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**Committee Meeting:** 2/21/2024

**Board Meeting:** 2/22/2024  
Austin, Texas

*Jodie Lee Jiles, Chairman*  
*Christina Melton Crain*  
*Robert P. Gauntt*  
*Janiece Longoria*  
*Nolan Perez*  
*Stuart W. Stedman*

	<b>Committee Meeting</b>	<b>Board Meeting</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Convene</b>	3:45 p.m. <i>Chairman Jiles</i>		
1. <b>U. T. System Board of Regents: Discussion and appropriate action regarding Consent Agenda items, if any, assigned for Committee consideration</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>104</b>
2. <b>U. T. Austin: Approval to establish a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric and Writing Studies degree program</b>	<b>Action</b> <i>President Hartzell</i>	<b>Action</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Adjourn</b>	4:15 p.m.		

1. **U. T. System Board of Regents: Discussion and appropriate action regarding Consent Agenda items, if any, assigned for Committee consideration**

RECOMMENDATION

The Board will be asked to approve the Consent Agenda beginning on [Page 159](#).

**2. U. T. Austin: Approval to establish a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric and Writing Studies degree program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Chancellor concurs in the recommendation of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the institutional president that authorization, pursuant to Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rule 40307, related to academic program approval standards, be granted to

- a. establish a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric and Writing Studies degree program at The University of Texas at Austin; and
- b. submit the proposal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and appropriate action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Program Description

The proposed Master of Arts (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in Rhetoric and Writing Studies represent the continuation of doctoral study in Rhetoric and Writing that, until now, has been offered by graduate faculty in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing (DRW) through and in conjunction with the Department of English, resulting in a Ph.D. in English with a concentrated focus on rhetoric and writing. The proposed change will elevate the existing concentration to the level of a degree program and represents an administrative change to align the degree program with the long-standing Department of Rhetoric and Writing. The program will continue to prepare students to examine how people argue, deliberate, and persuade or fail to persuade each other especially, but not exclusively, in written and digital media.

Training will include (inter)disciplinary perspectives that will facilitate a multi-dimensional understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical approaches to academic, practical, and community problems. The program is designed to provide students with specialized knowledge about rhetoric and skills to allow them to pursue an academic career; conduct field, archival, and community research; publish scholarly papers; design, develop, teach, and assess rhetoric and writing curricula; and use rhetoric and writing skills to solve nonacademic problems, including through field investigations, recommendations, and digital artifacts (i.e., digital content). Given the broad application of the knowledge and skills garnered through the rigorous academic training proposed, graduates will be prepared for careers in academic departments as well as nonacademic jobs.

The proposed Ph.D. program will require a minimum of 57 hours of coursework. This includes 15 semester credit hours (SCH) of required core courses, 15 prescribed electives, and nine general electives. In addition to required coursework, students must complete six SCH in a digital writing and research practicum. Doctoral students are also required to take at least six exam hours and six dissertation hours.

The proposed Ph.D. program will provide an option for students to earn an M.A. either on the way to or in lieu of the Ph.D. degree. The M.A. degree will require 30 credit hours of coursework in rhetoric studies completed with a minimum grade of B.

### Need and Student Demand

Since 1993, U. T. Austin's DRW has been responsible for teaching all courses in the English Department's graduate concentration in rhetoric. Since 2016, DRW faculty have also been responsible for designing and setting the distinct graduate rhetoric curriculum and for recruiting, advising, and offering professional development opportunities for rhetoric students. The faculty have built a very successful, world-class graduate rhetoric concentration in the English Department. Both departments agree that the proper home for the graduate-level rhetoric curriculum is the DRW.

Over the past eight years (2014-2021), the graduate rhetoric concentration in the English department has received 416 applications, with an average of 52 per year (with a high of 71 in 2015 and a low of 43 in 2020). Just under 8% of these applicants have been accepted: 32 students, typically four per year. This practice is expected to continue, admitting an average of four full-time students per year.

### Program Quality

The proposed program will include 13 core faculty (12.5 full-time employees), all of whom are research active and are currently appointed in the DRW and already delivering this curriculum through the Department of English.

### Revenue and Expenses

Because the required resources for the proposed Ph.D. are already in place, practically no new expenses are anticipated. Therefore, the following explanation of the proposed program's costs to the institution is offered:

1. All faculty who will teach in this program are already full-time faculty in the DRW, save one, who has (and will retain) a split appointment with the English Department.
2. The DRW currently provides financial support to graduate students in English who are pursuing the graduate concentration in rhetoric, have fulfilled the requirements for an M.A., and have teaching experience (Assistant Instructors). The DRW will continue to provide this student financial support when the new program is established in the DRW. The English Department currently provides financial support to graduate students in its rhetoric concentration who have not yet fulfilled the requirements for an M.A. and/or who have no teaching experience (Teaching Assistants). The English Department will continue to provide this student financial support when the new program is established in the DRW.
3. The two graduate program coordinators who currently share duties in the English department to serve students pursuing the graduate concentration in rhetoric will continue to provide this administrative support to students pursuing the new Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

4. All facilities, equipment, technology, and resources needed to support the proposed Ph.D. already exist and will remain in place once it is established.

Coordinating Board Criteria

The proposed program meets all applicable Coordinating Board criteria for new master's and doctoral degree programs.