

ASACR 3

Office of the President
April 1, 2014

Members, Board of Trustees:

CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WRITING, RHETORIC, AND DIGITAL STUDIES

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve the creation of the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences, effective July 1, 2014.

Background: Prior to the mid-Nineteenth century, English departments were unknown. Instead, colleges and universities employed rhetoricians who were responsible for teaching writing, speaking, and *belles-lettres*. As universities developed specializations in the United States, some preserved the dominance of rhetoric in undergraduate education by founding Departments of Rhetoric. But such departments were soon transformed into the English departments we know today, with writing and rhetoric relegated to support services rather than research subjects equally worthy of study as literature and philology.

In an external review initiated by the College of Arts and Sciences in 2008 and an internal study commissioned by the Provost and Interim Dean in 2009, the need for stronger writing instruction and a department that could meet the needs of writers across the University was identified. As a result, the Division of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media was founded in Spring 2010, and the newly organized faculty in the Division voted to seek departmental status.

Today's social and professional landscape requires educated participants who can move adroitly within media environments; understand the rhetorical framework of print and digital writing; and recognize, evaluate, and adapt to shifts in culture and technology, all while understanding the ethical implications of their work. The Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies will focus resources and intellectual labor on improving student success across the curriculum and by producing graduates who are prepared to succeed in professional and community settings.

The proposal has been reviewed and recommended by the Senate Academic Organization and Structure Committee and the Senate Council; and endorsed by the University Senate. The Provost of the University supports this recommendation.

ASACR 4 recommends the creation of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees for the new Department.

Action taken: Approved Disapproved Other _____