Power, Partnership, and Negotiations: The Limits of Collaboration

Susanmarie Harrington, Steve Fox, and Tere Molinder Hogue

Writing program administrators are much given to introspection. As Jeanne Gunner's presentation at last summer's WPA conference argued, the scholarship about writing program administration is increasingly concerned with critical reflection on the definition and work of writing program administrators. Gunner argues that the history of the WPA is "a history of an unraveling unity, a growing displacement of a monolithic position by a multipositioned agency." This displacement, which Gunner also calls "unthinking the WPA," involves seeing the WPA as more than either a bureaucrat concerned with oiling the wheels of a complex set of interlocking introductory courses or a single figure whose scholarly and pedagogical expertise drives the development of all curricula and faculty training; recent examinations of the nature of a WPA call for the position to become something embedded in partnerships, networks, conversations, and collaborations within the writing program and across the campus. Such analysis grows out of the political crises faced by WPAs whose institutions failed to value either their individual work or their programs, and also out of the trend toward the postmodern, which urges us all to become contextual, situated, multiply defined.

In many ways, this theoretical movement in scholarship about WPAs has grown largely unchallenged. That WPAs should forge political alliances is, of course, sound advice that we would not dispute. That WPAs, and writing programs, should be rhetorical, situated in their local context, aware of the ways in which multiple subjectivity affects all levels of decisions, is likewise undisputable. But living the experience of a postmodern WPA can be complicated and troubling. We have a personal stake in these matters, since our writing program is one of the few that does not have a single WPA at its head. No single person has authority or responsibility for the program; the WPA work is spread among a large committee. We are thus in a unique (or at least unusual) position from which to critique and extend the recent theoretical calls to decrease emphasis on a unitary WPA figure and to increase emphasis on collaboration.

Calls to increase collaboration in administration have proposed two different types of reform. In one, administrative structure would not change, but the administrative work would. Anne Ruggles Gere argues that the recent

> crises surrounding WPAs may open the way for a new model of WPA, one more in keeping with the long revolution of composition. . . . The word "administrator" signals the totalizing unity that most often defines WPAs. I propose that we reconceptualize WPAs in terms of multiple subject positions, positions that are more collaborative and research oriented and offer the possibility of forward motion in the long revolution of composition. (127)

Gere, while calling for a profound reorientation of administration, still assumes that there will be a figure who serves as a writing program administrator, albeit one who functions in "multiple subject positions." Barbara Cambridge and Ben McClelland, on the other hand, call for a different sort of collaboration, one which would change administrative structures as well as administrative work. They share Gere's complex vision of the WPA but suggest that perhaps writing programs don't need a director at all. Programs would benefit, they claim, from a collaborative administrative structure that promotes relationships with faculty across campus. The WPA position, they argue, should become a partnership with other faculty, characterized by shared governance, so that the WPA is repositioned "from icon to partner" (159). A WPA is not "primarily responsible for the program," but rather "remains intimately involved in coordinating the faculty who decide what they are able to do and for what they will be accountable. The value of the WPA's coordination and of the faculty members' pedagogical success are both measured by the student learning outcomes. The partnership implicates both the WPA and faculty in joint responsibility" (157). Despite the fact that Cambridge and McClelland argue for the abolition of the writing program directorship, they refer to "the WPA" throughout their essay. It is difficult to abandon the notion of a single administrator, although they do mention several administrative structures that involve more than one person.

What underlies both these arguments is the belief that the WPA should be conceptualized as a dynamic figure who enables other work—whether that other work be situated research (Gere) or innovative faculty partnerships (Cambridge and McClelland). Especially in Cambridge and McClelland's vision, the writing program administrator(s) provide energy more than direction; the WPA is not the only person responsible for explaining or dreaming the program's vision. Furthermore, the leadership provided by the WPA must come from a "shared administrative or organizational infrastructure" (157), which means more than a rotation of responsibility. It means shared responsibility, decisions made in fluid, contextual partnerships. The WPA, Cambridge and McClelland note, using Charles Handy's formulations, will "orchestrate the broad strategic vision . . . develop the shared administrative and organizational infrastructure, and . . . create the cultural glue which can create synergies" (157).

Cambridge and McClelland thus argue that a repositioned writing program *administration* is able to be more effective than a writing program *administrator*. Gere's argument in favor of the restructured WPA comes from a slightly different angle, for she posits that a traditionally conceived WPA can actually have negative consequences. Starting with Raymond Williams' analysis, Gere examines the ways in which WPAs obstruct a revolution in composition as "they identify with the existing order by accepting a position in the hierarchy," which keeps literature at the top of the department and composition at the bottom (127). A collaborative model of administration would resist the hierarchy and better enable action research (128), making the writing program a more vibrant place on campus, home to a network of texts and relationships.

What neither argument addresses is how such partnerships come to be created in a hierarchical university environment, how power (even the decentralized,

facilitative kind) is acquired, and how collaboration works on a daily basis. In an institution which values distinctions of academic rank, and in which administrative work in the first-year writing program is not always acknowledged as a complex form of teaching and scholarship, the creation of networked partnerships that build bridges across campus, or blur boundaries between research, service, and teaching, can be difficult. That the task is difficult does not make the task unworthy, but our theories must address this difficulty.

Local History

For us, this issue is a practical as well as theoretical matter, for we are three members of a ten-member coordinating committee that has collaborated in the administration of our university's first year writing program for the past ten years. Our experience living the theory affords us an opportunity to examine, critique, and extend the new directions in writing program administration theory. While the arguments for collaborative administration are clear, the political dimensions of collaboration and partnership have been undertheorized, and we use our institution's administrative structure as a starting point for analysis. Such a move, we must acknowledge, is exactly the kind of work Cambridge and McClelland call for near the end of their article, which cites our committee as one example of the kind of administration they advocate (158).

Rather than a writing program director, our program has a Writing Coordinating Committee, composed of tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty, that oversees all aspects of the introductory writing program. Like many other university structures, our model of writing program coordination came about partly out of theoretical conviction and partly out of historical accident. Overall, the structure of the writing program was spurred by two factors: first, the desire to decentralize decision-making and involve more adjunct faculty in the life of the program, and second, the desire to increase the connections between composition research and writing program practice. Particularly as the number of faculty lines in rhetoric and composition grew, the department reasoned, associating administrative tasks with lecturers would "free up" tenure-track faculty to pursue research interests within the writing program.

Collaborative administration has slowly grown in our department. In the 1970s, our department had a Director of Writing (a tenure-track line), along with writing program secretaries, who occupied a different office than the literature secretaries, and a literature faculty (full-time) and writing faculty (part-time, save for the director) who had little to do with each other. Two successive directors of writing who served from 1970-85 supervised a large group of part-time faculty who were excited by the arrival of process pedagogy. The *esprit de corps* among the adjunct writing faculty was impressive, and the directors of composition instituted an active committee and social structure for the adjunct faculty, who thus engaged in policy formation, professional development, and faculty governance. An adjunct professional organization kept track of seniority and handled scheduling.

In the mid-'80s, Barbara Cambridge was asked to become director of writing. She suggested the term *coordinator* instead, and requested that the department set up the Writing Coordinating Committee (WCC), composed of adjunct faculty. This move formalized the role the adjunct faculty had played in developing curriculum and made the WCC, previously an ad hoc arrangement, a standing departmental committee. The shift in title, from *director* to *coordinator*, allowed the department to recognize the ways in which the entire writing faculty worked together to create the program. But differences in status were still important. As the WCC's only tenure-track member, Cambridge was the only one able to attend department meetings. However, positions such as coordinators of various courses or of the University Writing Center emerged on the committee, and within the program, a flexible and shared administration grew. When the department was able to hire seven full-time, non-tenure-track faculty (called lecturers), these positions were filled from the ranks of adjunct faculty (largely those who were already serving on the WCC). By the late '80s, there were no more adjunct faculty on the committee, and some tenure track faculty were added to the committee. The committee currently has 10 members. (See Figure 1 for committee staffing. See Appendix for a full listing of the committee's responsiblities.)

Figure 1: Writing Coordinating Committee Staffing

Since 1994, the tenure-track faculty have rotated the chair of the committee every two years. This position does not include any released time, nor does it include any specified duties other than convening the committee on a regular basis and coordinating the agenda for each meeting. The WCC membership includes the following:

Coordinator of First-Year Composition and Coordinator of Basic Writing*
Coordinator of First-Year Composition and Coordinator of Second-Semester
        Composition (Research and Argumentation)*
Coordinator of Second-Semester Composition (Professional Writing)*
Coordinator of the University Writing Center*
Coordinator of ESL courses*
Liaison with academic advisors
        Tenure-line faculty
Director of Placement and Assessment (current chair; assistant professor)*
Assistant professor
Associate professor
Director of Technical Communication (associate professor)

*Lecturers have a 4/4 teaching load. Tenure-line faculty have a 3/3 teaching load, with usually one course released for research. Each person marked with an * receives 1, sometimes 2, course release(s) per semester for writing program administration. Summer administrative time is negotiated each year.*

The department chair retains technical authority over staffing and curriculum, although the committee, in practice, makes all such decisions. Virtually all the assigned administrative responsibility is held by five lecturers, who coordinate the writing center and the set of five writing courses that comprise the first year offerings. Susanmarie is the only tenure-track faculty member holding assigned administrative responsibility, and she directs the placement and assessment program. The other faculty on the committee (those without assigned administrative duties related to the writing program) serve to improve communication within the department and to involve composition research in the program. Collectively, the committee does what a director of composition would, handling matters of staffing, faculty development, curriculum, and policy. On a broader level —and this is where the collaborative structure makes a difference —the committee seeks to *coordinate* the work of writing program faculty; to *represent* the interests of adjunct faculty in the department and the university; and to *link* the writing program with other offices on campus with an interest in writing.

The mix of experience, expertise, and perspective on the committee provides much-needed diversity, and compensates for individual shortcomings. Although each member exercises strong leadership in individual areas of responsibility —whether that be a particular course, or placement, or the writing center—no single person dominates the overall policy-making responsibility of the committee. The writing program does not speak with a single voice, but it does, on the whole, speak from consensus. Yet some troubling dimensions of this arrangement remain, and we do not find these addressed in the literature on re-thinking collaboration. Issues of relative status and institutional power, as well as incentives to collaborate, are challenges we face. Our collaborative structure is grounded, in part, in the assumption that "administration" is something not suited for tenure-track faculty, or at least that it is an onerous burden to be borne by as few tenure-track faculty as possible. It is also grounded, in part, in the assumption that research and teaching are separate activities, research being conducted by tenure-track faculty in exchange for a lighter teaching load. The committee structure, an easy-going network, supports information flow, but does not contain a mechanism for addressing the effects of differential university status. At the same time, we recognize that this structure does create a web of relationships, since the committee's function is, essentially, to "engage all parties in strategic planning" (Cambridge and McClelland 157).

Complicating Collaboration

In this model, collaboration abounds. Few decisions are made by individuals; hallway consultations and long monthly meetings ensure information flow and shared decision-making. Our introductory writing program is a good one; last year's external review of the English Department praised the professionalization of our adjunct faculty and the effectiveness of our program administration. Yet, after twelve years of growth, we are beginning to sense strains in the collaborative model. Our structure emphasizes internal collabora-

tion, and does not explicitly set up pathways for communication or collaboration beyond the writing program. Our consideration of the possibilities and limitations of a collaborative administration grew initially out of frustration with handling the large work load of the committee, as well as with the campus' handling of certain debates about writing requirements. Why, with such a large committee to share the work, was certain information about our writing program not getting out to other departments? And why, with such a large committee, did we feel so overworked, and even beleaguered? We knew that at other institutions a single director and perhaps two assistant directors did what we assumed to be the same work. Perhaps there was something wrong with the way we were collaborating. While we have been grateful for the support our collaborative administrative structure provides, we have also become increasingly aware of the fragility of collaboration. We have become aware of ways in which external challenges can pressure collaborative administrators to work with, rather than against, the systems we usually aim to reform.

Molly Wingate's insightful discussion of writing center politics gave us a way to frame these questions in a larger context. Wingate invokes the historical associations of the term *collaboration*, using a political framework to categorize ways in which her collaboration with the university structure actually prevented the writing center from flourishing for a time. Collaboration is a complicated term, and Wingate reminds us that collaboration, in itself, is neither good nor bad; collaboration's goals and contexts must be articulated carefully if good results are to follow. An analysis of the politics of collaboration can be extended beyond the relationships between writing centers and their host institutions, to examine the ways in which writing programs themselves are situated in their universities. Wingate's work draws on the work of Werner Rings, a German historian, who describes four kinds of collaboration: *neutral collaboration*, undertaken by those who "believe that they must survive the best way that they can...these collaborators directly and indirectly work for the occupying power without professing any political principles" (104); *unconditional collaboration*, undertaken willingly because the collaborators "admire and accept the ideas of the occupying power" (104); *conditional collaboration*, undertaken out of only partial acceptance of the occupiers' ideas; and, finally, *tactical collaboration*, undertaken "to regain freedom, to save innocent lives, or to reach a political ideal" (104). In borrowing Wingate's use of these historical categories, we echo her warning that "colleges and universities are not cruel foreign powers occupying writing centers," and, we would add, first-year writing programs (104). However, Wingate helps us see that shared administration alone does not promote the reflection and progressive partnership necessary for reform; administrative structures must promote this, and they must promote partnerships across campus.

These campus partnerships can be difficult to achieve, a fact that was brought home to us in a long and public debate over writing requirements in an emergent proposal for revised general education requirements. The second-semester composition course taken by liberal arts and science majors had an

unacceptable drop/failure rate and had been the object of scrutiny and revision for more than a year when a committee proposing new general education requirements began critiquing it. The public discussion that followed involved several levels of department administration, and the WCC often felt that the campus discussion of the course neglected the work it had *already* done to identify and then remedy the problems. Our administrative model was sorely tested as we responded to this debate.

With the benefit of hindsight, we see that this crisis (like Wingate's) was provoked, in part, by our failure to embed our administrative work in campus partnerships. Much of our energy (and specific responsibilities delineated by the department) is devoted to collaborating with each other; little to collaborating with other academic units. Using Wingate's framework, we were able to identify the institutionalized style of collaboration we were living as neutral collaboration, collaboration which failed to articulate or address the assumptions under which we labored. And while some of those assumptions had positive consequences (for instance, the assumption that collaborative administrative structures would encourage information flow between full-time and adjunct faculty has indeed fostered good morale among our faculty), others have not (for instance, the assumption that non-tenure-track faculty have no need to conduct research has led to a devaluation of non-tenure-track faculty's voices in campus debates). As a result of these experiences, we have identified external political concerns that have impeded the formation of partnerships. Some issues that need to be clarified and theorized in any collaborative arrangement include the nature of partnerships, conflict management, and multiple roles played by all involved.

Nature of Partnerships

The nature of the partnerships implied in administrative collaboration has been a complicated issue. In some ways, the egalitarian nature of partnerships among ourselves is undercut by the titles we bear. Susanmarie, in a tenure-track line, is *Director* of Placement and Assessment, while Tere is *Coordinator* of the University Writing Center; the other lecturers who receive released time for administration are similarly titled course *coordinators*. In Susanmarie's first year, her title was also coordinator, but it was mysteriously changed by action of the university administration. If the partnerships are truly equal, why can't everyone have the same title? Does a director outrank a coordinator? And what to make of the committee members —like Steve —who serve with no special title at all?

The matter of titles grows out of a more fundamental difference between faculty ranks, and the underlying assumption of a split between teaching and research, or administration and research. How does publishing an article in a disciplinary journal compare to the kind of "lore" that an experienced teacher and administrator gains? How does the training a Ph.D. program provides function alongside the important professional expertise that a lecturer with one or more master's degrees has? Do titles confer or recognize authority? How does authority affect partnerships?

In partnerships within the Writing Coordinating Committee, we usually

manage to set aside these questions, and our unequal ranks in the hierarchy, and achieve working relationships built on actual experience and expertise and much mutual respect. In moving beyond the committee itself to forge partnerships with other faculty, departments, and schools, however, the unequal status of disciplines and faculty ranks becomes salient again. For example, when we tried to collaborate with a professor in another department (we'll call him "Professor Knox") who critiqued our first-year writing curriculum, we had many problems. Professor Knox, who had a sincere interest in the effectiveness of general education courses, did not seem to treat composition as a discipline worthy of true partnership with his own. Interdisciplinary faculty partnerships based on mutual respect for each other's discipline are one thing; an interdisciplinary relationship in which one person or group ignores the disciplinary expertise of the other, and in which that person or group's discipline does not even come into play, is quite another. Composition, like math or reading if not more so, invites kibitzers and Monday morning quarterbacks. It would be one thing for a faculty member in anthropology, psychology, or communication to offer perspectives from one of those disciplines that shed light on our work in composition—and to be open in turn to what composition might say to their disciplinary endeavors. Professor Knox did not offer insights from his discipline, and though one composition professor gave him several readings in composition theory, he did not seem influenced by our field's hard-won findings. Nor was his discipline's status at stake in this "collaboration." We have encountered similar problems when dealing with the campus committee charged with revising the under-graduate curriculum and with other institutional partners.

Faculty rank also complicates such external partnerships. The lecturers on our committee have sometimes felt slighted or patronized by professorial faculty both within and outside our department. Professor Knox, for example, seemed unwilling to acknowledge the professional authority of our lecturers and our adjunct faculty. Our lecturers are pragmatic and not terribly thin-skinned, so they frequently suggest that a tenure-track member of the committee, or the department chair, speak on behalf of the writing program. Still, this creates problems. The coordinator of a course should have more authority to speak about that course than the tenure-track chair of the Writing Coordinating Committee or the department chair—or at least should have comparable authority, so that we can work with other faculty as partners.

Although not every writing program has non-tenure track lecturers, most have faculty of various ranks (including adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants), and thus calls for a more collaborative WPA structure and the forging of partnerships must reckon with the effect of faculty rank and disciplinary status on such partnerships. At each institution, and sometimes in each new situation, WPAs must decide which sort of collaboration allows them to accomplish their purposes without unconscionable sacrifices of principle and self-respect. At our institution, the collaborative model of writing program administration has at least forced us to acknowledge these thorny issues and has also provided us with some experience, however imperfect, of an alternative, more egalitarian model. If

we engage more skillfully in tactical collaborations, perhaps we can make this model more influential in changing or humanizing the hierarchical model that pervades our university system.

Conflict Management

Collaboration is often linked with consensus, leading to the misunderstanding that consensus means everyone always agrees. In a collaborative arrangement, conflict must be managed well, indeed encouraged, for successful collaboration relies on a free exchange of ideas. The collaboration must be handled in ways that encourage collaborating partners to function as *equals*, to the extent possible, although (because of the tensions described above) this is one of the most difficult issues we have had to confront together. In a small group dedicated to collaboration, sharing offices in a small stretch of hall, there is actually great pressure to agree, to sacrifice professional disagreements for the sake of personal relationships. Yet what Gregory Clark asserts about the need to acknowledge conflict in reader-writer collaborations applies to our professional collaborations as well. Rather than suppressing conflict, Clark argues, readers must acknowledge it and even encourage it, and then seek through conversation to attain consensus—albeit a temporary consensus. The process of conversation, and thus the plurality of conflicting views, must continue (52-53). As teachers, we hear students complain that their peers are too "nice" and thus do not offer useful critiques. Some students fear that criticism will lead to conflict and that conflict will destroy the group. As members of the Writing Coordinating Committee, we have also, at times, feared conflict and thus suppressed it. We sometimes sidle up to major disagreements, and collectively back away from them, unwilling to air the disagreements publicly. For instance, a new textbook has been chosen for our first-year course with surprisingly little conversation among the committee or our faculty, partly because of time pressures, and partly because of no clear way to manage conflicts about some key issues in the program which are coming closer and closer to the surface. A similar level of surprising agreement has permeated the extensive revision of our basic writing and first-year composition courses. As Gregory Clark states, "Because it is the nature of consensus to deny the ideological nature of knowledge and thus the validity of conflict, any attempt to establish such a consensus constitutes an attempt to establish what Perelman calls 'an orthodoxy' that will officially ignore and consequently suppress difference and dissent" (56). Again, we need to apply what we have learned from student groups about collaboration to our own administrative collaboration. Peer workshop groups often move toward a consensus that suppresses difference. Individual committee members (and likely individual members of the writing faculty as well) have sometimes chosen silence over conflict, enabling what appears to be consensus, but actually creating an imposed orthodoxy. The imposition of orthodoxy is no less unfortunate if accomplished via collaboration than if directed by a single person.

Clark distinguishes authoritarian consensus from pluralistic consensus based on conversation:

A community that is proficient in pluralism is constituted on the basis of a very different kind of consensus than the authoritarian consensus that would reconstruct a community in the ideological image of the person whose rhetoric promotes it. Pluralism requires that conflicting notions of shared, social knowledge coexist, and that the conflicts themselves be publicly explored. Consequently, it necessitates that the conversations that sustain a community proceed not toward agreements that would end the exchange but toward the exposure of disagreements. In essence, it means that the primary agreement that supports the process of conversations is agreement to converse. (57)

A collaborative administrative structure will not automatically promote pluralism. Without an agreement to converse and a willingness to explore disagreements, shared administration can degenerate into a front, masking the will to power of some dominant person or group on the committee or in the department. Our collective leadership must be authorized by the conversation of the committee members—and by the conversation of the whole writing faculty. Otherwise, our collaboration becomes an imposition of authoritarian rule on others. This vision of authorized rhetoric conflicts in many ways with the hierarchical structure of the university. Not everyone would see themselves as part of the conversation: adjunct faculty and students in our classes might perceive our administrative collaboration as excluding them. We should find more ways to engage the various stakeholders in our writing program in the conversation that sustains us, and we must seek out the key disagreements that will provide the momentum for forward growth.

Many of the conflicts that administrators must face are not, however, internal conflicts (such as what textbook to use), but external conflicts (such as the role of writing courses in the university's curriculum, or how to assess students' writing abilities before graduation). And in a hierarchical university which, traditionally, values research more than teaching and in which full professors speak with more authority than do non-tenure-track faculty, conflict management becomes a difficult task. It is difficult to achieve pluralistic consensus in a hierarchical university that has not agreed to invite all members of the university community to the table for conversation. Any collaborative partnership must create a rhetorical environment in which conflict can be fully explored.

Multiple Roles

Another important element of a network of partnerships is Cambridge and McClelland's notion of "twin citizenship." The members of our committee exist as citizens of many worlds, worlds which sometimes conflict with one another, or worlds which may be less desirable than others. On a physical level, some of our offices are in different buildings, or on different floors of the liberal arts building. On an institutional level, the assistant professors on the committee, for instance, find themselves swept up in campus-level politics, meetings with vice-chancellors, deans, and directors, while worrying about how to present their administrative work in acceptable form in a tenure dossier. The lecturers on the

committee, now full-time teachers with benefits (albeit yearly renewable ones), all began their work with the program as part-time faculty members. The tenured members of the committee divide their time between program work and other administrative responsibilities in the department or the campus. In our multiple roles, too, we are responsible in different ways to different parties. Tenure track faculty are responsible to the department, often with their eye on the department's promotion and tenure committee, and see themselves as members of a profession and a discipline, with responsibilities that extend into professional organizations with national audiences. Non-tenure track faculty, on the other hand, see themselves as responsible to a more local community—students and teachers on our campus. Their sense of professional identity is often linked with the institution, more than with the profession as a whole.

Cambridge and McClelland argue that twin citizenship enables better decisions to be made, for they are made by partners with an investment in two worlds. In reflecting on our experience, however, we see that the notion of "twin citizenship" extends only so far. We create our own senses of citizenship, by our involvement with other units, and by the ways in which we define our own positions (no job descriptions exist for any of us). But the university often sees us only in one citizenship role—as tenure track faculty expected to publish (or perhaps teach excellently—that's more difficult to document, but it's possible), or lecturers expected to teach, and expected not to publish. We have found ourselves pushed into situations where we felt no option but to choose one world over another. The research agendas of tenure-line professors don't always mesh easily with the committee's priorities. Our desire to upgrade the status of adjunct faculty by creating more lectureships conflicts with professional concerns about defending tenure. In the search for tenure, both Steve and Susanmarie feel pressed to find ways to take individual credit for administrative work, to demonstrate the excellence of individual achievements, in order to fulfill tenure requirements, even as we remain committed to working with, rather than dominating, the Writing Coordinating Committee.

Conclusions: Whither Collaboration?

Our reconsideration of collaboration in administration leaves us both more committed to this model and more skeptical of it. Writing program administration is, in many ways, an exercise in power. As long as writing programs are staffed by teaching assistants or part-time faculty, and as long as required writing courses are a key element of university general education requirements, writing program administrators will possess a great deal of power over the curriculum, teachers, and students. This power, something we do not often acknowledge in a discipline which privileges cooperation, collaboration, and empowering others, is not necessarily evil; good administrators deploy power in order to allow teachers and students to engage in the constructive and critical work of building curricula that challenge student writers. Our own experiences in recent years have taught us that power *can* be acquired through partnerships and shared in collaborative environments. As collaborative

administrators, however, we must seek out partnerships that will grant us power in campus conversations about writing. It is particularly important for us to examine the ways in which partnerships are formed in a multiplicity of contexts. The unitary writing program administrator may well be a holdover from a simple and hierarchical notion of the place of a writing program in an English department. Yet the unitary WPA retains certain advantages over a shifting, collaborative, contextual writing program administration. The locus of power is clear in the unitary model, and that clarity speeds communications (especially outside the department). In order to recapture some of this clarity, our department is seriously considering appointing a director of composition again. Our challenge will be to position a new director as a facilitator of partnerships and overall director of a collaborative administration. In fact, the very title for this new administrative appointment will be carefully considered so that we can convey our commitment to the style of leadership we have forged and cultivated over the years.

Nurturing collaborative administration involves many layers of change. Partnerships are constantly (re)negotiated, and as that occurs, we must foreground the ways conflict, power, and citizenship sometimes unite and sometimes brush against each other. The function of rank, experience, and visibility with many audiences must be analyzed. Those who hold the most visible and most recognized power in any given situation must carefully work to deploy it for the advancement of tactical partnerships. A constant focus on power, partnership, and negotiation will further the steady growth of a principled, situated administrative model. This, too, will be a long revolution.

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Appendix

Writing Coordinating Committee Responsibilities

	Teaching	Research	Service
Intellectual Work	*write teaching materials (course guides, teaching w/ technology materials, Writing Ctr. handouts,etc.) *design Writing Ctr. workshops *orient new faculty , raters, WC staff *course meetings, workshops *observe/mentor new faculty *individual consulting with faculty *grade appeals *placement appeals *exemption portfolios *portfolio readings	*write curriculum *publishing/conference presentations *research workshops/ curriculum prior to development *assessing our programs *placement validity survey *evaluating teachers *choosing textbooks *keeping up with research *n.b. at Fall '96 retreat, the WCC targeted lack of evaluation of curriculum and lack of ongoing research into teaching practicesas areas that we currently overlook*	*Writing Center contacts around campus *liaison with other academic and student support units *teaching award nominations
Borderline/ Managerial	*read evaluations *nuts and bolts orientations *handle student, instructor complaints *student awards		*develop policies *hiring and firing *maintain records of policies *staffing/scheduling *newsletters/memos
Academic/ Professional Citizenship	*comparable credit petitions		*textbook orders *letters of recommendation *answering questions *technology consulting
Clerical	*preparing first day handouts		*test scores entered