**LETTER OF NOTIFICATION – 3**

NEW OPTION, EMPHASIS, CONCENTRATION or MINOR

(Maximum 21 semester credit hours of theory courses and 6 credit hours of practicum courses)

1. Institution submitting request: University of Arkansas Fayetteville

1. Contact person/title: Dr. Terry Martin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
2. Phone number/e-mail address: (479) 575-2151/tmartin@uark.edu
3. Proposed effective date: Fall 2019
4. Title of existing degree program: NA

(Indicate if the degree listed above is approved for distance delivery)

1. CIP Code: 23.1304 – Rhetoric and Composition
2. Degree Code: NA
3. Proposed name of new option/emphasis/concentration/minor (circle one):

Rhetoric and Writing Studies Minor

1. Reason for proposed action:

* To meet the needs expressed across campus, and by regional and national employers (see entry 11.g in this document), for additional upper-division writing instruction
* To offer undergraduates a theoretically grounded and distinguishing credential within English to accompany the degree in their major
* To provide a curriculum offered by many of our peer and competitor institutions

1. New option/emphasis/concentration/minor objective:

The proposed minor’s objective is to provide non-English majors advanced instruction in the study of rhetoric, which deals with the nature of language in use (especially for purposes of persuasion and deliberation in social settings, emphasizing author-audience relationships), and in the study of writing as a situated practice, one that requires critical awareness of context and knowledge of practical principles to generate effectively written texts.

1. Provide the following:
   1. Curriculum outline - List of courses in new option/emphasis/concentration/minor – Underline required courses

Students must complete 15 hours from the following courses:

* ENGL 2003—Advanced Composition
* ENGL 2013—Essay Writing
* ENGL 2173—Literacy in America
* ENGL 3053—Technical and Report Writing
* ENGL 3603—Special Topics in Rhetoric and Composition
* ENGL 4003—English Language and Composition for Teachers
* ENGL 4903—Special Studies in Rhetoric and Composition
  1. Provide degree plan that includes new option/emphasis/concentration/minor

Not applicable as a degree plan given that this is a minor

* 1. Total semester credit hours required for option/emphasis/concentration/minor

(Option range: 9–27 semester credit hours)

15 credit hours

* 1. New courses and new course descriptions

No new courses required

* 1. Goals and objectives of program option/emphasis/concentration/minor

The proposed minor seeks

* to add an option for advanced writing instruction for non-English majors;
* to improve the professional profile of U of A undergraduates; and
* to expand student awareness and knowledge base of a key field in the humanities.
  1. Expected student learning outcomes

Students completing the proposed minor will be able to

* demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of research in the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies;
* engage in rhetorical analysis that employs conventional terminology and methodology in the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies;
* produce original work that presents unique ideas and insights into aspects of effective communication;
* appreciate the rhetorical principles that inform the communicative choices people commonly make.
  1. Documentation that program option/emphasis/concentration/minor meets employer needs (if applicable)

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers’ (NACE) survey published in November 2017, written communication has seen a significant increase as a desirable attribute for college graduates entering the workforce in the past year. The survey alerts interested parties that written communication is the 3rd most important attribute sought on a candidate’s resume, with 80.3% of employers seeking that skill compared to 70.2% responding in the same way in 2016. Verbal communication is listed as 6th most important in 2018, with 67.5% seeking that skill on a resume compared to 68.9% in 2016.

“When NACE asked employers participating in its Job Outlook 2018 survey which attributes—beyond a strong GPA—they most value, employers indicated that problem-solving skills and an ability to work in a team are the most desired attributes and are of equal importance. […] This is the second consecutive year that the largest percentage of employers will search for these attributes on students’ resumes.

Following problem-solving skills and teamwork abilities, written communication skills, leadership, and a strong work ethic are also highly valued attributes that employers want to see evidence of on resumes.”

Data for the Job Outlook 2018 survey were collected from NACE’s employer members from August 9, 2017, through October 2, 2017. A total of 201 surveys were returned—a 20.5 percent response rate. Of those responding, 14.4 percent of respondents were from the West, 25.9 percent were from the Northeast, 23.9 percent were from the Southeast, and 35.8 percent were from the Midwest.

—Source: Job Outlook 2018 survey:

[www.naceweb.org/store/2017/job-outlook-2018/](http://www.naceweb.org/store/2017/job-outlook-2018/)

Moreover, in response to a 2017 survey developed and disseminated by the University of Arkansas’ Brown Chair in English Literacy, 27 employers in the technical fields who hire U of A graduates expressed their opinion of U of A graduates’ writing, speaking, and multimodal communication skills.

The survey revealed that using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most positive response (“strongly agree”), for items listing degree of competency in the three communicative modes (writing, speaking, digitally-mediated), respondents’ consensus never moved higher than 2.4 (an indicator hovering between “agree” and “neutral”) on any of the items queried (see attached document).

With regard to writing ability alone, the survey revealed that coherence in writing for the technical fields was the competency that evoked the least favorable consensus (3.1 average, indicating that a substantial subset of respondents—29.6%—“disagreed” with the claim that our students generated written documents in which “ideas transition[ed] smoothly from one to the next”), followed closely by the concern with “grammatical errors” (3.0 average, but with a high subset of respondents—44.4%—choosing the “disagree” option).

With regard to general professional communicative competency, the item that evoked the least favorable response was the claim that U of A graduates “create presentations that are dynamic and innovative” (the average for this item was 3.3, an indicator hovering between “neutral” and “disagree”). As was the case with the concern with grammatical errors, a high subset of respondents (44.4%) expressed disagreement with the claim that our graduates had the expected multimodal communication skills.

While we are encouraged that no item evoked a response in which the majority of the respondents in the technical fields held a negative opinion of U of A graduates’ professional communicative competency (that is, no single item evoked a consensus nearing a score of 4 or greater), the absence of a resounding positive response for any of the competencies listed indicates that our graduates could certainly benefit from additional practice in written and oral communication, the kind of practice the proposed minor in rhetoric and writing studies (with its built-in option of a certificate in technical and professional writing) can provide for a larger cohort of our undergraduate population.

Thus, the survey of local employers complements the national employer survey conducted by NACE. Both surveys support the move to enhance U of A graduates’ competencies in written, spoken, and multimodal communication in order to remain competitive in the job market and thus contribute to the States economic vitality.

* 1. Student demand (projected enrollment) for program option/emphasis/ concentration/minor

Based on the last three years’ increasing enrollment in composition courses beyond first-year core composition (that’s an average of 300 students per term), we estimate that the minor could draw anywhere from 50 to 100 students per term (which is in keeping with what other institutions are reporting).

State University of New York-Stony Brook offers a minor in Writing. It enrolls 80-100 students at any given time.  Presently it has 89 students coursing the minor. As of fall of 2015, this university’s total enrollment is 25,272.

Syracuse University instituted a writing minor in 2004.  From 2004 to 2009, they averaged 50 students in the minors per year.  In 2009, they added a writing major, which now averages 80 students per year. As of fall of 2016, this university’s total enrollment is 21,970.

West Chester University offers a writing major in the English Department (54% of the majors choose the writing focus over the literature focus):  325 writing majors, 275 literature majors. As of fall of 2015 this university’s total enrollment is 16,600.

Baylor University offers a major in Professional Writing and Rhetoric. There are currently 63 students pursuing that degree. As of fall of 2015, this university’s total enrollment is 16,787.

University of Colorado—Colorado Springs offers a Rhetoric and Writing emphasis within its English major with a current enrollment of 50 students. The other tracks (or emphases) are Literature (with 68 enrolled), Secondary Education (with 58 enrolled), and Professional and Technical Writing (with 31 enrolled). As of fall of 2015, this university’s total enrollment is 12,000.

Cal State—Northridge offers a minor in Writing and Rhetoric. There are currently 38 completing the minor. As of fall of 2015, this university’s total enrollment is 41,548.

* 1. Name of institutions offering similar program option/emphasis/concentration/ minor and the institution(s) used as a model to develop the proposed program option/emphasis/concentration/minor (if applicable)

The following institutions offer a minor in Rhetoric, Composition, and/or Writing Studies:

* University of Central Florida
* Cal State, Long Beach
* Cal State, Northridge
* Cal State, Monterrey Bay
* Penn State
* University of Texas, El Paso
* Villanova
* Miami-Ohio
* University of North Carolina
* University of Mississippi
* Appalachian State
* Syracuse
* Brigham Young
* Metropolitan State-Denver
* University of Oregon
* University of Rhode Island
* Southern Illinois University
* Eastern Connecticut
* University of Kentucky
* Auburn
* University of Maryland, Baltimore County
* Illinois State University

Texas A&M University offers an undergraduate Professional Writing Certificate that is tantamount to a minor in English. It consists of 18 credit hours in courses focusing on Rhetoric or advanced Technical Writing.

1. Institutional curriculum committee review/approval date: November 14, 2018
2. Will the new option/emphasis/concentration/minor be offered via distance delivery? If yes, indicate mode of distance delivery:

The proposed minor is not configured for completion via distance delivery.

1. Explain in detail the distance delivery methods/procedures to be used:

Not applicable.

1. Specify the amount of additional costs required for program implementation, the source of funds, and how funds will be used.

The proposed minor carries no additional cost for implementation.

1. Provide additional program information if requested by ADHE staff.

President/Chancellor Approval Date: January 21, 2019

Board of Trustees Notification Date: March 28, 2019

Chief Academic Officer: James S. Coleman Date: January 10, 2019