

Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: Lion Rock Visiting Writers Series
Program Manager: Ali Ünal, Coordinator & Committee Chair; Committee: Taneum Bambrick
Fiscal Year: 2022-23

1. In what ways does your program support CWU students? Please be specific, yet concise.

Our program offers all students across disciplines:

- (1) the opportunity to learn directly—via Zoom presentations—from authors writing across genres and on a variety of subjects;
- (2) the chance to introduce and read with professional, published authors.
- (3) Our student interns also run a student-centered reading each quarter, at which any student in any major can sign up to read from their original work;
- (4) student interns work to help set up events, and work in all aspects of PR and outreach, alongside a faculty mentor.

All of our events are free, currently virtual, and open to the entire campus community.

2. What are your specific program goals or learning/operational objectives? How are you assessing the effectiveness of your program in achieving those targets?

1. Bring a diverse range of acclaimed writers to CWU campus for readings, craft talks, & other student-centered events, live & virtually, serving both campus and online students
2. Connect campus community & online cohorts via accessible platforms
3. Create a forum for student-to-community engagement
4. Provide a model for professional engagement beyond/ besides classroom learning
5. Promote & connects our literary mission with larger social, environmental, & racial justice endeavors
6. Highlight CWU on the Pacific Northwest literary map
7. Provide professional showcase for the writing of CWU faculty & alums
8. Promote interdisciplinarity & collaboration across departments & programs

To Assess:

1. We reflect on what writers we brought at the end of the year and what kind of representation they offered.
2. During and after the pandemic we used the Zoom platform for our events, which has been accessible to anyone who has access to the link (CWU community, per our contract with authors). Next year we are back to having in-person events now with an online component through Zoom. With these hybrid events, we aim to increase our reach and accessibility of our events.
3. Students engage with community members in chat, Q and A, and as part of the audience for the events. Books by writers in our series have been One Book, One County "picks" as well, so they're featured in local libraries.
4. Writers who appear in our series read from published work and/or discuss how to engage. in craft and publish literary work, so they are modeling professional engagement.
5. At the end of the year, we consider what social, environmental and/or racial justice issues were raised by our writers (frequently this is part of what we use to determine whether to invite them in the first place), alongside what literary aesthetics and community they engaged.

- 6. By inviting writers from other places, we bring their awareness to CWU on the national literary scene. By highlighting writers from our own area, we also showcase CWU in the Pacific NW.
- 7. When students introduce the readers, we offer a showcase for their writing. Nearly every year also, either a CWU faculty member, alum, or both, read as part of the series, and there are also student readings.
- 8. Since the writers' work often addresses topics important to other departments and programs, their students and faculty frequently attend as well. One of our winter events collaborated with Humanities Washington, LLAS, CWU Libraries, Douglas Honors College, and the public libraries.

- 3. What is the overall purpose of your program and what service(s) does your program provide?
 - a. Are there overlaps or intersections with other university programs who have a similar purpose or service?

See above (esp #1) for overall purposes.

We intersect with a number of programs--e.g., the CWU Libraries, Veterans Center, Wildcat Shop, History Dept., LLAS, Museum of Culture and Environment, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, College of Art and Humanities, Art & Design, Theatre, Douglas Honors College, and MECHA.

- 4. How does your program align with the purpose of S&A funding? *“Supporting cocurricular and extracurricular activities and programs participated in by students in the furtherance of their education.”*

We provide opportunities for students to meet (both virtually and in-person) practicing writers whose literary works reach national acclaim (such as Ross Gay, whose 2014 book *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude* won National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry and the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award; he was also a finalist for the National Book Award for Poetry). Students get to hear these authors perform their work and offer craft talks and generative workshops. Students from a variety of programs attend these events. Some students also participate by introducing the writers and/or setting up events.

- 5. How does your program support CWU’s mission and goals? (<https://www.cwu.edu/mission/>)

1: TEACHING & LEARNING

Objective: Enhance student success by offering a visiting writers series that is tied to but not dependent on learning objectives in English, and many other CAH departments, as well as across the curriculum in the sciences, and many campus groups.

Objective: Provide learning opportunities for personal interactions between visiting writers and students, including Q and A, informal conversations, and written commentary from writers to select students in upper division English classes.

Objective: Through the visiting writers series, promote creative work of literary value by writers who can not only offer models of excellence in their written poetry, fiction, drama, creative

nonfiction, or other genres, but also can model and discuss the creative process, the business of authorship, and can speak as ambassadors for the arts.

2: INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY

Objective: Invite writers from underrepresented groups to campus to enhance inclusivity for faculty, staff and students; ensure that CWU has inclusive & diverse curricular and extracurricular activities, and increase faculty, staff, and student diversity by active programming.

3: SCHOLARSHIP & CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Objective: Increase the opportunities for students to see creative expression in action via performances by visiting writers who may also discuss form and theory in their genres.

Objective: Increase external funding for the LRVWS via external grants like the NEA, Humanities Wa, Community grants like the Kittitas County One Book One County Program, and internal grants as they are available.

4: PUBLIC SERVICE & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Objective: Increase participation between the University and external communities by offering performances from some visiting writers who will appeal to various interdisciplinary and community groups.

Objective: Host writers who model a commitment to social justice, community service and/or address issues of civic engagement in their work.

5: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & STEWARDSHIP

Objective: Seek financial stewardship from donors and maximize the efficient and effective operation of the Lion Rock VWS.

Objective: Offer writers whose work has cross-disciplinary connections to attract non-majors who may, as a result, become English majors.

6. Please provide detailed information regarding who utilizes your program? (*Students, faculty, staff, community? Specific demographic information? Class standing, gender, ethnicity, transfer, campus location, etc.*)

Students from a variety of disciplines, often those enrolled in English classes, but those include a variety of majors, especially from 100 and 200-level classes. Faculty from across disciplines, staff, community members. For class standing, all levels. All genders. Since Lion Rock prides itself on representation that mirrors the student population, it draws a diverse range of

students. Student groups from across programs, online populations, and our centers can join our virtual events.

7. How many unique CWU students utilize your program or services?
 - a. How do you gather these metrics?
 - b. If you do not, what is preventing you from getting that data and how are you determining usage by CWU students?

In our first hybrid event this year, we hosted 30+ in-person students and 70+ Zoom participants in Shaw-Smyser Hall, Room 115--this was a student reading. Pre-registration provided by Distance Education gave us a report of the Zoom attendance list. We'll be using a similar method for all our hybrid events. We have about 50-100+ students in live attendance at virtual events on top of the in-person participation in the hybrid events we are going to organize this year. While they do not all attend live, many watch the recordings later, which are stored in our virtual repositories. We also ask the IT folks to send us registration email addresses.

8. Are there any current vacant positions in your program?

We have already recruited 3 interns for the 22-23 Academic Year. There is no vacancy.

9. Given the budget reductions taking place and continuing for the remainder of the funding cycle, please tell us what specific impacts those reductions have had on your program compared to what was originally planned and including in your initial base funding request.

We have been careful not to overcommit our funds to programming. This Fall, we organized a reading with the President's Office who provided the funding for the event, which helped us move our budget around to organize an event in 2023 Winter that required less funding. We will be careful not to overextend our funding. We also rely on co-operating with literary magazines, art galleries and libraries to bring local writers and CWU alumni on honorarium that eases our budgetary constraints. .

10. Are there any circumstances or challenges that are currently impacting your ability to use your base funding allocation this year?

We still have Thayer funds that we would like to spend up first. Since two of our events this year are funded by the President's Office and the SEA Big Grant, respectively, we'll be able save our budget to use for our new projects such as offering honorarium to virtually invite authors whose books are being taught in the PCW Classes so that students can ask them questions first hand. We plan to seek more after Thayer fund is no longer available.

11. What growth or increases would you like to see in your program in the future?

We hope to continue to offer quality programming for next year at about the same, sustainable levels. With our new honorarium program offered to PCW professors who would like to invite authors that they are teaching, we also aim to close the gap between writers and ~~our students to give them a chance to directly engage with the authors whose books they are~~ reading. We will also work with the Burg to broadcast or promote our events.