

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA MFA IN WRITING

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Omaha

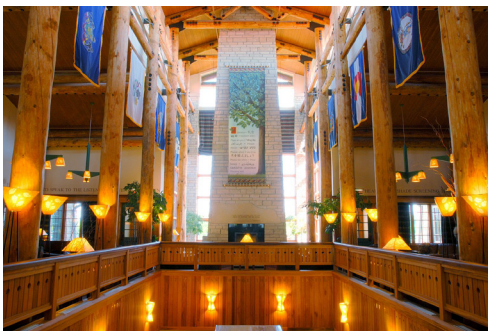


Program Overview

The University of Nebraska MFA in Writing Program offers focused instruction for creative writers who are committed to a literary career. This low-residency program is composed of four 16-week at-home semesters and five 10-day conference-style residencies. The semesters and residencies are integrated to help those who desire to hone their writing and critical thinking in order to participate competitively in the wider domain of contemporary American letters. At Residency, you will attend lectures, workshops, and readings, and you will be paired with a Faculty Mentor with whom you will meet to design your study plan for the home-based semester. Our Faculty Mentors are chosen not only on the basis of their literary and teaching accomplishments, but also because their approaches to teaching and the craft of writing coincide with our emphasis on Mentorship. While devoting a minimum of 25 hours per week to your studies, you will have time to maintain commitments to family or job while you pursue your literary studies within a flexible structure of writing, guided readings, and critical response. Over the course of the program, you will earn 60 credit hours toward a Masters of Fine Arts degree in one of four genres: Fiction (Adult or YA), Poetry, Playwriting, or Creative Nonfiction.



The five short residency sessions convene all the MFA students and faculty twice a year. The site for these residencies is the Lied Lodge & Conference Center in Nebraska City. Featuring Adirondack-style timbers and stonework, this lovely retreat is set in the middle of a 260-acre wooded park.



Contact Us

MFA in Writing Office

Jenna Lucas Finn, Associate Director

Program Information

Email: jlucas@unomaha.edu

Phone: 402-554-3020

Richard Duggin, Program Director

Faculty Inquiries

rduggin@unomaha.edu

Benjamin Graber, Playwright in Residence

Playwriting Track Inquiries

benjamingraber13@cox.net

Residency Overview

Twice a year, students, mentors, and visiting faculty meet for ten days for Residency at the [Lied Lodge & Conference Center](#) in Nebraska City.

[Residency Events](#)

[Residency Facilities at the Lied](#)

Residency will introduce you to a variety of artistic concepts and practical writing techniques in a mixture of literary activities. Each residency is designed to inspire your continued commitment to your art and refuel your enthusiasm for the solitary writing time during the semester ahead. You will attend a combination of instructional activities and co-curricular events, including:

- lectures and craft discussions conducted by faculty and guest writers
- small team-taught workshops
- readings of original work by faculty, guest writers, and graduating students
- individual conferences with faculty mentors

Activities will be scheduled from approximately 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Although you do not need to attend every activity, workshops are mandatory, and you are required to attend a minimum number of lectures. You are encouraged to choose from all the lecture offerings, not just those in your genre. You are not required to buy books in order to prepare for residency. In addition, during the first days, there will be Orientations, Blackboard (an online communication system) training, and Mentor interviews. For more information, visit our [Residency Events](#) link.

You will complete written evaluations of lectures, workshops, and co-curricular events. All required paperwork at residency may be handwritten, but the forms are also available for electronic completion. If you choose to bring a laptop and would like to use it to access free internet service, it must have ethernet or wireless capability. Also, the [Lied Lodge & Conference Center](#) offers shared computers with internet access and a printer for public use on a first-come-first-served basis. For more information about the Lied, visit our [Lied Facilities](#) link.

Graduating Residency Session

Your fifth residency period, capping the fourth semester in which your creative thesis is successfully completed, is the Graduating Residency which not only celebrates your successful completion of the requirements for the MFA degree but also provides other students in the program with the opportunity to hear you present a craft lecture and a public reading from your thesis. On our final evening together, we hold a special Graduation Celebration ceremony, honoring the Graduating Class as a whole and each Graduate individually. There is an additional Residency Fee for Graduating Students; however, you will be charged no tuition for the fifth residency session.



Residency Events

[Residency Home](#)

[Residency Facilities at the Lied](#)



Mentor Interviews

You will work with one Faculty Mentor each semester in a focused pursuit of your individual writing goals. During the first days of the residency, you will have the opportunity to “interview” Teaching Faculty Mentors in an informal setting. Questions could be about many things, including teaching philosophy, preferences on packet submission (electronic or U.S. Postal), advice on working on book-length projects, or what kind of reading list might be recommended. Use this time to find out whatever you believe will best help you make choices regarding your preferences for your

semester Mentor.

After the final round of interviews, you will submit a Mentor Preference Form. Final mentor/student pairings will be posted by the following morning. Although we cannot guarantee you will receive your top choices, students and mentors are carefully matched in order to join forces to enjoy a successful and fruitful semester. We encourage you to talk to current students and alumni; you will find most of them eager to share interview tips and their own experiences regarding how the process works.

Study Plan

In one-on-one conferences with your Mentor during the course of the residency, you will create a Study Plan. Four times during the semester, you will submit a packet of your original writing, critical work as appropriate for each term, and a detailed cover letter. The Study Plan grows out of a mutual agreement between you and your Mentor of what will most benefit your goals as a writer; it will map out your individual goals for writing, reading, and critical development for the coming sixteen-week semester. Each semester’s project is developed with regard to an overall goal of shaping a sequential plan of study leading to the completion of the degree requirements.

The nature of the Study Plan is flexible; as long as you complete the required amount of creative and critical work, the Study Plan you submit at residency may change as the semester progresses.

Workshops

Students are assigned to workshop categories of Prose (including Adult Fiction, Young Adult Fiction, and Creative Nonfiction), Poetry, or Playwriting. We run multiple workshop groups in these categories simultaneously, each containing the same small group of students and moderated by 2 faculty members who are rotated each workshop session. Workshop materials are submitted electronically in advance, and they are compiled and bound into “worksheets” which serve as the “textbook” for each workshop group. You will receive one copy of the worksheets before the residency in order to have time to read your group’s material thoroughly and prepare for workshop. Your work will be discussed for approximately one hour. In addition, periodic Special Topic Workshops will gather two or more small workshop groups together. Attendance at workshops is mandatory.

Residency Facilities at the Lied

[Residency Home](#)

[Residency Events](#)

The Lied Lodge & Conference Center

We encourage all participants to enjoy the many offerings of the [Lied Lodge & Conference Center](#) and the surrounding area. Because of the intense nature of Residency, we schedule “downtime” and optional informal social activities—opportunities to relax, enjoy the company of fellow writers, or enjoy quiet writing time. Among the many local resources, walking trails, vineyard tours, and nearby golf courses are available to you when you are not engaged in program activities.



With environmental programs that focus on trees, conservation, and environmental stewardship, the Lied was designed to serve as a resource for the Arbor Day Foundation members, other conservation-related organizations, teachers, forestry professionals, and other organizations. It is the only educational complex of its kind in the nation. The Lied’s [Sustainable Solutions and Green Lodging Practices](#) have earned them the Code of Sustainability recognition from the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC).



The Lied is also a full service facility with free wireless and ethernet internet access, a fine dining restaurant, cocktail lounge, indoor swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, and fitness center. All private rooms have work-study areas with internet access, daily maid service, cable television, AM/FM clock radios, irons and full-size ironing boards, coffee makers, recycle bins, and guest-controlled heating and cooling systems which are powered by an energy efficient Fuelwood Energy Plant. Continual break service is offered throughout the day.



Your Residency Meals & Lodging Fee includes daily meals from Arrival Dinner to Graduation Celebration Dinner, lodging, break service, and participation in daily events. For your convenience, the Lied offers you the option of leaving a credit card on file to cover incidental charges, including shuttle service to/from Omaha Eppley Airport, long distance phone service in your room, additional food, overnight stays and/or meals for spouse/family (limited to 2 nights or by MFA Office approval), and a refrigerator or microwave in your room.

We invite you to browse the [Lied Lodge & Conference Center](#) web site for more details about this beautiful venue our students and faculty have dubbed “Camp Lied.”

Semester Overview

Our program operates on a sixteen-week semester system with several weeks off between the end of Spring term and the beginning of Summer Residency. Your work each semester will be guided by your Study Plan, a written agreement that maps out your individual goals for writing, reading, and critical development for the coming semester.

Normally, you will produce and submit electronically a “packet” of written work every four weeks (4 packets over the semester), including a detailed cover letter discussing progress on the Study Plan, as well as any questions or issues of craft. However, you and your mentor might agree to engage in a hardcopy exchange through the mail, and your mentor will handwrite comments on the manuscript. Whatever form the exchange takes, your mentor will respond within one week in a detailed report addressing such areas as technical and aesthetic development of the work, notes for revision, suggestions for further reading, and new issues and directions you might take.

While this is functionally an independent study approach, you will be closely supervised each step of the way. Each Mentor directs the progress of no more than five students each semester, although two or three students is typical. You will maintain regular contact with your mentor through packet presentations and, as needed, supplementary communication. This regular dialogue concerning issues of craft, criticism and aesthetics becomes the working medium for study and growth.

At the end of each semester you will return to residency to design the upcoming semester with a new faculty mentor. A successful semester earns 12 credit hours for the semester and 3 credit hours for the residency, for a total of 15 credit hours per semester.

During the semester when you are distanced from one another geographically, many of you will continue to converse with your fellow students and alumni via our MFA [Facebook](#) site, or by email, phone, or even online web conferencing platforms. Students frequently share works-in-progress with one another, exchange information or encouragement about individual writing opportunities, or make plans for getting together again at an upcoming residency. Through the MFA Organization website on Blackboard, faculty mentors may post online announcements, examples of professional writing pertaining to genre, lecture notes, or links to subjects of interest.

Packet Exchange

The packet exchange is designed to encourage a detailed conversation between you and your Mentor; the nature of that conversation is as individual as the parties involved, but your own approach will largely set the tone.

Whether your preference is for a formal or an informal exchange of cover letters, your Mentor will invite you to address not only your thoughts and questions on the enclosed or previous submissions and your response to your Mentor’s feedback, but also your insights into what you are learning about your process, the writing life, response to works you have read but not annotated, or personal experiences. The bulk of your communication with your mentor will take place during this packet exchange. However, there might be questions you have between packets that are time sensitive. Some Mentors are comfortable with setting the occasional appointment to talk on the phone, while others prefer to communicate strictly by email. On your Study Plan, you will address the nature and frequency of between-packet communication.

Both students and Mentors submit written mid-term and final summaries of the semester experience to the MFA Office. You will be asked questions regarding your analysis of your progress and the Mentor/student exchange, and you will be required to submit samples of your work. Individual packets do not receive grades; you will receive a final grade once you have completed each semester and only after both your Mentor’s and your summaries have been filed in the MFA Office. Final summaries are held confidential until the following residency when they will be signed by both student and Mentor. At that residency, you will meet with your Mentor for a closing conversation.

First and Second Semesters

In the first and second semesters you will concentrate on new creative writing, revision, and critical responses to your readings. The readings derive from a suggested reading list of books relating to your particular work during the semester. These readings should generate a series of brief critical essays that address and illuminate some specific technical aspect of craft which you note. These essays are intended to heighten your critical thinking and create awareness of structural, imagistic, stylistic and aesthetic choices writers make in bringing a piece through its various drafts to completion.

For ***Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, and Poetry***, a typical packet during your first two semesters will include 30-45 pages of fiction or creative nonfiction, or 7-10 poems, new and/or revised as arranged in your Study Plan. You will also submit 2-3 brief critical essays each month in your packet.

For ***Playwriting***, you will submit up to 35 pages per packet of creative work. Over the course of your first semester, your submissions will include one 10-minute play and two One-act plays, new or revised; over the course of your second semester, your submissions will include one Full-length play. You will also submit 2-3 brief critical essays each month in your packet.

However, since the focus is on your individual needs and goals and takes into account your previous experience, you and your mentor might agree to adjust the number of pages/poems, the length of plays, and the length/number of essays per packet, as well as the number of packets.

Third Semester

The third semester requires, in addition to the ongoing focus on original writing, a 30- to 40-page critical paper in lieu of the series of brief critical essays. Together, you and your mentor will determine a subject and outline an in-depth study of an aspect of writing craft or literary theory of particular value to your own writing. The main difference between your third semester's critical work and your efforts in the first two terms is that you will now concentrate on a detailed reflection of a single topic, rather than writing a series of brief responses to separate works.

You will maintain the same focus on your creative writing as you did the first two semesters, with an eye toward the creative thesis due by the end of the fourth semester.

Fourth Semester

In the fourth semester your main focus will be the completion of a thesis manuscript based on the creative work undertaken in prior semesters. A faculty thesis committee will adjudicate the thesis, a book-length original work in your major genre. You will also prepare a craft lecture and public reading from your thesis that you will present at your fifth residency.

Admissions

Application Requirements

We accept applications in Adult or Young Adult Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Poetry, and Playwriting. Application requirements for each concentration are detailed below.

Complete your [Online Application](#).

[Application Deadlines](#)

[Application Links](#)



Application Terms

NOTE: For purposes of Financial Aid and Tuition/Fees billing, each Residency is considered part of the Semester which follows.

To apply for the **Summer Residency/Fall Semester**, choose **Fall** as your term.

To apply for the Winter **Residency/Spring Semester**, choose **Spring** as your term.

All applicants must fulfill the following:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent professional certification from an accredited college or university. You should request that official transcripts from each college or university attended be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Studies. Hand-carried or student-submitted credentials are not acceptable, and submission to any office other than Graduate Studies will delay your application;

2. Fill out the [Online Application](#) form for the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Information entered on this form is received by the Office of Graduate Studies for processing before being distributed to the MFA Program Office. If you have any questions or encounter any problems with the online application, please contact the Office of Graduate Studies at (402) 554-2341.

3 A. Submit the following to the [Online Application](#) in **Fiction** (Adult or YA), **Creative Nonfiction**, or **Poetry**:

I. Statement of Purpose (1-2 single-spaced pages)

* a self-assessment of your background in writing;

* reasons for wanting to attend the University of Nebraska MFA in Writing program;

* your goals as a writer;

* how you believe our MFA in Writing program will benefit your goals;

* any other experience you have in the wider community of literature (e.g. organizing or participating in craft workshops, attending conferences, working for literary magazines, etc.);

II. Creative Sample

Submit a single manuscript representing your best work in fiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry:

* 15 total pages of poetry, 30-40 total pages of fiction or nonfiction (complete piece, excerpt or multiple pieces, as long as the submission is a single document). See below for formatting requirements;

III. Recommendations

* email contact information for three persons who can attest to your ability to complete a course of graduate study, the ability to work independently, and/or the quality of your prior literary achievements. Recommenders will receive an email with instructions for submission.

3 B. Submit the following to the [Online Application](#) in **Playwriting**:

I. Statement of Purpose

- * a one- to two-page single-spaced self-assessment of your background in writing;
- * reasons for wanting to attend the University of Nebraska MFA in Writing program;
- * your goals as a writer;
- * how you believe our MFA in Writing program will benefit your goals;
- * specific experience as it pertains to full-length plays, one-act plays, and ten-minute plays, plus any experience in other areas of theatre;

II. Creative Sample

Submit a single manuscript representing your best work playwriting:

- * 15-20 pages of original playwriting. See below for format requirements.

III. Recommendations

* email contact information for three persons who can attest to your ability to complete a course of graduate study, the ability to work independently, and/or the quality of your prior literary achievements. Recommenders will receive an email with instructions for submission.

Format Requirements:

Material in genres other than the one in which you are applying will not be read.

Fiction (Adult or YA), **creative nonfiction**, and **poetry** manuscript format should be in 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman typeface with 1" margins. **Poetry** may be single-spaced, **prose** should be double-spaced, pages numbered top right, applicant's last name at top left of each page.

Playwriting submissions should follow standard Playwriting format. If you have questions, contact our [Playwright in Residence, Benjamin Graber](#).

Applicants are admitted to the Program primarily on the basis of the original manuscript; therefore, the manuscript should exhibit sufficient quality of work, level of commitment and sophistication of skills to suggest you are ready for graduate work in writing and literature. Manuscripts are read by a panel of faculty and the Program Director to determine whether an applicant has a working understanding of the represented form, as well as whether the writing possesses the more abstract qualities of energy, enthusiasm for language, and ambitious intent. Comments made in response to application manuscripts are intended for the Program Director's internal use and are not made available to applicants, nor can the Program Director supply individual faculty evaluations to those applicants who are denied admission. Applicants not admitted into the program may reapply with new manuscript material after one year.

NOTE: With the exception of international applicants who must submit a TOEFL score, applicants do not need to submit any standardized test scores such as the GRE. International applicants should contact the International Studies and Programs office regarding questions about transcripts or TOEFL. All applicants, however, should include a summary of any pertinent graduate or undergraduate work completed.

Application Deadlines

Complete your [Online Application](#).

[Application Requirements](#)

[Application Links](#)

Program enrollment is small and selective. Prospective students are encouraged to apply as early as possible. Applications will be considered on a year-round basis, but within the following **priority** acceptance cycles:

Priority application deadline for Winter residency and Spring semester is **October 1**.

Priority application deadline for Summer residency and Fall semester is **May 1**.

Upon request, applications received after a priority deadline may be considered for admission in the upcoming term. Due to room reservation deadlines set by the Lied Lodge & Conference Center, late admissions might be placed on a waiting list, pending room availability. Contact [Jenna Lucas Finn](#), Administrative Director, for details.

Upon acceptance, a \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to hold the student's place in the program. This deposit is applied toward the first Residency Meals and Lodging Fee. Prior to the first residency, applicants admitted to the Program will register for one Residency Session (3 credit hours) and for the Semester's Seminar (12 credit hours).

Our Application Committee begins the review of each application once the Statement of Purpose and Creative Sample have been received. However, a final decision cannot be reached until all materials have been received. In order for you to monitor which materials might be outstanding, we encourage you to periodically review your Application Checklist on Mavlink. For assistance with the online application, contact the Office of Graduate Studies.

Applicants not admitted into the program may reapply with new manuscript material after one year.

Future Residency Dates :

December 28, 2015-January 6, 2016

July 15-24, 2016

December 28, 2016-January 6, 2017

Application Links

Complete your [Online Application](#).
[Application Requirements](#)
[Application Deadlines](#)

Jenna Lucas Finn, Associate Director

Program Information
jlucas@unomaha.edu
Phone: 402-554-3020
WFAB 301

Benjamin Graber, Playwright in Residence

Playwriting Track Queries
benjamingraber13@cox.net

[Office of Graduate Studies](#)

Online Application Questions - Residents of U.S.A.
graduate@unomaha.edu
Phone: 402-554-2341
EAB 203

[International Studies and Programs](#)

Online Application Questions - International Students
[International Application Checklist](#)
world@unomaha.edu
Phone: 402-554-2293
ASH 241

[Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)

unofinaid@unomaha.edu
Phone: 402-554-2327
EAB 103

[Mavlink](#)

Application Tracking - Checklists
Financial Aid Award Information
Tuition/Fees Payment
Registration

Tuition and Fees

Detailed tuition and fees costs are listed by [Cashiering/Student Accounts](#) under “Distance Education Tuition Rates - Graduate CFAM - MFA (MF)” and “Student Fees.”

Total costs are calculated based on 15 credit hours per semester. All Tuition and Fees are subject to change by the Board of Regents. Rates are typically updated each June.

Upon acceptance, a \$500 non-refundable deposit is required to hold the student’s place in the program; payment arrangements can be made.. This deposit will be credited directly to your University bill. Payment arrangements can be made.

Estimated Rates for the 2016-2017 Academic Year will be posted when available.

2014-2015 Academic Year / Fall 2015

* Estimated * Tuition and Fees per Semester

Tuition

Non-Nebraska Residents Tuition	\$9390
Nebraska Residents Tuition	\$6000

Fees (All Students)

Distance Education Fee	\$375
Library Fee	\$60
Technology Fee	\$165
Enrollment Fee	\$57.75
New Student Fee (graduate)	\$151.50

July 2015 Session Residency Meals & Lodging Fee

Single Room	\$1523.50
Double Room **	\$1115.50

** Double rooms are only available by mutual arrangement on the part of both participants.

NOTE: The Residency Meals & Lodging Fee covers all meals except on departure day, is included on your University bill, and is qualified for Financial Aid. There will be an additional Residency Fee cost (currently \$350) for Graduating Students.

For information about your individual eligibility for financial aid, contact:

The Office of [Financial Support and Scholarships](#)

6001 Dodge St. / EAB 203

Omaha, NE 68182-0187

Tel. (402) 554-2327

Email: finaid@unomaha.edu

Raves & Reviews

“This first residency was life changing for me. I am not saying that lightly – no hyperbole. I came into this amazing community of gifted writers feeling like an imposter. I was scared to put my own work on the table for fear of being found out and sent home! I left feeling like a writer, like I belonged here, like I do have something of value to share, like I found my ‘tribe.’” ~Current Student

“I cannot say enough good things about this program. I have enjoyed every minute from my acceptance phone call to the present. This program is designed in a way that voracious students can thrive, and I feel I am thriving. I will be a better teacher, writer, and person all for having completed this program.” ~Current Student

“My mentor went beyond his responsibilities as a mentor. He pushed me to get my work sent out to literary magazines, and I have done that. I know that he wants me to succeed, and I know he is invested in me and in my work. I have tried to show him how important his guidance has been to me. The best way I could think of to illustrate how much I appreciate him and his work was to teach one of his poetry collections in my literature class. My students loved the book, and teaching it also gave me a deeper sense of his incredible talent and imagination.” ~Alumnus

“When I was first hired, my expectations were based on past experience. Perhaps this would be a job I would do packet-by-packet, giving each student’s work attention in concrete blocks of time, finishing a semester, and moving on to the next. I quickly found the reality infinitely richer and delightfully messier. I not only welcomed regular communication with my students beyond the packet exchange, but also grew sincerely interested in each of them as writers and human beings and grateful for what the exchange brought to me as a writer, teacher, and human being. Years later, I understand that these bonds last far beyond a semester – beyond students graduating, in fact – and I feel blessed to be part of the whole process.” ~Faculty Mentor

“We all lead separate lives into which we all press time for writing. We all make our hours work for us. I think that is one of the remarkable things about this program. We never stop our day to day, really, except for the residencies, and when there we are all frantic and excited and drunk on the setting and the subject and the people. I am glad that I did not get to work with my current mentor during my second semester, as I had so wanted, because I think I would have missed out. I think I needed her smarts and her heart and her kindness and intuition to get through this paper, this poetry, and all those other parts of memory and history that acted out their roles of the living dead for me this semester. I think the thing I appreciate most about her is that she and I do not share the same opinions. I know she did not agree with everything in my critical paper, but she never ever limited my thought with her opinions; instead she opened up the paper in new ways with her own ideas. She never made things clouded for me, never pressed me to take up her voice, but instead truly mentored me to find my own meaning.” ~Alumnus

“Forming the sense of community has been key for me. I’ve formed friendships and camaraderie with students. Most special is the openness and friendships formed with the faculty...I am very grateful for this gift.” ~Current Student

“It’s an honor and privilege to be part of this program. I have taught for many years, and I can easily say that participating in the UN MFA in Writing program is without doubt one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Moreover, being part of this writing community is one of the most rewarding experiences of my writing life.” ~Faculty Mentor

“My overall evaluation of the residency is that it was satisfactory and comfortable. Well, it was not actually comfortable. I attended far too many excellent, helpful lectures, ate far too many excellent lunches and dinners, enjoyed far too many

Raves & Reviews

desserts, spent far too much time with new, dear friends and generous, hilarious, humble, kind, and human faculty members, of which there are few in this world that I know of who will let students see, smell, and embrace their humanity. I have relished in far too many delightful readings, taken far too many notes, and I have even planned to read far too many books in the coming months. I have far too many pillows on my bed, and far too many good choices of tea whenever I happen to need a small lift. I gained far too much insight and hope for my novel after just one visit about it with my much too amazing mentor. I went on far too few walks in the woods, and I even saw too few owls flying and perching on the canopy outside the Lied. I ate far too few apple pies grown from the orchards on these far too beautiful grounds. I did not swim in the heated pool nearly enough. I never got on the treadmill, and I never even did one salute to the sun in my room. I am FAT with the experience of this residency. I have indulged in body and mind and spirit much more than I could ever have imagined, and so that is not comfortable at all, but new, and exciting, and squeeze-into-your-pants-after-Thanksgiving feast-full times ten. How could that be comfortable? I have slept far too little, read quietly in my room far too little, and checked far too few emails– at my job! I have to admit I am tired, but energized, hopeful and frightened, prepared and panicked about this two-year commitment, and let me just say, how else would I want to live but on the edge of a new horizon? I am at an age where I appreciate a (dangerous) new start, a chance to follow my (idealistic) dream, and I have found a (perfect) dreamy place in the middle of the country where I can do this.” ~Current Student

“The lectures by the faculty were across-the-board useful, well planned, and heartfelt. I am so struck by the passion, dedication, talent, and generosity of the faculty and know that my decision to come here was absolutely right.” ~Current Student

“I have some experience in the writing world, and have published my work, and it was thrilling to discover that the program was designed with the serious writer in mind. The sensible structure of the program allowed me to receive the firm foundation in writing I was seeking, and also provided the opportunity to concentrate on my unique interests and needs. As a result, I completed a novel and produced a craft paper, both of which I am now seeking to publish. If I am successful, I will be genuinely pleased to be able to tout our MFA program as a significant reason for my success.” ~Alumnus

“Faculty members brought their specific experiences to the arena, respectfully playing off the strengths of one another. Simultaneously, the writers were integrally pulled into these discussions, dissecting, analyzing, and, most importantly, discovering through discourse the intricacies of our writing.” ~Current Student

“When I first decided to attend a low-res MFA program, I was afraid that the workshops might be brutal and disheartening. Our workshop sessions, however, were completely opposite. The students and the faculty were honest but constructively critical. No one was ever attacked, all of the students were very pleased with the feedback, and I, for one, am leaving the workshops with excitement and motivation.” ~Current Student

“As I made professional plans after graduation, I felt a bit shy about contacting former mentors for written recommendations. What was I thinking? Now, I feel silly for hesitating to ask. Each mentor responded with glowing support. But what really shocked me was the warm encouragement I received from a mentor who did not even teach my primary genre. Upon ‘hearing’ what I wanted to do, she contacted me with an offer to provide written support, based on her experience sitting in on workshops, hearing my readings throughout the years, and attending my graduating lecture.” ~Alumnus

Raves & Reviews

“This residency went beyond all expectations, not only in the academic sense, but socially as well. Faculty interaction was probably the high point. Their accessibility and flexibility served to negate any feelings of discomfort or self-consciousness. We were treated as equal participants in the creative process.” ~Current Student

“I chose the program because I loved the work the mentors had produced, and knew I could learn from them. To a person, I found the entire group of them wise, generous, open and insightful, and the uniquely supportive atmosphere of the program owes much to them. My particular mentors were mentors in every sense of the word: they were articulate and insightful about my sentences, expansive in their embrace of my vision, and supportive and kind towards me as a writer.” ~Alumnus

“I can feel deep in my bones my work already shifting, expanding, deepening. My mentor is unbelievably generous, extremely prepared, and so able to help me approach my upcoming semester.” ~Current Student

“The residency experience was one of the best things I have ever done for myself. The level and amount of information that came to you all day long was intense, but then when you blend in the bare emotional content of some of the readings and the constant dialogue with warm and interesting people who have incredible lives and stories to tell... Awesome experience.” ~Current Student

“I’ve taught talented students in the past. I’ve taught the driven, the ambitious, the previously-published, the future published, the might-be-published-if-only-they-would-follow-through, etc.. These MFA students approach writing not only seriously, but also with a daring and willingness to risk I wish I could have dreamed of as a younger writer. And this program fosters all of the above.” ~Faculty Mentor

“My mentor is truly dedicated. From the first time we conferenced, he knew enough about me and my writing to be able to discuss my work and guide my reading and study plan. I’m excited about the coming semester and am confident that I will learn and grow as a poet because of the high expectations of my mentor and because of his expertise and commitment.” ~Current Student

“Even though I’m a writer, it’s difficult for me to put in words how important my mentor has been to me. He listened to me, he cared about me and about my work, he endured my long rambling letters, e-mails, and phone calls. He’s the best teacher I’ve ever had. Honestly, I plan to continue to be his greatest fan.” ~Alumnus

“The best part of the residency and workshop, besides some great friends, was my mentor. He is one of the most knowledgeable, considerate, fun, insightful, and cultured individuals that I have ever met. I am amazed that I had the opportunity to work with him and feel that our interaction will be the most beneficial portion of this process.” ~Current Student

“In all my years of teaching, publishing, and participating in the wide world of writing, I have never encountered such a vibrant and diverse group of people dedicated to this craft, faculty and student alike.” ~Faculty Mentor

“Faculty treat students with respect and an expectation of their best efforts. Students are a mature and talented group of adults serious about their craft. The camaraderie of the group is remarkable. These are people I am proud to know. This is a program of which I am proud to be a part.” ~Alumnus

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do you accept applications from Young Adult writers?

A: Yes, we welcome YA writers who seek to master their work in literary YA Fiction.

Q: I missed the Priority Application Deadline. Can I still apply?

A: We do accept applications after Priority deadlines. However, because Residency takes place at the Lied Lodge & Conference Center in Nebraska City, we must make room reservations for students according to the Lied's deadlines and availability. While they cannot guarantee room will be available, the Lied does make every possible effort to accommodate late reservations. Contact [Jenna Lucas Finn](#) to discuss your particular circumstances.

Q: Do you offer Summer Courses?

A: No. Although we hold Summer Residency before the start of the Fall Semester (typically, in July), it is considered a Fall Course for the purposes of tuition, registration, and financial aid. You will enroll for a total of 15 credit hours (3 for Residency Session, 12 for Seminar) during the Spring and Fall semesters.

Q: Is it possible to study more than one genre in your program?

A: Yes, we do offer the opportunity to study cross-genre, both at residency and, in some cases, on an individual basis. Many writers have an interest in multiple genres. At the same time, we believe that, when choosing to enroll in an intensive MFA in Writing program, your work is best served by a focus on one main genre for the four semesters you are enrolled, even if you have other interests. In order to truly earn a degree that means you have "mastered" your craft, it is necessary to cultivate a level of intense critical analysis, creativity, and professionalism that results from specific focus on one genre.

With the above in mind, Residencies are designed so that you will not only be offered the opportunity to attend lectures on all genres, but you will also be encouraged to do so. In addition, we hold Special Topics Workshops, sometimes within one genre, other times across multiple genres.

If you are interested in pursuing an intensive study in another genre after completion of your fourth semester, you may present a statement of purpose and portfolio (similar to the initial application process) and, if approved, you may choose to study one or more additional semesters in that genre. Requests are evaluated on an individual basis.

Q: What financial aid, scholarships, or assistantships are available?

A: Financial Aid packages are offered on an individual basis; for details, contact the [Office of Financial Support and Scholarships](#). All students who are accepted into our program are automatically considered for merit-based scholarships, including, but not limited to, those listed below. Please contact us with questions. Amounts vary.

Regents Tuition Scholarships waive a significant portion of tuition

Advantage Scholarships waive a significant portion of tuition

The **Karen S. Kane Memorial Fellowship** offers cash awards for exemplary work in fiction, poetry, playwriting, and literary nonfiction

The **Michael S. Corum** Memorial Scholarship is applied towards Residency Meals & Lodging

The **Tonie Harrington Residency Assistant Scholarship** covers Residency Meals & Lodging for one student each session

The **Lied Lodge & Conference Center** sponsors one new student each residency by deducting the entire lodging portion of the Meals and Lodging fee

Frequently Asked Questions

Friends of the UNO MFA in Writing Scholarships are applied towards tuition and/or Residency Meals and Lodging fees

The **Academy of American Poets Prize** for students of the UN MFA in Writing program recognizes outstanding work in poetry with a cash reward

Q: How much time off do students have between semesters?

A: The Spring term typically ends during the first two weeks of May, and Summer Residency is usually held in July. Although limited preparation for residency is required, our students enjoy several weeks of Summer Break. The Fall term ends in early December, and Winter Residency begins late December.

Q: Do I need to complete the program in four consecutive semesters?

A: No. Your personal circumstances might require, for example, that you enroll in only Spring or Fall semesters, or you simply might choose to take semesters off. In most cases, University policy requires that you complete your degree within ten years.

Q: Is it possible for me to contact faculty, current students, or alumni?

A: All of the above would be happy to respond to your questions. You can request contact information from [Jenna Lucas Finn](#). You can also feel free to post questions on [Facebook](#) or the [MFA Blog](#), run by alumni and current students.

Q: What support do you offer alumni?

A: Our students, faculty, and alumni create a special writing community. Alumni are offered a number of opportunities to enjoy the same support, access to information, and professional connections they found available during enrollment in the program. In addition, we routinely bring in visitors from the publishing world, including agents, book doctors, and editors, who will meet in individual conference one-on-one with alumni and advanced students. Through email and other distance tools, including social media connections like [Facebook](#) and the [MFA Blog](#), Alumni also maintain contact with students and faculty, find professional opportunities, continue to share in-progress creative work, maintain relationships, and plan reunions. Alums have a standing invitation to participate in residency on a variety of levels. Whether returning as a visitor for a day, a participant in the annual Alumni Reading and Panel, a participant for the entire residency, or as an Alumni Assistant under partial scholarship, many return to refuel their creative energy, support current students, and form new professional and personal relationships. Finally, Post Graduate Residency Session and Post Graduate Seminar courses are in the final stages of development.

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact [Jenna Lucas Finn](#), Associate Director.



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Jenna Lucas Finn, Associate Director

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