I. Center Accomplishments During Reporting Period

A foundational focus has been to establish a powerful working relationship between the Binghamton Center for Writers and both the local community and the wider literary community. Major components of this effort would be (1) events that bring writers and editors of national stature here to Binghamton such as our Readers’ Series, Writing Life series, and the Writing by Degrees Creative Writing Conference; (2) projects that bring national attention to our program such as the Binghamton Book Awards and Harpur Palate; (3) projects that strengthen ties between the university and the Greater Binghamton community such as The Binghamton Poetry Project; and (4) interdepartmental events and collaborations that provide opportunities on campus and beyond. There is overlap and synergy between and among these categories.

(1). Bringing the nation to the program:

*The Writing Life: Conversations with Writer-Editor Series* enables students, faculty, and the local community to meet editors of literary magazines and presses. A sampling of visitors this series has featured includes the editors from David Godine, Publisher, Inc., Graywolf Press, BOA Editions, Coffee House Press, Four Way Books, University of Arkansas Poetry Series, and literary journals like *Connecticut Review,* *The Literary Review,* *Texas Review,* *Prairie Schooner,* *Gettysburg Review,* *Passages North,* *2 Bridges Review* and *The Georgia Review.* As a result of this direct interaction with working editors, many of our students and faculty have gone on to publish in these venues.

*The Readers’ Series* (and concurrent “Living Writers” mini-course) brings well-known writers to the campus, and the wider community, and gives our students an opportunity to meet those writers and discuss their work. Over the years, our Readers’ Series, directed by Maria Gillan and coordinated by Christine Gelineau, has received significant media coverage from print and television, particularly for events like the visits from noted author Jonathan Franzen (Franzen is a National Book Award winner who was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* captioned as “The Great American Novelist.”), Poet Laureates Robert Pinsky and Ted Kooser, internationally-recognized writer and BU alumni Camille Paglia, and best-selling author John Irving. All of these events drew audiences of over 400 people.

*The Writing by Degrees Creative Writing Graduate Student Conference* is the first in the national graduate conference specifically for creative writers. This event features headliners of national prominence and draws participants from around the country; the conference is held in downtown Binghamton and panels and readings are open to the community.

The conference and both series are open to and promoted to the Greater Binghamton community as well as the university community through press releases, the WBNG Arts Calendar, Dateline, B-line (now B-Engaged), the University Events Calendar, and our own web and Facebook pages. All of these events bring writers and editors of significant reputation to our campus.
(2) Bringing the program to the nation:

*Harpur Palate*, the graduate-student-run literary magazine, which has built a base of contributors and subscribers that bring national recognition to our program. *Harpur Palate* has teamed with the Center to provide a strong, visible presence at the conventions and book fairs such as the Pages & Places Book Festival in Scranton, PA for the last four autumns; the Arcades Project in Ithaca, NY; or most significantly the Associated Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) conventions (held in recent years in Seattle, Boston, Chicago, New York City, Atlanta, and Austin); and connections have been forged locally as well: a *Harpur Palate* table in the galleries has not infrequently been a part of Binghamton’s First Friday Art Walks.

*The Binghamton University Milt Kessler Poetry Book Award and Binghamton University John Gardner Fiction Book Award*. These awards serve to bring the program to national attention in a variety of ways.

- They attract the attention of prestigious publishers and the top writers they publish;
- They afford the opportunity of having both awards mentioned twice a year in the closely-read “Calls & Awards” columns of national literary journals such as *Poets & Writers* and the AWP *Writers’ Chronicle*, and *Poetry Flash*.
- They often provide the opportunity to bring the winners to campus for an Award Reading. A significant factor in our being able to bring many of the most celebrated of our readers to campus has been the fact that they were award honorees.

(3) Bringing the program to the community:

*The Binghamton Poetry Project* is turning out to be an extremely successful project for the Center. Under the coordination of Abby Murray, the project expanded in 2014, conducting workshops in the community for adults and children at the Broome County Public library, adults at the Mary Wilcox Library in Whitney Point, teens at the Oasis After School Program at the Endicott Boys & Girls Club, and now also veterans at the Binghamton Veterans Center. These workshops are conducted by Creative Writing graduate students. Under the auspices of the English Department Internship Program (RHET 495), Abby Murray assumed supervision of two undergraduate English major interns interested in literary outreach and nonprofit work. Each year the series of workshops has culminated in the publication of a bi-annual anthology and in three public readings hosted both on campus and at the BC Public Library. Also, beginning in February 2014, Abby Murray has coordinated an extension to the Binghamton Poetry Project that sends four creative writing instructors every February into two local elementary schools (Charles F. Johnson Elementary and Johnson City Primary School) to teach four weekly workshops to first graders.

(4) Building interdisciplinary opportunities:

*Collaboration with the Evos Project:* Another on-going area of interdisciplinary collaboration would be through the Evos Project with David Wilson from the Biology Department and Prof. Leslie Heywood. Professor Heywood is a member of the Evos Executive Committee. She is also working with Koji Lum, a Biomedical anthropologist in the Anthropology department, on a research study called “Behavioral Neurogenics of Creativity,” which is examining relationships
between creative writers, dancers, and musicians and their genetic profiles, specifically the DRD2/DRD4 alleles associated with, in the case of the former, impulsivity and risk-taking, and in the latter, with obsession.

II. Future Directions

a. Summarize briefly the center’s long-range plans and describe how these plans are being met.

We plan to continue building on the programs we have established in the past seven years. We have had to be very creative because money is tight in all areas of funding. Although we have increased our programming, we have had to work from decreased funding because some sources were themselves experiencing budget challenges. We are exploring additional sources of outside funding and are interviewing for a graduate assistant to help with applying for grants.

b. Estimate anticipated non-budgetary resource needs you foresee in the future for the center.

This fall we have submitted an application for funding for a graduate student to assist us with administering the Binghamton Poetry Project and to assist in the process of applying for external funding for that part of our program. (Note: Abby Murray has been chosen to fill this position and the Dean’s office has agreed to provide the additional $1500 needed to pay for her assistance for the calendar year and we are applying for a renewal of that funding.) The most important of the non-budgetary resources that we will seek in the future concerns space. We need office space for *Harpur Palate*, The Binghamton Poetry Project and our other programs. Additionally we need to have the University identify space that is appropriate for our programming. We have been in discussion about this matter with Provost Neiman and Dean McCall, but to describe the issue briefly, when we are inviting well-known writers and editors to come to campus to give presentations, we have been using space that was designed for very different purposes. We have been inviting Poet Laureates, Pulitzer and National Book Award winners to read in a room that has only just been vacated by the last of a long series of lecture classes. The room shows the wear and tear of the day, the reader is stuck behind a barricade of an immovable desk or toed up to the audience with a lectern squashed in ahead of the desk, etc. It is neither a congenial space nor a good representation of the image of our university that we want to present to the world. We have been advised that we should consider moving our programs across campus or to the Downtown Center, but we feel that we will not be able to get both undergraduate and graduate students to attend the programs if they are removed from the center of campus. We need identify space that is in the main area of campus or will lose our audience.

c. Describe your timetable for scheduling an external review of your center.

At this point in our development we need to concentrate on identifying and seeking additional sources of funding and further strengthening our programming. We believe it would be helpful to have an external review at the ten-year period.
Attachment 1. Center Personnel

a. List faculty members actively engaged in center’s research or its administration. Do not include CVs.

Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Director
Christine Gelineau, Associate Director

Leslie Heywood, English       Susan Strehle, English
Robert Micklus, English       David Bartine, English
Joseph Weil, English          Jaimee Wriston Colbert, English
Libby Tucker, English         Alexi Zentner, English

b. List graduate and postdoctoral students directly contributing to the unit who: a) are on the unit’s payroll; b) participate through assistantships, fellowships or traineeships; or c) are otherwise involved in center’s research and scholarly activities.

Abby E. Murray, Director, Binghamton Poetry Project
Heather Dorn, Assistant Director, Binghamton Poetry Project
Clara Barnhart, Coordinator of Binghamton Book Awards

The Binghamton Poetry Project: Abby E. Murray, James Fitzgerald, Heather Dorn, Brian Trimboli, Matt Sumpter, Hannah Ledford, Beca Borger, Jessica Femiani, Joel Davis, Clara Barnhart, Adam Brunner, Kathleen Keogh, Michelle Li, Griffin Quist.

Harpur Palate:
Melanie Cordova, editor in chief
Abby E. Murray, poetry editor
Dante Di Stefano, poetry editor
Sri Siddhi N. Upadhyay, poetry editor
Julian Darragjati, fiction editor
Jason Allen, fiction editor
Rose Fritzky-Randolph, nonfiction editor

Writing by Degrees: Brian Trimboli

c. List (and FTEs) professional, technical, administrative and clerical personnel employed by the Center.

Abby Murray ($1500 annual stipend provided by the Dean of Harpur College Office)
Attachment 2. Center Productivity During Reporting Period

a. List all center-related publications (or in press).

* Harpur Palate

**13.2 - Winter/Spring 2014**
(printed/mailed February 2014)

**Milton Kessler Memorial Prize for Poetry**
Susan Cohen- 'Reportorial'

**Harpur Palate Prize for Creative Nonfiction**
Shawn Fawson- 'The Owl Sits Apart From Its Tree'

**Fiction Selections**
Ben Black- 'Describing the Scenery', 'Let’s Get Run Over'
Michael Chaney- 'I Broke It Rollerskating'
John Gifford- 'This Is Why We're Going'
Caitlin McGuire- 'Centralia, Pennsylvania'
Lindsay Merbaum- 'Lemon Tree'
Devin Murphy- 'Controlled Burn'
Dennis James Sweeney- ‘Selections from Not Easy to Buy a Bus Ticket'
Soon Wiley- 'Wagyu Fungo'

**Nonfiction Selections**
David Bersell- 'Bodies'
Emma Bolden- 'The Penis Game'
Anthony Spinner- 'Trouble'

**Poetry Selections**
Holly Burnside- 'Women Shall Teach Women'
Liz N. Clift- 'Elasticity'
George Drew- 'They Miss You, Georgiana Willard'
Ricky Garni- 'Let Me Tell You', 'Cologne of the Greats'
Chris Huag- 'Denver International', '6 a.m. Mona Lisa', 'Reading Metamorphoses'
Ivan Hobson- 'With Dad'
Erin Hoover- 'We See Into the Life of Things'
Austin Kodra- 'Cello, 8th Grade'
Adam Lambert- 'Rahab'
Richard Luftig- 'Love Letter', 'Figure/Ground'
Sarah Fawn Montgomery- ‘The Astronaut Kisses Saturn’
M. G. Moscato- '(Poor) Roger Maris, 1964 Topps'
Jacob Newberry- 'Judas'
John A. Nieves- Jarilo (Moonlit)'
David O'Connell- 'Skeleton'
Andrea O'Rourke - 'Limp Saints'
Jacob Oet - 'Death is Boring'
Peter Sears - 'Borneo', 'Petals', 'Dear Giant Squid #2', 'The Old Woods'
Carrie Shipers - 'Dear Hospital,'
Sara Wallace - 'White Gold'

14.1 Summer/Fall 2014
(printed/mailed September 2014)

John Gardner Memorial Prize in Fiction
Janet Schneider - 'The Positional Player'

Fiction Selections
Kashana Cauley - 'Basil, Lemons, and Blood'
Anna Gates Ha - 'The Abalone Diver'
Landon Houle - 'To My Husband's Old Girlfriend Whose Photograph I Slide Into An Album'
Keith Lesmeister - 'Blood Trail'
Joel Neil - 'Rooms Are Subject to Inspection At Any Given Time'
Casey Pycior - 'Where I Am and Where I Need To Go'
Steve Warner - 'Bunny'

Creative Nonfiction Selections
Devin Latham - 'Swailing'
Melissa Oliveira - 'Crab Season'
Caleb Powell - 'Pork'

Poetry Selections
Julie Babcock - 'The First Call'
Brandon Courtney - 'Invasion,' 'On Seeing My Ex-Wife at the Farmers' Market'
Ray Gonzalez - 'I Was Hungry for the Secrets of the Sadistic Fish'
Rochelle Hurt - 'Self-Portrait in Accident, Maryland'
Major Jackson - 'Reverse Voyage'
M. P. Jones IV - 'Fish Tale,' 'To the Liquor Store with Hayden Carruth'
Rob MacDonald - 'Puritan Roots'
Michelle Menting - 'First Snow Aubade'
Kathryn Neurnberger - 'About Derrida, If You're Into That,' 'More Experiments with the Mysterious Property of Animal Magnetism (1769)'
William Palmer - 'Practice Smiling'
Janelle Rainer - 'Ode To My Ribcage'
Jim Reese - 'Fifty Shades of Grey,' 'Man's Four Biggest Fears,' 'Potatoes are in the Dryer'
Emily Schulten - 'Anointing of the Sick'
M. A. Vizsolyi - 'I Like it Here in America'
Charles Harper Webb - 'Building a Turtle,' 'Snails'
Tana Jean Welch - 'Horse-Driven Men'

Interview
Melanie J. Cordova- "'To Breathe What She Breathed All the Time': An Interview with Stephanie Powell Watts"

*Faculty Publications*

Maria Mazziotti Gillan:  

Alexi Zentner:  

Leslie Heywood  

Jaimee Wriston Colbert had two stories recognized as finalists in national awards this year: “The Hoodie’s Tale” Finalist, Glimmer Train – Very Short Fiction Award and “Suicide Birds” Finalist/Honorable Mention – Gabehart Prize. Her story “Erosion” is under consideration for the Pushcart Prize and her story “Finding the Body” was published in Tahoma Literary Review, with on-line video/media version and forthcoming blog: “For What It’s Worth.”

Christine Gelineau  
The poems “Curing” and “Jack” have been accepted for Louisiana Literature (likely Vol. 33 No. 1); and “Accident” was published in Broad Street Vol. 1 No. 2, Fall 2014. Her poem “Act as Object” is included in called Ley Lines, a book on collaboration written and compiled by H.L. Hix, from Wilfrid Laurier University Press (Canada). A line from this poem, “Act as Object,” was included in Hix’s poem “Wisps for Mortar, Traces for Bricks” in his collection As Much As, If Not More Than (Etruscan Press, Wilkes-Barre, PA, 2014).
*Books from Member Graduate Students*

Nicole Santalucia:
    *DRIVING YOURSELF TO JAIL IN JULY*, Winner of the 2013 Ruby Irene Chapbook Award, Arcadia Magazine, January 1, 2014. Print.

Steven Rosenstein (under the pen name Steve Danziger):

*Binghamton Poetry Project anthologies*

Two 60-80 page anthologies of participants’ work were produced this year.

b. List all major presentations directly related to center activity.

**THE SPRING READERS’ SERIES**

As noted in the report overview, The Readers’ Series (and concurrent “Living Writers” mini-course) brings well-known writers to the campus, and the wider community, and gives our students and community an opportunity to meet with those writers in an extended conversation on their work and on craft. In 2014 our series featured Nahid Rachlin, Karen Brown, January Gill O’Neil and Daniel Donaghy, as well as emerging writers (and Binghamton alums) Heather McNaugher and Jacob White. Iranian-American author Rachlin is best known for her memoir *PERSIAN GIRLS* and is also the author of four critically acclaimed novels. Brown’s *LITTLE SINNERS AND OTHER STORIES* won both the Binghamton University John Gardner Fiction Book Award and the Prairie Schooner Prize, and was named a Best Book of 2012 by Publishers Weekly. O’Neil is the author of the poetry collections *UNDERLIFE* and *MISERY ISLANDS* and Donaghy, also a poet, authored the collections *STREETFIGHTING* and *START WITH THE TROUBLE*.

**THE WRITING LIFE: CONVERSATIONS WITH WRITERS / EDITORS SERIES**

The Writing Life workshops give students, faculty and community members the opportunity to learn about publishing and to meet directly with editors in an informal Q&A session. The series features conversations with working writer/editors discussing craft, publishing and the writing life. Workshops in the Spring 2014 semester included visits from Jen Grow and Laura Shovan, editors of *Little Pawtuxent Review*, publishers of poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and artwork; John Gallagher, editor of *The Laurel Review*, a literary journal that publishes poetry, short fiction, essays and reviews; and Tim Green, editor of *Rattle*, a magazine which describes its mission as promoting the practice of poetry and a community of poets. In the Fall 2014 semester, we welcomed visits from Bill Harding of *The San Diego Poetry Annual* and Garden Oak Press; and from Maria Gagliano, editor, publisher, and writer with a long career at Random House and then Penguin, also the co-founder and editor of *Slice*, a literary journal which publishes poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.
WRITING BY DEGREES CREATIVE WRITING GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

In 2014 the WBD Conference was held on Friday and Saturday, March 14-15, at the Binghamton University Downtown Center, and featured as keynote speakers STEPHANIE POWELL WATTS & JILL BIALOSKY. Watts is the author of the short story collection We Are Taking Only What We Need, which won an Earnest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence, was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award and was listed on Oprah Magazine’s summer reading list; based on the stories in that collection, Watts was also recognized with a Whiting Award. Jill Bialosky is the author of the poetry collections The Players, Intruder, Subterranean, and The End of Desire; also the novels The Life Room and House Under Snow, and the memoir History of a Suicide: My Sister’s Unfinished Life; in addition to being an editor for W.W. Norton & Company in New York City. In addition to the keynotes, there was a full slate of panels and readings, with presenters from around the country. The event was open to the campus and surrounding community and free for students and community members to attend.

c. List all symposia, meetings, and lectures or lecture series directly related to center activity.

The Readers Series, Writing Life Series, and Writing by Degrees Conference listed above.

d. List other related activities of the center.

The Center had a strong presence at the 2014 AWP Conference and Bookfair held February 26 - March 1 in Seattle. AWP is the largest literary conference in North America. The Binghamton Center for Writers & Harpur Palate shared a table at the Bookfair for the duration of the conference. In addition, our director, Maria Gillan, was honored with the George Garrett Award for Community Service to Literature. A special reception was held in her honor and she gave a talk to people who attended. In addition, Gillan chaired a panel called Taking Literature Off the Page: How to Be a More Attractive Job Candidate. She was also one of the panelists.

In October, 2014, Maria Gillan was the keynote speaker at the New York State Council of Teachers of English convention in Albany, NY. She acted as one of the judges of the Scammmaca prize at the International Poetry Competition in Erice, Sicily and was the featured reader at an event in San Mauro, Cilento. Italy. Maria also gave presentations in northern and southern California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Michigan, South Dakota, Toronto, and at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Poetry Festival.

Alexi Zentner gave a large number of readings, presentations, and interviews in support of his new book, Lobster Kings:
- Readings at Jabberwocky Bookshop (Newburyport, MA), Brookline Booksmith (Brookline, MA), Newtonville Books (Newton Center, MA), Letterpress Books (Portland, ME), Spoken Interludes Literary Series (Hastings-on-Hudson, NY), McNally Jackson (New York, NY), Greenlight Bookstore (Brooklyn, NY), Curiosity House Books (Creemore, Ontario), International Festival of Authors (Toronto, Ontario).

Leslie Heywood was Featured Reader and Workshop Leader, Warren County (NJ) Poetry Festival, and Featured Reader at the Downtown Writing Center’s Reader’s Series, Syracuse, NY. Guest speaker at Vassar College, workshop on Arts & the Humanities, topic “Evolution and Process,” invited by artist Steven Siegel; also guest speaker/reader, Mansfield University, “Women in Sports,” academic lecture, poetry reading, part of Reader’s Series.

Jaimee Wriston Colbert presented on “Fragmented Narrative as Literary Device” at the Hawaii International Conference on the Arts & Humanities in January.

Joe Weil read and conducted workshops at Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY; Augustana and St Marty’s Colleges in Sioux Falls and Yankton, South Dakota; the Berkeley University Bookstore, and read and lectured on working-class issues at The Red Room in Dumbo, Brooklyn. He was the featured reader at the Long Beach Poetry Festival at Long Beach, California.
Attachment 3. Current Sources of Support/Space

a. List proposals submitted and grants awarded to participating faculty credited to the Center during the reporting period (including sponsor name and amounts). Any additional sources of support to the center should be included, such as internal support, income from service facilities, sale of publications and from other services.

- We have so far collected a small number of donations (plus 3 grants) to the Center plus $1500 from the Dean’s Office. The grants include $1000 from the Broome County Arts Council, and $4172 from Chenango Arts Council. Both grants were written by Abby Murray and the funding supported instructors of The Binghamton Poetry Project.
- The GEO has granted $300 to the Binghamton Center for Writers in order to support an extension of the Binghamton Poetry Project that sends four instructors into two local elementary schools every February to teach four weekly workshops to first graders.
- The English Department contributes Readers’ Series money ($4000 in 2014).
- The English Department has agreed to pay $2000 toward the Book Awards and $1500 for two alumni readers for the academic year 2013-2014.
- The Harper Dean’s office allocated $3000 for The Writing Life: Conversations with Writer/Editors Dean’s Workshop Series.
- Harpur Palate contributes contest fees of $1000. Maria Mazziotti Gillan contributed $450 to Harpur Palate to secure a booth at this year’s AWP conference in Boston, MA to showcase Harpur Palate, the Center for Writers, and the BU Creative Writing Program.
- Maria Gillan contributed $1000 to the Binghamton Center for Writers, funds she allocated to the Creative Writing Program to support activities of the Center.
- In 2014, Maria Gillan instituted the Maria Gillan Scholarship in Creative Writing, donating $6000, with the intention of continuing an annual donation of $6000 for a total of five years, beginning with this first award in 2014.
- The Advisory Committee for Scholarship and Research (ACSR) and Bahgat Sammakia, the Vice President for Research allocated the Center an administrative allowance of $2000 for the purposes of funding a graduate assistant designated to help identify and secure additional external funding.

b. Describe the critical role that the center played in the development of each research proposal and grant award submitted through the center.

All of the grants received are mentioned above and the projects that the funds support are labeled.

c. Annual Operating Budget for the Center, including all sources of funds available for center activities.

$28,922 (see breakdown in section (a) above)

d. Description of space currently occupied by center, if applicable.
Many of the Center’s activities require space, from the office space to coordinate and administer its many events to shelving entries for the Binghamton Book Awards to the physical space required to produce a nationally-recognized literary journal. There is no space exclusively dedicated to the Binghamton Center for Writers but the Center operates out of LN 1211, which also functions as the Office of the Creative Writing Program and serves as Associate Director Christine Gelineau’s office (from which space she also directs the English Department’s Internship Program). The literary journal Harpur Palate once ran out of LNG 54 but for some years now, of necessity, has been working out of the John Gardner Creative Writing Graduate Lounge (LN 1213). The Writing by Degrees Conference is also planned and directed principally from LN 1213. Director Maria Gillan’s office, LNG 30, has been serving as the storage place for the Binghamton Book Awards and as the staging ground for other Center activities.

4. New Budget Request and Justification (if applicable)


We wish to apply for an additional $2000 to continue funding a graduate assistant designated for helping us in identifying and securing additional external funding.

We will continue to request funds from all the sources mentioned above for the programs already established. We’ve applied for all funding available in the region for these types of programs.

b. Describe how center is reducing reliance on internal support.

The Center is doing what is possible to reduce reliance on internal support but it must be noted that external funding for programs in the arts has been shrinking rather than expanding. For instance, for more than a decade, in support of our Readers’ Series, we applied for and received grants from Poets & Writers, Inc. typically totaling $1000, a significant portion of our Readers’ Series budget, but Poets & Writers has changed their guidelines to exclude any events associated with the SUNY system, making us no longer eligible for those grants. We continue to assiduously explore any source of funding we can uncover.