, detail oriented, speaking and listening, writing and reading, creativity and innovation, interpersonal, problem solving and decision making, critical and analytical thinking.

Among the skills students would acquire in this creativity-based program are those critical to the workplace as AI takes on many non-creative tasks. What AI cannot replace is human creativity. Citing research by the World Economic Forum on projected job displacement resulting from AI, Ilya Likhov of Forbes Magazine, says, "For now, I see AI as a job transformer. The workforce of tomorrow will need new skills: emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, creativity and the ability to work alongside intelligent systems" ("Cultivating Creativity: A Workplace Essential," August 28, 2025).

Creativity and writing skills will be at a premium in managing AI capacity, particularly in creating the prompts that allow AI to provide useful information. To make the connection between creative writing and generative technology, we would send our faculty member with the background in both creative and technical writing for further training so he could advise students appropriately about marketing their skills in this rapidly expanding field. In future program developments we imagine coursework directly tied to creative, human management of AI systems.

14. What salaries can program graduates expect to earn in South Dakota and nationally?

Nationally, the average salary for a novelist, for example, is $49,000. We have inadequate data for South Dakota. While this salary is below that of the state average of $57,000, novelists nearly always have additional paid work, usually an additional, full-time job in teaching, journalism or other areas.

When searching for book authors in general rather than novelists, we find a range from $43,000 to $84,000 naturally. Again, most authors have additional paid work.

Technical writers average $99,000 in January 2026. Project managers $82,000. Art directors $151,000. Video game writers $81,000. Grant writers, $79,000. This information comes from an AI query.

15. Optional: Provide any additional evidence of regional demand for the program.

e.g. prospective student interest survey data, letters of support from employers, community needs...

We have discussed the proposed program with at least one community college in Wyoming, where there is demand among those with associate's degrees in creative writing who seek baccalaureate programs in the region. We can reasonably assume that since there are few creative writing programs in the region, we would also gain students from other surrounding states.

Student Demand

16. Provide evidence of student completers/graduates at that degree level at peer institutions that offer the same/similar program using data obtained from IPEDS.

Choose programs not already listed in question 11. Use the most recent year available.

University Name	State	Program Name	Number of Degrees Conferred in Program	Total Number of Conferrals at Level (Undergrad or Grad)
University of Evansville	IN : Indiana	BFA in Creative Writing	2	46
Eastern Oregon University	OR : Oregon	MFA Creative and Environmental Writing	11	127
Minot state University	ND : North Dakota	BA in English	3	96

17. What evidence suggests there is interest from prospective students for this program at the university?

Repeated requests from students for a major. A growing interest in theater and film writing from students in the theater program resulting from collaboration of English and theater.

Enrollment

18. Are students enrolling in this program expected to be new to the university or redirected from existing programs at the university?

Include the number of openings, as well as the percentage of growth when possible.

Both. Some of our approximately 40 minors would likely choose creative writing as a major. However, this program would set us apart from most other regional, comprehensive universities in the country, so it would likely draw students in and out of South Dakota.

19. Narrative Description of the preliminary estimates on annual enrollment in this program by year six

Include all students within the program, not just those new to the program.

Given the strength of the faculty, the success of the related minor, and the recruitment opportunities, we expect immediate growth.

Year 1-- 10 Year2--15 Year 3--18 Year 4--20 Year 5--25

A poll of current students with minors in creative writing proves interest in the major. Of the students who responded (6), all were supportive and all but one were highly enthusiastic. That one—while pleased with the minor-- expressed reluctance to take the major in the field, citing a wish for a major more directly aligned with future career title.

One student comment (cited with permission) is an example of a typical response:

I would have loved to major in Creative Writing. They were some of my favorite classes, and I likely would have double majored in English and Creative Writing to round my skills out [. . . .] I believe incoming writers would benefit from this major greatly, especially as they spend time with these talented professors! Plus, I love BHSU and I know that by creating this major, students would be inclined to choose this school over others who may have it as an option already. Since we have recently become the most affordable university in the state, this would be a great opportunity for these students.

Most students do not respond to email polls. However, even if we started with the five students who said they would switch from the minor to the major, we can reasonably expect to begin with ten majors. An additional five would come from recruitment, particularly from Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado, where such programs do not exist.