Event Title: Here There Be Dragons: Risking the Uncharted Territory of an Untried MFA Program

Event Description: Entrusting your education with an untested MFA program is a bit like sailing your ship off the map—there are dragons, but you may also discover new lands. Meet some of the risk-takers who braved the new Alma program and the director who started it all.

Event Category:

Event Organizer: Mary Bishop

Event Moderator: Joey Meyer

Welcome to Here there be dragons. A few reminders before we begin:

For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let me know, and a printed copy will be delivered to you.

Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.

Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.

Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing scented products.

Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone’s use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

Participant Introductions:

Joey Meyer

Joey Meyer is a neurodivergent, multi-genre writer holding a BA in Creative Writing from Susquehanna University and an MFA in Creative Writing from Alma College. His work appears in Aquila Review, Half and One Journal and he's a regular contributor to the Borussia Dortmund blog, Fear the Wall.

Sophronia Scott

Sophronia Scott is founding director of Alma College’s MFA in Creative Writing, a low residency program based in Michigan. She is the author of novels and nonfiction works including Wild, Beautiful, and Free and The Seeker and the Monk: Everyday Conversations with Thomas Merton.

Mary Bishop
Mary C. Bishop is an MFA student at Alma College studying both fiction and creative nonfiction. Her work has appeared in Geez Magazine and Convivium Journal, among other places. She resides in Annapolis, MD with her family.

**Kelsey Weiss**

Kelsey Weiss holds a BA in English from Alma College. They are a member of the first graduating class of Alma College's low-residency MFA program in Creative Writing. They are a trauma and social justice poet who resides in the Metro Detroit area of Michigan.

**Participant Opening Remarks:**

Panelists will open with their personal statements about how they came to find Alma College and where they currently are in their writing journey.

**Moderator Questions:**

- What and Where is Alma College, and how long have they offered an MFA in Creative Writing?
- What is a Traditional MFA versus Low-Residency. And why did you choose Low-Residency?
- What gave you confidence in applying to a program that had yet to graduate anyone?
- When looking at a Master’s program in its infancy, what kind of due diligence can you complete?
- Why did you choose Alma in particular?
- Is there a significance of this program to the American Midwest?

**Time for Question and Answer**