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Award-winning Poet Wunderlich Named Director of Bennington College Writing Seminars

BENNINGTON, VT— Bennington College announced today that poet Mark Wunderlich has been named the next director of the Bennington Writing Seminars, the College's MFA program in writing.

Poet and essayist Mark Wunderlich has been on the Bennington College faculty since 2004, and has been a core faculty member for the Bennington College Writing Seminars since 2009.

"With his deep commitment to literature and rigorous writing instruction, Mark embodies the values of the Bennington Writing Seminars," said **Bennington College President Mariko Silver**. "Between Mark's strong roots at Bennington and his vision for how the program fits in the national landscape, we are thrilled to see him take on this new role, and we are looking forward to a bright future for the program."

"I believe in the vision of the program: that being a writer is an extension of being a critical and discerning reader," said **Mark Wunderlich**. "I want to celebrate and evolve the model that has yielded so many incredible writers, while connecting it to Bennington's broader literary history and ensuring that the Writing Seminars represent the diversity, complexity, and richness of American literature today."

Founded in 1994, Bennington College's Master of Fine Arts in Writing program was one of the first low-residency creative writing programs in the country. It continues Bennington's long literary history that has included such faculty as Mary Oliver, W.H. Auden, Bernard Malamud, Stanley Kunitz, and Howard Nemerov, as well as alumni writers Kiran Desai '93, Jonathan Lethem '86, Bret Easton Ellis '86, Donna Tartt '86, Michael Pollan '76, Ann Goldstein '71, Megan Marshall '75, Luke Mogelson '05, Mary Ruefle '74, and, more recently, Anais Duplan '14, Jeva Lange '15, Safiya Sinclair '10, and Bruna Dantas Lobato '15. Recent alumni of the Writing Seminars include Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney MFA '13, author of the bestseller *The Nest*; Morgan Jerkins MFA '16, essayist and cultural commentator who has written for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Ebony*, and Buzzfeed; Megan Mayhew Bergman '10, associate director of the program, essayist and author of *Birds of a Lesser Paradise* and *Almost Famous Women*; Charles Bock MFA '97, author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Alice & Oliver* and *Beautiful Children*, and Katy Simpson Smith MFA '13, author of *The Story of Land and Sea* and *Free Men*. [Bennington Review](#), a national biannual print literary journal, is also housed at the College.

“Between faculty members, students, and alumni at both the graduate and undergraduate level, Bennington has been at the forefront of some of the most interesting writing in American literature,” said Wunderlich. “For a small college, we punch way above our weight.”

Wunderlich has directed the Poetry at Bennington reading series, which brings established and emerging poets to campus for brief multi-day residencies. Recent speakers have included Natasha Trethewey, Safiya Sinclair '10, and Terrance Hayes.

Wunderlich is the third director in the program’s history, following Sven Birkerts, who will return to the program’s faculty in June 2018, and founding director Liam Rector.

About Mark Wunderlich

Born in 1968, Mark Wunderlich grew up in Fountain City, Wisconsin. He holds an MFA from Columbia University School of the Arts and a BA in German Literature and English from the University of Wisconsin.

He is the author of *The Earth Avails* (Graywolf Press, 2014) which received the Rilke Prize, and *Voluntary Servitude* (Graywolf Press, 2004). His first collection, *The Anchorage* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), won the Lambda Literary Award.

He is the recipient of the Wallace Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and two fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. He has also received awards from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation. Wunderlich has taught at Stanford University and Barnard College and in the graduate writing programs at Sarah Lawrence College, San Francisco State University, Ohio University, and Columbia University. He lives in New York’s Hudson River Valley.

About Bennington College

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that distinguished itself early as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to integrate work in the classroom with work in the field and the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education. To this day, Bennington stands apart in requiring that every student—every winter term—get a job, complete an internship, or pursue an entrepreneurial experience.

Steeped in the College’s prestigious literary tradition, [Bennington’s Master of Fine Arts in Writing](#) is consistently named one of the top low-residency programs. Founded in 1994, Bennington’s Writing Seminars was one of the first low-residency graduate writing programs in the country. During this two-year, low-residency program, students commit as much to reading as to writing and conceive reading lists that strengthen and broaden their knowledge. Students perform critical literary analysis and craft bold new works of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry inspired by their discoveries. They finish with a polished

thesis and a parting lecture. All this with the expert guidance of authors who, throughout individualized instruction, become familiar with and develop a stake in students' work.

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<http://www.bennington.edu/mfa-writing>