Thank you for your interest in the M.A. in Communication Arts degree at Webster University. Part of the application process is an essay in which you address the following questions:

What motivated you to seek an MA in Communication Arts? Based on the School of Education’s mission statement, the program description and learning outcomes, how do you think your participation in Webster’s M.A. in Communication Arts program will help you to accomplish your personal and professional goals?

Your essay (250-300 words) should be an honest reflection of your experiences, beliefs, and aspirations. In addition to being an example of your best writing, it should be thoughtful, reflect your curiosity for learning, and address the questions posed above. Please submit your Admissions Essay with your M.A. in Communication Arts application.

1. The Mission of the School of Education
The School of Education at Webster University provides its candidates with the knowledge, experiences, and practical tools that enable them to guide both themselves and others toward lifelong learning. The School of Education is a community of teacher-scholars who apply critical reflection and creative energies to enhance learning in schools and other educational settings. The faculty strives to achieve this goal by modeling effective teaching practices based on sound theory and research. The personalized approaches create a challenging, yet supportive environment that permits the risk-taking necessary for learning and growth. The School of Education encourages its faculty and candidates to work actively toward this end, keeping in mind that the actions must be rooted in visionary yet realistic thinking. This thought and action process underscores the development of an inner-directed self-understanding, an outer-directed global outlook, and an appreciation of human diversity that arises from both perspectives.

2. Dispositions of the School of Education
The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education defines dispositions as "the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth." (Professional Standards, p.53) Interpreting and assessing dispositions is often more intuitive than it is descriptive and measurable. Regardless of the difficulty of assessment, there is significant value in focusing attention on qualities that make an effective teacher. Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory competency in regard to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the School of Education Conceptual Framework.

**Understands and Respects Self**
- Understands and respects that s(he) may be different from others
- Embraces an openness to change (adaptability and flexibility)
- Exhibits Curiosity
- Engages in Reflection

**Understands and Respects Others**
- Understands, respects, and responds appropriately to diversity in a variety of settings
- Exhibits empathy
- Commits to fairness and honesty
- Listens respectively to other points of view
3. Description of Masters of Communication Arts Program

Candidates pursuing the M.A. in Communication Arts degree engage in observation and documentation to research young adult’s learning processes by analyzing observational data in light of developmental theory, current research and best practices, as well as historical and social contexts. Compelling and reciprocal relationships exist between theory, action research, brain research, and best practices in Communication Arts education. Theory not only lays the foundation for Webster’s program development, but also provides support for ongoing decision-making and program improvement.

Since the teaching-learning process is a complex cycle that requires continual study and analysis, educators continue to keep abreast of current research in Communication Arts. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards are used to assess the program and the candidate as well as student learning in K-12 classrooms.

4. Communication Arts Candidate Learning Goals

a. Refine oral, visual, and written communication skills and understand the importance of language, media, and the arts in the communication process.
b. Develop sound instructional and assessment strategies as they create curriculum based on understanding of research, theory, and practice in content areas such as language, literature, reading, writing, media literacy, and the visual and performing arts.
c. Promote creative thought and expression through leadership in schools and communities.
d. Develop skills and strategies to respond to diversity in schools and communities.
e. Utilize technology and mixed media (libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

The M.A. in Communication Arts degree aims to achieve the National Council of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Council of Teacher of English (NCTE) competencies for teacher candidates. These competencies form an important part of the School of Education’s mission at Webster University.

We contend that the ability to write sound academic English is crucial to anyone pursuing a graduate degree. The submission of a short essay by new applicants provides writing samples that we use to judge their potential for success within our program. When writing samples are judged to be less than proficient we do not consider those candidates to be suitable for the rigor of our courses. If, however, writing is less than proficient, but content and GPA are within our criteria, individuals might be counseled to use the Writing Center and still be admitted.

The essay also helps us qualitatively measure candidates’ level of self-respect, demonstrated curiosity for learning and for the program, and ability to engage in reflection. We believe that the essay provides insight into all three of these dispositions and aides us in determining the suitability of a candidate for our program.
Scoring Rubric for the M.A. in Communication Arts Admissions Essay

The rubric below describes the criteria for scoring the M.A. in Communication Arts Admissions Essay. If a candidate's essay receives scores of 3.0 or above, the candidate will be accepted if all other admissions requirements are satisfactory. If any element of the essay receives a score of 2 or below, the candidate's admission decision will be deferred. Upon deferment, a plan of remediation will be developed and implemented the first term (8-weeks) at the end of which the essay must be resubmitted. Within four (4) weeks of resubmission the essay will be reviewed and a final admission decision made. If all elements receive a score of 3.0 or higher, the candidate is allowed to register for a second semester. If a candidate’s second try is unsatisfactory, the candidate admission will be denied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Nearing Proficiency</th>
<th>Deferred</th>
<th>Denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>&lt;1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>School of Education Mission Statement</td>
<td>Admissions Essay shows high motivation and an excellent understanding of the mission of the School of Education</td>
<td>Admissions essay shows good motivation and an understanding of the mission of the School of Education</td>
<td>Student appears to have some motivation. Admissions essay shows some understanding of the mission of the School of Education</td>
<td>Student appears to have very weak motivation. Admissions essay does not show understanding of the mission of the School of Education</td>
<td>Essay submission not satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions of the School of Education</td>
<td>Prospective student is very likely to benefit from study in the MA in COMM ARTS.</td>
<td>Prospective student is likely to benefit from study in the MA in COMM ARTS.</td>
<td>Prospective student may benefit from study in the MA in COMM ARTS.</td>
<td>Prospective student is not likely to benefit from study in the MA in COMM ARTS.</td>
<td>Essay submission not satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM ARTS Candidate Learning Goals</td>
<td>Prospective student and program definitely fit identified learning/career goals.</td>
<td>Prospective student and program fit identified learning/career goals.</td>
<td>Prospective student and program may fit identified learning/career goals.</td>
<td>Prospective student and program do not fit identified learning/career goals.</td>
<td>Essay submission not satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Writing Skills</td>
<td>Critical thinking, in-depth analysis and reflection are present in the essay. Writing is clear, descriptive, succinct, and reflective</td>
<td>Critical thinking student has thought about the two questions in the essay and are adequately developed Many elements of good writing are used</td>
<td>Ideas are somewhat developed. Some elements of good writing are used</td>
<td>Ideas are not developed. Writing skills are deficient.</td>
<td>Essay submission not satisfactory.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Admissions Results

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Candidate’s Name

Accepted [ ]

Deferred* [ ]

Denied [ ]

*If essay is deferred, see attached remediation plan.

SCORES:  
Mission
Dispositions
Learning Goals  
Critical thinking/Writing

GPA

Reviewer’s Signature Date

Adopted 6/01/12