



# Book Creators

## SPRING GROUP AUTHOR PROGRAM

Professor Eric Koester (aka the “**Book Professor**”) will be offering an open version of his award-winning book creation course beginning Spring 2021. Professor Koester’s Book Creators program is designed to offer a community-driven experience to first-time or new authors that combines a structured program with editorial coaching, and a clear path to publishing your book.

**The Spring 2021 program is open to (a) current college and graduate school students and (b) working professionals. Participation in the 20-week program is free and authors simply pay for a developmental editor to work with them directly: (1) full-time student authors pay \$249 to their developmental editor during the program (thanks to the support of a sponsor); and (2) non-college and graduate participants pay \$499 to their developmental editor. Approximately 60% of the participating authors will work on traditional non-fiction books while 40% will work on creative books (fiction, memoir, creative nonfiction, poetry, etc.).**

Professor Koester began offering this “open-source” authorship experience in 2018 and now offers it in the fall and spring semesters, as well as a summer program. Author groups meet (a) each week virtually via Zoom for one hour; and (b) authors choose to participate in regular (4-5 times per month) “group writing sessions” via Zoom or in person as available.

The 20-week program is designed to let aspiring authors create books (non-fiction, fiction, and poetry) through this hands-on program. At the end of the 20-week program, authors can continue into the next phase to publish their book with no out-of-pocket costs or fees. Approved authors are eligible to publish through the Creators Program of New Degree Press that enables them to pre-sell their book (before it’s finished), which provides authors a path to own all rights to their book with no out-of-pocket costs (authors will use their pre-sale proceeds to fund book creation expenses such as cover design, layout, typesetting, advanced editing, copy editing, and marketing support.)

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Authors participate in a 20-week, group-based writing program (aka a virtual book writing seminar) with individualized editor support and coaching on the development and writing of their manuscript.**

#### Details:

- This experience is based on Professor Koester’s award-winning “Creators” program from Georgetown University that has helped 400+ authors publish books.
- 20-week program:
  - Each week there will be live group sessions and a series of videos, activities, and exercises to create a first draft of a book manuscript.
  - Periodically there will be virtual writing workshops and additional working sessions.
- At the end of the five months, approved authors (those with manuscripts of 25,000 words or more and the recommendation of their developmental editor) will be eligible to launch their books through a unique partnership with the New Degree Press Creators Program (a unique pre-sale publishing program).
- Professor Koester will support each author, including helping identify and clarify book topics, designing weekly activities, and providing ongoing coaching and support.

# Book Creators Program

## Cost/Commitment:

- Professor Koester offers this five-month, pilot program of his Book Creators course at no cost thanks to the support of his university department.
- Each author will pay editor dues of \$249 or \$499 at the beginning of the program toward the costs of their professional developmental editor. The extremely high publishing rate of authors in this program is driven by this level of personal and individual editorial coaching.
  - This professional editing support opportunity at this cost is only possible through the gracious support of the program sponsors who help to cover up to half of the editor costs for all full-time college and graduate students, plus the costs of teaching assistants for the program.
  - We find that very few first-time authors will have personal editing support (leading to poor first drafts or incomplete manuscripts), typically due to a lack of access to high-quality editors and/or the costs of hiring an editor—reasonably \$800 to \$1,200 for four months of support.
- We expect participating authors to 1) attend a weekly session time that fits their schedule (typically 4-6 time slots to select from) or watch session recordings on their own, 2) to meet or speak regularly with their developmental editor, and 3) participate with a group of fellow authors throughout the 20-week program.

## Publishing Opportunities:

- Authors in this program will have the opportunity to publish with New Degree Press. ([www.NewDegreePress.com](http://www.NewDegreePress.com)) through Professor Koester's Creators Program partnership.
  - Each participating author will have an individual publishing strategy session and an opportunity to have their manuscript evaluated for publishing by the publishing board of New Degree Press.
  - Professor Koester has worked with New Degree Press to design this innovative, group-based, hybrid publishing experience. Through the Creators Program partnership, authors publish without any out-of-pocket costs or fees while retaining 100% ownership in their book.
- New Degree Press partners with each author to co-develop a pre-sale campaign for your book with a goal of selling 200 signed copies. The six-week pre-sale program helps the author build their audience and generate the initial sales used fund their book's production costs.
- More than 400 authors have successfully funded their book through this innovative model with a 96% success rate.

## HOW DO I SIGN UP/JOIN?

Authors will be approved to participate following a one-on-one topic call with Professor Koester. These calls enable Professor Koester to learn about the author, understand the aims of their book, and ensure the topic, approach and author are a fit. Once you've completed your topic call and both parties decide it's a fit, you're approved to participate in the program. Note that space is limited.

- **STEP 1:** Complete the Topic Brainstorming & Participation Form
  - <https://forms.gle/NWjqRBbxFLDvYgwe7>
- **STEP 2:** Schedule a time for your "Topic Chat" with Professor Koester
  - <https://cal.mixmax.com/erickoester-37/booktopicchat>
- **STEP 3:** You will receive onboarding instructions for Quip and select your weekly virtual seminar time.
- **STEP 4:** Pay your "Editor Dues" of \$249 or \$499 (due within the first 10 days of the program)

From there, you'll be able to participate in all the sessions and begin the process of creating your first-draft manuscript and eventually publish.

## Book Creators Program



### HOW THIS WORKS

**PLEASE NOTE:** *This is a pilot program designed to test out and innovate a new teaching/coaching model from Professor Koester of a group-based book creation experience. It'll be a hybrid learning model combining live weekly sessions and workshops, individualized editor coaching, scheduled group writing time with self-paced writing, research, videos, and book work (the program is 100% virtual).*

This process is designed to enable a first-time author to create, publish, and launch their book in 10 months, and was named by USASBE as the most innovative course of 2018 due to its success and outcomes. It was initially offered after Professor Koester was continually asked, "Could I sit in on your class to learn how to write a book?" With the support of Georgetown, Professor Koester created an open model of his course for students not enrolled at Georgetown and anyone no longer in school to use this approach to develop and write their first book.

The full process can be thought of as two "semesters" or "halves" consisting of two five-month periods intended to be completed back-to-back. The manuscript creation process takes approximately 5 months, during which you work with the support of your developmental editor to create a first-draft manuscript. From there, authors are able to begin the book publishing process, which is a 5-month group-based publishing experience through a unique partnership with New Degree Press. Authors own 100% of their books and finance the production costs through an innovative pre-sale publishing model.

The success of this program has been driven by (a) the group-based book writing experience designed by Professor Koester (where you'll work with the support of group of fellow authors and the support of a developmental editor); and (b) the pre-sale publishing model that drives early momentum and support for your book (to enable authors to own their book and fund their publishing costs). This enables every college and graduate student and professional to write their book, publish their book, own their book, and have the best book possible.

# Book Creators Program

## 1. CREATE A FIRST-DRAFT MANUSCRIPT:

- **Structure of the program**
  - Over 5 months, you'll go from an idea to a **25,000-word first-draft manuscript**. This will be a rough first draft, but you'll have 3+ months of time spent on revisions before publishing.
- **Time Commitment**
  - Each week, we'll have a 1-hour hands-on workshop where you'll do things like (a) schedule interviews; (b) do research; (c) structure stories; (d) identify themes; (e) design chapters; etc.
  - Outside of the weekly session, most creators spend 2-4 hours per week on activities from interviewing, researching, writing, editing, and structuring.
  - There are regular "library sessions" where an open Zoom room is setup and lightly facilitated to enable authors to put dedicated work/writing time on the calendar.
- **Developmental Editing Support**
  - Every participant is paired up with a developmental editor—a professional book editor focused on the development stage of your manuscript—who reads your stories/chapters, offers improvements and suggestions, and provides support and coaching to the author.
  - This work is not copy editing (which happens later) but is more around developing better story writing and crafting well-designed/structured chapters.
  - Participants enrolled in college, graduate, or high school will pay a \$249 fee to cover the costs of their developmental editor (there are no further fees for the process), which typically amounts to 10-20 hours of developmental editing support throughout the process. Developmental editors will do phone calls throughout and read/review/edit content of the authors. Non-students will pay a \$499 fee to cover the costs of their developmental editor.

## 2. PUBLISH, PRODUCE, and MARKET:

- **Structure of the Program**
  - The publishing program is facilitated through a unique partnership with New Degree Press.
  - It's designed to be a natural continuation of the creation stage as authors will continue in a group-based, weekly program through the key steps of publishing and launching their book: (a) revisions/editing; (b) a pre-sale campaign of their books; (c) book production including cover design, layout and typesetting, and production of audio and hardcover books; (d) launch and marketing; and (e) developing longer-term opportunities (speaking, writing, career, new ventures) through the book.
- **Acceptance to Publish**
  - Authors who produce a 25,000-word first-draft manuscript and receive a positive recommendation from their developmental editor are generally approved to publish their book with New Degree Press.
  - In Spring 2018, 25 out of 25 authors had their books approved because the program is designed to help writers get ongoing feedback to ensure the quality of their work is publishable, as well as support the creation of sufficient content over the 5 months.
  - Approved authors are not obligated to publish their book but will have the opportunity to participate in the New Degree Press Creators Program should they choose to do so.
- **Revisions & Editing**
  - Authors will engage in a 3-step revision process including (a) initial draft revisions recommended by an editing team; (b) beta reader feedback (based on sharing the revised draft with a selected group of readers); and (c) copy editing and final polish.

# Book Creators Program

- This process will take 2-3 months post-initial draft and will help create a high-quality book.
- **Pre-Sale Campaigns**
  - Approved authors will commence a pre-sale campaign of their book immediately following creation of their first-draft manuscript.
  - The pre-sale campaign enables the author to (a) build early supporters and community around your book; and (b) raise funds to cover book production costs for your book. This enables the author to retain 100% ownership of their book.
  - Prior to beginning your pre-sale campaign, you'll develop the working title for your book, have a 'temporary' cover designed (see examples in the video), create a pre-sale video campaign, and develop marketing materials. You'll make a \$300 deposit (returned upon achieving pre-sales to cover the production costs outlined below) that funds the filming and production of your video.
  - Authors "pre-sell" their books to cover production costs. Pre-sale campaigns commonly target sales of between 125 to 250 copies allocated as follows:
    - (a) ~125 signed copies of their book to cover paperback and eBook production;
    - (b) ~25 signed copies of their book to cover hardcover book production; and
    - (c) ~50 signed copies of their book to cover audio book production.
  - See examples of our previous authors who have leveraged the pre-sale publishing model:
    - **Groomed by Samantha Leonard** <https://igg.me/at/AmaYMwjin088/x/20569148#/> (Memoir)
    - **Reborn by Amy Hsuan Chiu** <https://iqg.me/at/ahcpoetry/x/20569148#/> (Poetry)
    - **Destination Space by Rob Kasper** <https://igg.me/at/5O42bzfDJ9U/x/20569148#/> (Nonfiction)
    - **Zen of Business Acquisitions by Tom Hine** <https://igg.me/at/4xM0Q1czwHw/x/20569148#/> (Business Nonfiction)
    - **Not Another Sarah Halls by Haley Newlin** <https://iqg.me/at/not-another-sarah-halls/x/20569148#/> (Fiction/Horror)
    - **Live LIVE! by Katie O'Connell** <https://igg.me/at/rq-xNvxagW4/x/20569148#/> (Nonfiction)
    - **23 Miles and Running by Ty Pinkins** <https://iqg.me/at/23MilesAndRunning/x/20569148#/> (Memoir/Creative Nonfiction)
    - **Ability Innovation by Astri Doub** <https://iqg.me/at/5Zrlb-Zebl0/x/20569148#/> (Nonfiction)
  - The pre-sale publishing program is facilitated by New Degree Press ([www.NewDegreePress.com](http://www.NewDegreePress.com)).
  - This publishing model leverages the 'tried and true' publishing approach pioneered by individual authors on Kickstarter and Indiegogo where nearly 10,000 pre-sale books are offered per year.
- **Book Production**
  - Authors will leverage their pre-sale campaign to launch various book configurations:
    - Paperback book and an eBook;
    - Foreign language translations;
    - Audio book; and
    - Hardcover book.
  - You'll work with the publisher to create covers (typically based on 3-4 initial design directions, and at least 2-3 rounds of revisions), book layouts (producing the interior layout of the book text for publication), and distribution (ISBNs, preparing for the printer and distribution through Amazon, Barnes & Nobles, and other traditional booksellers).
  - Authors will be shown how to order their books "at cost" for events or other purposes.
- **Marketing**

## Book Creators Program

- Authors will work with the publisher/producer to develop a 3-4 month, automated marketing plan to market and promote your book.
- Books will be available for purchase through Amazon and Barnes & Nobles, and authors will be shown how to get local-area bookstores, libraries, and organizations to carry your book.
- **New Degree Press**
  - The publishing program is facilitated through a unique partnership with New Degree Press who provides and facilitates the group-based publishing approach and experience (which authors typically fund through the pre-sale publishing model).
  - New Degree Press is an IBPA-certified hybrid publisher and does not take any royalties or have any ownership of the book/work from the authors. It provides its services under a “fee-for-service” arrangement where the book production costs are covered through pre-sales of your book (ensuring the author retains all rights and creative control).
  - Pre-sale campaigns are built with the author to enable early book purchasers to become a part of the journey and receive advance copies of the book, helping choose your cover, and other perks.
  - During your pre-sale campaign, authors will pre-sell books to cover the costs of book production and delivery of pre-sale books. The campaigns are typically structured as follows:
    - **Paperback and eBook.** Authors will pre-sell 125 signed copies of their books at \$39 each to raise \$5,000. Those costs are allocated as follows: (a) \$3,500 goes to the hiring and work of cover designers, advanced editorial and copy-editing support; layout, typesetting, and marketing support); (b) \$900 goes to the printing/mailing of ~125 books from your pre-sale campaign; and (c) \$600 goes to the Indiegogo platform and credit card processing fees. Authors will typically publish their paperback and eBook first.
    - **Hardcover Book.** Authors will pre-sell ~25 signed copies of their books at \$39 each to raise \$1,000. Hardcover books will typically feature one or two new “bonus” pieces of content. Those costs are allocated as follows: (a) \$700 goes to the hiring and work of cover and cover sleeve designers, additional editing and copy editing and marketing support; (b) \$250 goes to the printing/mailing of 25 books from your pre-sale campaign; and (c) \$50 goes to the Indiegogo platform and credit card processing fees. Authors will typically publish their hardcover book second or third, typically a few months after the other launches to add some new content.
    - **Audio Book.** Authors will pre-sell ~50 signed copies of their books at \$39 each to raise \$2,000. Those costs are allocated as follows: (a) \$1,500 goes to the hiring and work of audio engineering for mastering your audio book, cover, and marketing material design, voice coaching, and purchase of recording equipment; (b) \$300 goes to the printing/mailing of 50 books from your campaign; and (c) \$200 goes to the Indiegogo platform & credit card processing fees. Authors typically publish their audiobook second or third, and add in some new audio-focused content (interviews, other stories, etc.)
    - **Foreign Language Translations (Hardcover and/or Paperback).** Some authors would like to translate their book into another language (often for family or if the topic is relevant to another audience). You may discuss this option with New Degree Press if you are interested. NOTE: At this time, all authors in this program are required to create their first draft manuscript in English, but if they wish to translate it into a foreign language, then this process enables them to do so.

## Book Creators Program

- Creators typically finance all of their production costs through the pre-sale model, where you'll leverage the sale of signed copies of your book prior to publishing to fund the production costs. However, some authors may choose to forgo the pre-sale model and cover these production costs directly (or partially cover them).
- While the success rate of pre-sale publishing is extremely high, in the unlikely event that an author is unable to pre-sell sufficient copies of their book, there is no obligation to fund production yourself. Authors who choose to pause or stop the publishing process will simply refund pre-orders to their backers and may decide to run a second campaign at a later point.
- All pre-sale proceeds above these levels go to the author; all sales revenue and sales from the sale of the books at the book launch and afterwards go to the author.

# Book Creators Program



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the Origins and History of the Program?

Professor Eric Koester was frustrated by his inability to help his students at Georgetown University realize their potential—and came up with a crazy idea: *“Let’s have each of them write and publish a book.”* Armed with his own experience in writing and publishing two books in his 20s and interviews with nearly 100 successful authors, he ran his first ‘book creators’ course, leveraging some of the iterative principles that had worked in entrepreneurship and applying them to writing books. The idea was just crazy enough to work, and in April 2017 the first 16 student authors from this course would publish their books through a unique partnership with New Degree Press. Not only would they create books that were well-received and have sold thousands of copies, the authors would each experience incredible results *beyond the book*—from landing dream jobs and getting speaking opportunities to securing press coverage and starting companies.

Since then, the program has continued to grow into one of the most popular offerings at Georgetown, and Professor Koester received approval to create this ‘open community’ version of the program for individuals outside of Georgetown and non-students. Professor Koester currently offers this open model of the course/program two or three times a year (Fall, Spring, Summer) for interested authors and creators.

To date, 400+ authors have published through this program and 500+ are on track to publish in the next year.

***This program was named “2018’s Most Innovative Program in the Country” by USASBE and Professor Koester was named the National Entrepreneurship Educator of 2020.***

### What are some of the success stories of the program?

With more than 400 authors having already published through this program, there are lots of successes across career, speaking, entrepreneurial, press, and life outcomes. Professor Koester begins working with each author to understand the outcomes they are seeking—what doors do they want the book to open, what do they want the book to enable for them, and how are they thinking about the book as a tool for themselves. This helps ensure that the outcomes are successes. As a result, the program is focused on participants who want to do more than simply ‘write and publish a book’, but plan to use the book to create opportunities.

The program integrates these outcomes, goals, and objectives throughout the process. Authors routinely leverage their books to gain highly competitive jobs in the fields of sports (scouting and professional sports teams), investments (venture capital), food (food trend market research), and many more. Participants have leveraged their books to acquire new clients or customers for their business, to launch startups, nonprofits and other groups or organizations, and have won awards including national book of the year awards, ‘Under 30’ and ‘Under 40’ awards, and more. Additionally, most participants are able to use their books to earn media



# Book Creators Program

coverage (Forbes, Fortune, CBS, Entrepreneur Magazine) and land countless speaking opportunities (including TEDx Talks).

See author interviews here: <http://bit.do/student-authors>

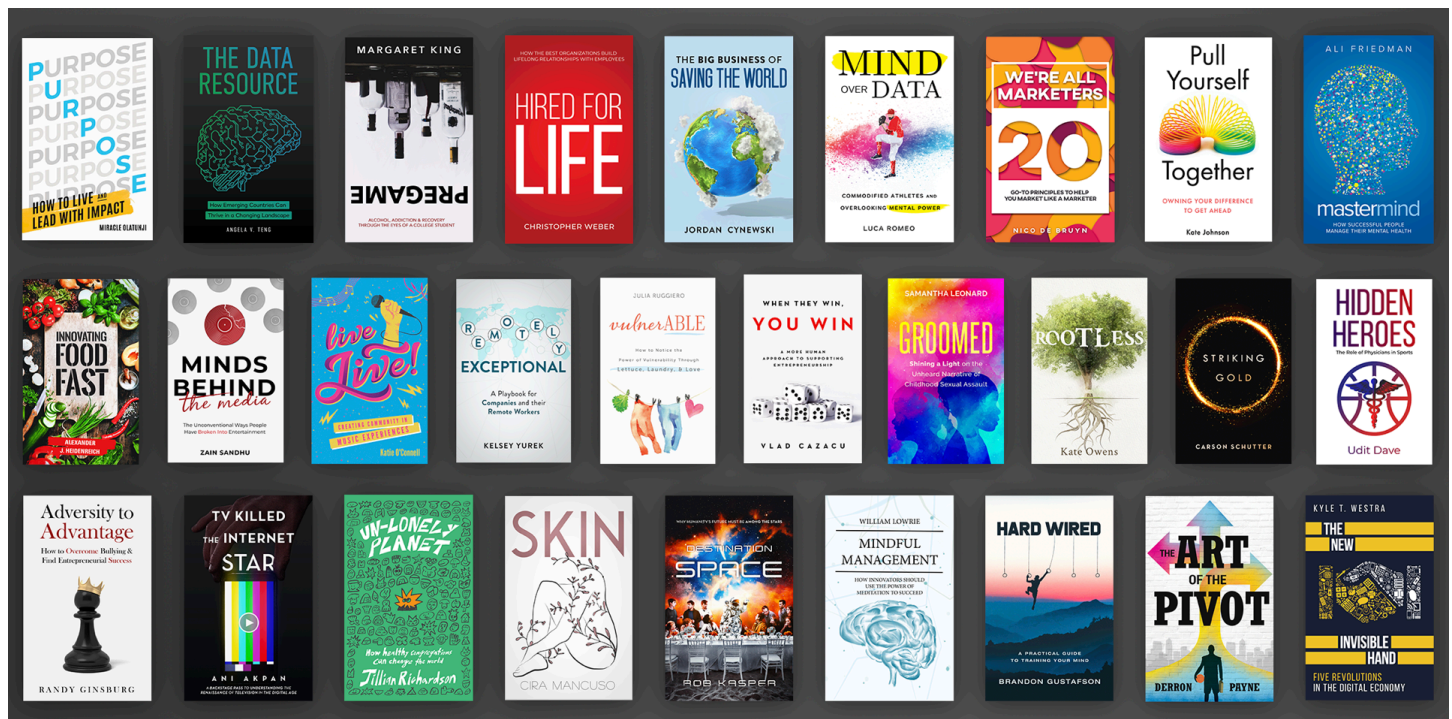
## I'm not a current student. Will this program still work for me?

While the program began as a course for students, today the open community model is made up of about 60% full-time students (undergraduates and graduates) and 40% working professionals (individuals working full time at various stages of their careers). The mixture of students and professionals creates a really nice balance and shared experience that participants appreciate—the authors succeed at finishing a publishable draft at about the same rate regardless of background. The only difference is that working professionals do tend to write slightly longer books (approx. 10% longer on average). The experience itself is not any different, however, and it's open to the community regardless of background.

## What are the types of books?

About sixty percent (60%) of the books are traditional nonfiction books and forty percent (40%) are creative books including fiction, creative nonfiction, memoirs, and poetry. The experience for all authors is very similar (many of the core writing and structuring techniques apply regardless of the type of book). Authors are matched with a developmental editor who has experience and knowledge that make them a fit based on the book.

For Creative Authors, we have dedicated weekly sessions that begin in the third week of the program focused on some of the unique aspects of their writing (scene development, character development, dialogue, and plot arcs). Authors are matched up with developmental editors who have relevant experience and interests in the specific topic of the author. Below are some samples:



# Book Creators Program

## **Should I just do this on my own?**

Research has shown it's difficult to complete a book—less than 2% of people who begin a book finish it. Part of the reason is that it's difficult to complete a book on your own (without support). This process is designed to provide the three core elements to successfully finishing a manuscript: (a) a process; (b) coaching; and (c) a community. We have found that by putting participants through this process, giving them some targeted developmental editing coaching/support, and a community of other authors, more than 90-95% will be able to publish their work. It's a neat experience to share with others, and we believe holding a launch event with other authors makes the process even more special.

## **How do participants develop their topics?**

Professor Koester does a short call with each author before they begin the program and has developed an optional 3-workshop series that helps authors discover topics that can unlock the most opportunities for them. The goal of the book is to create outcomes for the author such as new job prospects, new opportunities in writing/speaking, supporting a new venture, or becoming a full-time writer/author.

## **Do authors in this program sell lots of copies of their books?**

The program focuses on the key drivers of book sales to help authors have successful launches. One of the biggest mistakes first-time authors make is failing to build their audience *before* their book is finished. A big component of the Book Creators experience, and the pre-sale publishing model, is authors being coached on how to build their audience, activate their existing network, and build early fans who drive much larger book launches. As a result, authors from this program launch books that perform well, with 85-90% of debuting as a #1 New Release in their categories on Amazon based on first-month sales. Additionally, numerous authors sell thousands of copies of books in their first year (often tied to speaking, interviewing, and writing activities). Book sales is one goal for every author—but it's not the only goal of the book creators experience.

## **Who are the developmental editors and how will I be paired with mine?**

All the developmental editors working with the program are professional editors who have worked on numerous books, and for most of them editing is a full-time or part-time career. Development editors in the program include former medical doctors, lawyers, professors, engineers, and scientists. The role of the developmental editor is as much of a coach as an editor, and so we spend extensive time ensuring the developmental editor is a fit for the authors in this program. Each author is matched with a developmental editor based on the current topic or genre of the book with a goal to ensure an enthusiastic passion for the shared project. In the prior five cohorts of authors, we've had less than 1% authors request to be reassigned to a different developmental editor—each editor-author relationship is unique and customized to provide feedback and support based on the book, experience-level, and goals of the author. Nearly all the developmental editors have been a part of multiple cohorts of the program.

## **How many participants have gone through the program?**

The first group of 16 student-authors published in April 2017. Since then, 400+ authors have been published, and 600+ will be published in the next year. This includes authors from more than 300 colleges and universities other than Georgetown such as Brown, Michigan, Oregon, Linfield University, University of Virginia, Northwestern, The George Washington University, and many others who are working professionals.

## **What is needed for the weekly sessions?**

Think of these sessions as a "virtual seminar" where a group of 30-40 participants will engage in series of activities including lectures, discussions, small working sessions, and dedicated writing/creation time. Additionally, participants have access to a series of videos from Eric and regular "writing workshops" to have

# Book Creators Program

dedicated time to create. If a participant is unable to make the session time, then they can join in another time or watch the session as a recording.

## Could someone participate if they can't attend the weekly sessions?

The experience is designed to build community through the weekly sessions, but every session is recorded and may be watched as a video, listened to as audio, or read as an audio transcript.

## Do you offer refunds of the editing fees if I choose to stop the program?

No. However, we will enable an author to apply their editorial costs to a future program (one-time only).

## What if participants aren't great writers?

Authors at Georgetown taking the course come from all different departments and majors. The program is designed to teach storytelling to enable even poor writers to create stories that, with developmental editing and coaching, can become a great book.

## I'm a little intimidated by the publishing process—how does the book publishing industry work?

The publishing industry IS a little bit confusing, and perhaps more importantly is in a state of flux. There are generally seen to be four common approaches to book publishing:

- **Traditional Publishing**—also called royalty-based publishing—is what many people think of when they think of the world of publishing and is where the *publisher* has full rights to the work and pays the author a royalty (often 5-10%) for copies that are sold. Today the opportunities for first-time authors in traditional publishing are slim, unless the author has a built-in audience that can purchase 10,000 copies of a book.
- **Self-Publishing** is defined by the writer assuming both the writer and publisher roles. The tasks include writing, editing, designing, printing, marketing, and distributing copies of the book. There is a high learning curve, but the book can rise as high as the author's efforts.
- **Hybrid Publishing** is described as a middle ground between Traditional and Self-Publishing. It is often called Partnership Publishing or Author-Assisted Publishing. Hybrid Publishers will usually assume some risk in the publishing process (as opposed to Vanity Publishing where authors pay for the publishing service before work begins).
- **Vanity Publishing** is defined as the writer paying a company to act as the publisher and do everything that is needed to produce the book. Simply put, the publishing is the point. Authors pay up front for their publishing costs and often there is no publisher vetting to approve a manuscript for publishing.

## Who is New Degree Press?

New Degree Press is a hybrid publisher with hundreds of titles in its catalogue. The mission of New Degree Press is to 'empower authors as owners' and therefore does not take any royalties or ownership of the work from authors. The New Degree Press Publishing Board includes industry executives from the innovation and publishing industries. The publishing board approves authors for publishing based on quality and their evaluation of the impact of a book in the market. New Degree Press complies with each of the Independent Book Publishers Association of America's (IBPA) Guidelines for hybrid publishers.

## What type of publishing is the New Degree Press Creators Program™?

The New Degree Press Creators Program™ is a hybrid publishing experience where New Degree Press partners with the author to develop and launch a pre-sale campaign to fund the book's production costs. This

# Book Creators Program

model enables the author to avoid (a) out-of-pocket costs or fees to publish their book and (b) receiving only small royalties on any sales of the book.

## **Why did you choose and recommend this publishing model for your authors?**

The Creators Program with New Degree Press was designed to offer first-time authors an affordable and efficient way to publish their work in a manner they are proud of. Traditional publishing is very difficult to break into for first-time authors and takes excessive ownership in the work, while self-publishing is challenging to do well and comes with substantial upfront costs, and vanity publishing is often expensive (\$20,000+) and requires authors to pay up-front for the publishing support. Hybrid publishing—particularly when combined with the pre-sale program—created the most viable and effective strategy to keep control in the hands of first-time authors and offer a path for a professional publishing experience. Authors may always choose to pursue another publishing model after completion of the Book Creators course—traditional, self, or vanity publishing—but this offered the best combination for first-time authors. Professor Koester's most recent book, *Founder, JD*, was published under this same program in 2019.

## **How was the New Degree Press Creators Program developed?**

The Creators Program™ was first designed by Professor Koester in partnership with New Degree Press for his Georgetown University students. But as more authors began to participate in Professor Koester's courses it was expanded to offer all his first-time authors a financially viable approach to publishing by leveraging the combination of hybrid publishing and a pre-sale campaign with a group-based book development experience. That combination was designed to make publishing accessible, affordable, and effective. New Degree Press offers full-service publishing support and services to the authors but can keep its costs low by batching authors (which enables them to negotiate lower costs from cover designers, editors, layout, and copy editing support). Additionally, through the Creators Program New Degree Press creates a partnership in publishing by investing in the pre-sale campaigns of each author—the six-week pre-sale coaching program has helped more than 200 authors in 2019 successfully fund their book's production costs.

## **How long does the Creators Program publishing process take?**

The Creators Program is a five-month publishing process beginning with your pre-sale campaign. Concurrently with your pre-sale campaign, you'll begin preparation for the book production efforts. Authors engage in each of the key steps the publishing process—revisions, editing, beta reader feedback, covers, layouts, launch planning, marketing, and logistical details—during a group process facilitated by a team from New Degree Press.

## **Is the pre-sale publishing model something new?**

Experts estimate more than 10,000 books per year use a pre-sale publishing model for their books. We've seen this as a very common approach for years in other industries. For example, if your favorite artist or band announces a concert in a couple months, you'd go on Ticketmaster and buy the tickets for the concert in advance. You've pre-ordered a ticket to the concert. By doing this, you have enabled the concert producer to use that cash now to rent the stage, hire the people to setup the venue, and secure all the logistical pieces needed for the concerts. This same model is being applied to your book.

In addition, traditional publishers do something quite similar (just positioned in a different way with worse economics for the author). Traditional Publishers 'pre-pay' the book production costs for your book up front and in exchange they get paid back first for those costs, then keep 90-95% of all profits going forward. Pre-sale publishing is designed to cut out that middleman and let the author pre-sell their book and retain all profits.

# Book Creators Program

## **How does pre-sale publishing work with New Degree Press?**

The pre-sale campaign experience is integrated directly into your publishing journey (which doubles to build your audience in advance of the formal book launch). Once your manuscript is approved (this is called having your manuscript 'green lit' for publication) you'll begin the six-week pre-sale program. Working with the team from New Degree Press, you will create a series of marketing assets (campaign video, temporary book covers, marketing copy, etc.) to produce a pre-order page and materials for your book. Authors are responsible for a \$300 deposit for your video production costs (which is returned upon successfully raising \$8,000 through your campaign). The author then proceeds to pre-sell the book over a four-to-eight week period. Over the course of the campaign, you'll have a series of workshops and weekly sessions designed to support you with the marketing and sales efforts for your campaign. Over 250 individuals have successfully met their pre-sale targets (with a 96% success rate). At the end of your campaign, the proceeds of this campaign are then applied to cover the book production and publishing costs.

Just like the concert example above, there are costs to produce and publish your book (cover designers, editors, copy editing, layout design, ISBNs, etc.) But rather than you paying for them up front, you simply get others to buy the book in advance and then you'll deliver them the book five months later.

## **How do I succeed at my pre-sale campaign?**

Authors target selling 200 signed copies of the book over a 30-60 day period to cover production of paperback/eBook, audiobook and hardcover book. To achieve this, New Degree Press facilitates the six-week hands-on program for authors to create, run and complete their pre-sale campaign, including production of video content about the author, the book and their process for marketing and pre-selling their books. You'll receive coaching, support and tools to succeed which is why 96% of authors meet their pre-sale campaign targets.

## **Thirty-Nine Dollars seems like an expensive price for my book. Will people pay that?**

Yes. Remember, individuals who pre-order your book get more than just a copy of the book—they become part of the process helping you with aspects of the book production including: (a) being listed in your acknowledgements page of the published book; (b) voting on title selection; (c) choosing covers; (d) serving as beta readers; and (e) supporting marketing efforts. This process creates a community around you and your book (which is a secret to success for book launches). In addition, the \$39 price point was determined based on an extensive analysis of thousands of successful and unsuccessful pre-sale book campaigns. The single biggest reason pre-sale campaigns fail is that the authors price their book too low—therefore the \$39 price point was the most common price observed in successful campaigns, and when positioned to your audience correctly, there are few (if any) concerns authors hear about that price point. Additionally, authors can pre-sell a digital (eBook) at a lower price point during the campaign.

## **Am I responsible for any publishing costs if I can't pre-sell 125+ books?**

No. The campaign is designed to enable an author to begin the campaign and to pause or cease the campaign without any cost or obligation. However, at key milestones (pre-sale of 30 books, 60 books, 90 books), authors will commence selected publishing activities and begin work on editing, covers, etc. and apply the proceeds from that sales milestone to those costs. Beginning the pre-sale campaign does not mean you are obligated to publish, and the author is not responsible to cover any costs beyond those from their pre-sales and applied to publishing activities. An author may choose to pause pre-orders or cease their campaign and either refund sales or provide a 'partial delivery' to backers. Pre-sale publishing is not an obligation, but an opportunity.

## **Do I have to publish with New Degree Press?**

# Book Creators Program

Authors are not obligated or required to take this publishing route—the pre-sale publishing program is an opportunity for authors, but not an obligation. To date, the vast majority of authors have chosen to publish through the Creator Program and New Degree Press. However, we have had select authors pursue a “traditional” publishing route. Authors are informed of the options at the time of manuscript submission: (a) publishing with NDP and the pre-sale campaign; (b) turning their manuscript into a web-based article series or e-book; and (c) traditional publishing/self-publishing options. The goal is to give authors a variety of options.

## **I've heard it's cheaper to self-publish. Should I just do that?**

Self-Publishing is defined by the writer assuming both the writer and publisher roles (essentially you ‘do it all’). The tasks you’ll be responsible for include writing, editing, designing, layout, printing, marketing, and distributing copies of the book. Self-Publishing has been a positive option for the industry, and for some authors in this program it may be a viable option (especially if they have access to a pool of talented, vetted creatives with experience working on books to support the book production activities). However, many first-time authors mistakenly believe self-publishing will eliminate costs to publish their book or might be faster/easier to do than working with a publisher. The average self-published author reports spending \$4,450 on publishing costs for their books for expenses including editorial, cover design, layout design, marketing, and administrative costs. These costs are incurred before you publish (so they are upfront costs you’ll have to come up with). Additionally, self-published authors note that their biggest challenge is vetting the quality of editors, cover designers, layout designers, copy editors, and marketing support.

## **Do I have to publish my manuscript?**

No. But we think that once an author puts in the time to create a manuscript, they’ll want to, but it’s not required in any way. For authors who are still unsure about publishing, they may decide to undertake the pre-sale campaign as a no-risk proposition to try out the publishing journey—if you do not reach your sales goals, you are not liable for anything, you simply end the campaign. Some authors may choose to delay publishing, which is also an option.

## **What are other options I can consider other than publishing?**

For authors that are considering an alternative to publishing their book (or considering self-publishing), Professor Koester typically recommends that authors consider publishing their work as (a) a multi-part article series (a 10-12 part blog/article series on your website or in partnership with another site); or (b) an eBook. If at the end of the program you are in this situation, Professor Koester provides resources for this alternative.

## **What if an author is not initially approved to publish?**

The author will receive feedback to improve their work—typically the few authors not approved need to create more content to hit the minimums for publication. We require authors to write at least 30,000 words to be published. The process is designed to create publishable works, and 25 out of 25 authors participating were approved to publish in Spring 2018.

## **So what's the catch? How can this be offered for free?**

Professor Koester first offered this as a course that was accessible only to full-time undergraduate students at Georgetown University and it very quickly became one of the most popular courses on campus—even being offered two times per year. Taking the course if you weren’t a student was expensive and challenging, so he was flooded with requests from graduate students and alumni to audit or just ‘sit in on’ his courses, which unfortunately wasn’t feasible. In the fall of 2018, Professor Koester approached the university about offering an open version of the course to the community—one not restricted just to full-time undergraduates and that didn’t cost money to enroll. He wanted to ensure the course would be open to people at other schools, to

## Book Creators Program

people no longer in school, and available to anyone around the globe. They would approve his request and the first 'pilot' of the open, hybrid course was offered in Fall 2018 to twenty-four (24) individuals hailing from nine (9) colleges across the country. Twenty-one of those authors would go onto publish in Summer 2019.

Today, Professor Koester offers this community version of his course each semester as he is able—aiming to offer it three times each year for the community. He is committed to offering a course that is accessible to students and younger professionals. In 2020, Professor Koester was named the National Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year for his work on this program, ensuring his commitment to future authors.

We utilize sponsorship and grants to offer the program in this pilot model (without direct costs other than the editor dues). We have begun to expand this program more formally into additional colleges, universities, and organizations, but has agreed to offer an open and accessible model to the community as he is able with the support of Georgetown. Of course, Professor Koester could charge for this course (there are plenty of companies that sell "book writing" courses like this one) or Georgetown could force students to enroll in the program on campus. But its far more important to have it easily accessible and leveraging sponsorships/grants has enabled us to do this. Every student should feel empowered to write their book, publish their book, own their book, and have the best book possible.

Professor Koester's research examines the power of these types of intense 'creation' experiences, in fact finding that over 80% of the Forbes 30 under 30 alums (comprising many of today's most successful 20-somethings) had a similar 'substantial creation' experience (publishing a book, launching a podcast season, organizing an event series). Having taught thousands of students in his career—and the single greatest learning and growth experience is seeing a student create and publish their book. The power of this experience in driving the growth and success of a younger person is very real. Professor Koester believes every college and graduate student on earth should write and publish a book—college and graduate students are at the ideal time in their lives to create one to open life and career doors...it's just that students aren't typically given the chance. Providing this book program for free is his way of proving he's serious about achieving that goal.

And over time, the goal is that more colleges and universities will see the value of incorporating programs like this into their formal curriculum (and several have in addition to Georgetown). That goal takes time, but in the meantime students should have access to the information and community to create something. And our successful student authors from campuses are at the forefront of helping bring this—formally—to their schools, colleges, and campuses for future authors to benefit from.