

We see this moment in the history of the SUNY New Paltz English Department as a true inflection point and our searches as an opportunity to hire scholars eager to participate in a re-envisioning of the study of literature, informed by current methodological, theoretical, and archival developments in the field. Scholars in literary studies are producing work on BIPOC, non-Western, and LGBTQ+ writers from all historical periods, and such teaching and research have transformed the canon and the grand narratives of literary history in important ways. We recognize the need to complicate national traditions by expanding and intensifying our students' exposure to different canons and ethnic traditions and to cultivate an understanding of literary study as an inclusive practice. We are welcoming of all representations of diversity and intersectionality, and we recognize the ways in which that representation is critical to innovation and a more integrated curriculum.

The English Department contributes to the university and influences its students in wide-ranging and meaningful ways that go far beyond the English major. We educate students across many disciplines and—crucially—shape future teachers. We do so by providing first-year writing courses, general education courses—four of which are diversity-designated (including American Women Writers of the Twentieth Century, Contemporary Issues and Literature, Introduction to American Literature, and Multiethnic & Diasporic Literature)—and content courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels for students in the School of Education. We have been working to build a cadre of diverse teachers and scholars who benefit the whole campus as well as our students in the department. As a department, we seek to expand our purview and develop a more outward-facing presence that builds interdisciplinary connections with other programs and forges stronger links with the vital literary community of the Hudson Valley.

Over the past decade, our department has done all we can using existing resources to transform our program from Western and Anglocentric to global, multiethnic, and diasporic in content and design. English faculty members have made a concerted effort to revise course syllabi to incorporate more writers and scholars of color. Our last program review found that “[u]ndergraduate students especially appreciated the diversification of the curriculum and remarked on the fact that they were encountering texts and literary traditions they had been unaware of in their secondary education.” At the advanced undergraduate and graduate levels, however, our curriculum does not adequately reflect the exciting work around race, gender, sexuality, and embodiment that is taking shape in literary and writing studies, and a recent survey of graduate students found a yearning for more diverse literary content. Candidates for this search would not only be invited to help us think through such issues in our existing courses, but they would also bring their scholarly expertise to expand our upper-division and graduate offerings with the introduction of new courses. Broadening our curriculum in this way would significantly enhance the position of our program in the region and serve students who might otherwise seek graduate studies elsewhere. Given the role our English MA program plays in training secondary education teachers in the Hudson Valley and the growing numbers of students of color in area high schools, this position would address a vital need for the region, and not just for SUNY New Paltz. There is no doubt that a more racially, ethnically, and culturally

diverse faculty—mirroring the increasing diversity of our student body—would enable our department to better meet the needs and concerns of its undergraduates and graduates.

Hiring freezes and several recent retirements have left the department understaffed in key areas, and our department is eager to address this shortage while also making its ranks more inclusive. Our most recent tenure-track searches have helped us make progress in this effort. In 2022, we welcomed a Queer Asian-American poet as well as a feminist scholar of Medieval literature to New Paltz, and in 2023, a specialist in Latinx Literature joined our department. Our recent visiting professors have included a dramatic writer whose work focuses upon LGBTQ issues, a Queer Filipino scholar of early modern literature, and a specialist in global Shakespeare whose scholarship focuses upon performances of his plays in contemporary India. Our Creative Writing Program has also sought to introduce diverse voices by inviting authors from historically underrepresented groups to give readings, speak with our students about their professional experience, and teach in our annual Writer-in-Residence program. As a member of the campus-wide Diversity Board, Professor Kris Jansma, our Creative Writing Director, has actively worked to develop pedagogical standards for the university's general education requirement in Diversity and to expand the university's inclusive course offerings.

Beyond expanding our curriculum and diversifying our faculty, the English Department invites new perspectives in how we carry out our most fundamental work on campus: teaching students to write, think critically, and become more empathic citizens; producing scholarship that contributes significantly to national and international discourse in our areas of expertise; serving on committees that carry out the unseen but essential work of the campus community; contributing to conversations and actions that move us toward the ideals of anti-racism; and modeling more collaborative and inclusive forms of scholarly inquiry.

The English Department is an environment in which BIPOC and LGBTQ+ faculty can thrive. As a department steadfastly committed to fostering inclusion in its curriculum, faculty development, and mentoring, it is a place that can fully support and embrace diversity among students and faculty. The department recognizes the important role that mentorship, from guidance about professional development to university service, plays in supporting faculty through the tenure process. Faculty have opportunities for pre-tenure leave, whether funded internally through the institutional Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave or externally through organizations like the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Career Enhancement Fellowship. Moreover, we are sensitive to the ways in which diverse faculty often face disproportionate burdens of service, and so we work closely with them to set reasonable expectations for departmental and university service that do not exceed what is equitable in order to support their professional development for the purposes of continuing appointment and tenure.