Writing Program Administration

Journal of the
Council of Writing Program Administrators

Council of Writing Program Administrators

Author's Guide

WPA: Writing Program Administration publishes articles and essays concerning the organization, administration, practices, and aims of college and university writing programs. Possible topics include the education and support of writing teachers; the intellectual and administrative work of WPAs; the situation of writing programs within both academic institutions and broader contexts; the programmatic implications of current theories, technologies, and research; relationships between WPAs and other administrators and between writing and other academic programs; placement; assessment; and the professional status of WPAs.

The previous list is meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive, but contributions must be appropriate to the interests and concerns of those who administer writing programs. The editors welcome empirical research (quantitative as well as qualitative), historical research, and theoretical, essayistic, or reflective pieces.

The length of submissions should be approximately 2,000 to 5,000 words, although the journal occasionally will publish shorter or longer pieces when the subject matter warrants. Articles should be suitably documented using the current MLA Style Manual. For citations of Internet resources, use the *Columbia Guide to Online Style.*

Please submit only *electronic* of manuscripts as WORD or rich text (.rtf) attachments, with the author identified only on a separate cover letter. Submissions are anonymously reviewed by the Editorial Board. The editors aspire to respond within two months after the receipt of the submission.

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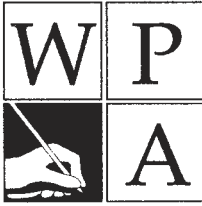
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Contents

Letter from the Editors

We will be brief in this our last letter. Simply put, it has been an honor and a pleasure to work for this organization as editors of the Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Along the way, we had the good fortune to work with four wonderful WPA presidents, a series of engaged and engaging executive councils, an extremely professional editorial board, and a host of smart, scholarly, and creative authors. We thank them all for the opportunity and experiences.

Dennis wants to thank Chuck Schuster and Diana George for nudging him into this most gratifying work and position; and Marguerite Helmers for taking a chance on a collaborative editorship with someone she had never met!; and David Blakesley for stepping aboard with such grace, skill, and enthusiasm when we so needed all three.

Dave wants to thank Dennis Lynch for his wisdom, grace, and good cheer; Marguerite Helmers for welcoming him aboard in the beginning and for continuing well after on new adventures; his colleagues and graduate students at Purdue who supported production of the journal; and the Executive Board for having the confidence to invite him to stay on with "Digital WPA" as its Web Developer.

We also want to congratulate Chris Farris on her well-crafted guest-edited issue, *WPA* 26.3.

We hope you find this last issue a good read. We think there are interesting strands of thought connecting the pieces, but that it also is another example of the wide range of excellent scholarship that constitutes this very special field that is Writing Program Administration.

Finally, we were told not to thank and praise (again) the incoming editors for their collegiality and professionalism, so we won't, as much as we would like to, really.

Dennis Lynch, Michigan Technological University
David Blakesley, Purdue University

Judging WPAs by What They Say They Do: An Argument for Revising "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration"

Barbara Schneider and Richard Marback

"Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration" (EIWWA) gives expression to the aspirations and experiences of writing administrators who have struggled to earn tenure and promotion while their primary work as administrators falls outside traditionally defined categories of scholarship and teaching to land in the least valued and least rewarded category of service. Writing administrators know from experience that their work is much more than service, that it is made up of elements of both teaching and scholarship. EIWWA gives expression to these experiences, an expression providing evaluative criteria for writing administrators and tenure and promotion committees struggling to make sense of intellectual work that does not fit neatly into the three categories most widely used for evaluating academic work. The strength of EIWWA lies in the constraints it puts on the reduction of writing administration to service within the evaluation process, providing terms and criteria to curtail inaccurate, even dismissive, assessments of writing administration. In this way, evaluation guidelines drawn out of EIWWA can be useful, are perhaps even necessary, to making the work of writing administrators intelligible to colleagues accustomed to separating out scholarship and teaching from service.

We propose, however, that as it now stands, EIWWA does not provide criteria adequate for accurately evaluating the work of writing administrators. We further propose that EIWWA does not provide sufficient guidance for institutions to define the role of future writing administrators in ways that avoid relegating their intellectual work to evaluation within the category of service. As a guide for evaluating the work of current writing administrators, the statement falls short in its description—as evidenced by the multiple stories we consider later in this essay—inadequately characterizing

that work as arising out of an opposition between management and scholarship. Within this dichotomy, the intellectual work of administration is valued in proportion to its proximity to scholarship. But writing administration is not scholarship in the traditional sense and so will always appear lacking to tenure and promotion committees where this appeal is used. Opposing management to scholarship hinders EIWWA's usefulness as a heuristic for redefining administrative roles and evaluative criteria by failing to define the intellectual work of writing administration as productive of new knowledge in terms sufficiently distinct from terms describing traditional scholarship.

In this article, we concentrate our efforts on developing an argument for revising EIWWA. We believe revision of EIWWA is necessary because it fails in its current form to resolve the dilemma inherent in crafting criteria appropriate for and adequate to the task of evaluating writing administration: either the work of writing administrators has intellectual merit not discernible within the categories of teaching, scholarship, and service or those categories are inadequate to the task of evaluating the merit of that work. We also believe that, with revision, EIWWA can live up to its implicit promise of revising institutional practices of tenure and promotion review so as to better recognize and reward the intellectual work of writing administrators. In what follows, we draw out the implications of the dilemma and pursue the promise.

We begin by considering how the language of EIWWA constructs writing administration as an activity that is both administrative and scholarly while being neither merely administrative nor simply scholarly. When it is described as simultaneously both and neither, writing administration eludes accurate description and evades appropriate evaluative criteria. We agree that representing the intellectual work of the writing administrator through the opposition of administration and scholarship enables evaluation of writing administration as something more than service by constructing that work as scholarship. Unfortunately, within the evaluative category of scholarship as it is most widely used, writing administration fails to fit. EIWWA joins the intellectual work of writing administration to scholarship by emphasizing the application of research in composition to administrative decision making. Better decisions are those that better enact or better reflect current composition research. Taken to the extreme, emphasis on fit between administration and scholarship leads to the conclusion that writing administration is easy to evaluate: It is good work when it enacts what scholarship tells us. In contrast to this description, writing administrators typically characterize their own work as an exercise of judgment not reducible to scholarship in composition studies: There is more to it than just enacting what the scholarship tells us.

That there is more to writing administration is most recently captured by Christine Ross. In her review of the annual collaborative revision of the University of California at Irvine composition program textbook, Ross characterizes the institutional activities through which theory gets translated into practice as "messy," the interactions of multiple agents with multiple purposes and understandings. Such interactions do not lead directly from talk of theory to curricular reform and into classroom practice; instead, as Ross concludes,

> the effect of any reform discourse may have less to do with its ideal or pragmatic coherence per se, or with the "understanding" of individual teachers and students, and more to do with the general conditions of possibility and the local, specific conditions of the pedagogical culture through which it is appropriated in the world of volatile contingencies that gives it life. (325)

We believe Ross's experience is quite typical. Appropriating composition theory within any pedagogical culture always requires more from the writing administrator than doing what the research says and more often than not results in something other than the research describes. While local contingencies cannot be eliminated from writing administration, the gap between what scholarship tells us and how that scholarship gets enacted does provide an opening for reflection on, and elaboration of, EIWWA. Working within the gap between "what" and "how," we argue that the intellectual work of writing administration is best evaluated not as bureaucratic functionalism (or service), nor as ideal reform discourse (or scholarship), but rather as guided institutional action, as introduction of a critical discourse that makes knowledge in, for, and about a writing program.

We illustrate our argument for evaluating writing administration as guided institutional action by reviewing the accounts of writing administrators in three current collections: *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource*, edited by Stuart Brown and Theresa Enos; *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours*, edited by Diana George; and *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist,* edited by Shirley K Rose and Irwin Weiser. We have selected these three volumes out of the wealth of scholarship available because in each of these collections the authors characterize the "how" of writing administration by appeal to insights and intuitions gathered from outside knowledge in composition studies, a move that runs counter to the emphasis in EIWWA on "what" becomes available for evaluation, a move that preserves a certain kind of extra-disciplinary, judgment-making discretion as the real work of the writing administrator. Taking seriously the place writing administrators assign to judgment-making discretion, we conclude

by suggesting revisions to EIWWA that extend our talk about the character of writing administration, refine our understanding of the work we do, and bring better understanding to the preparation and evaluation of writing administrators.

Characterizing the Work

The primary purpose of EIWWA is to define the work of the writing administrator and to render it measurable by performance review committees. EIWWA crafts measures of performance by shifting the definition of writing administration from a management activity to "scholarly and intellectual work" (preamble). As a mere management activity, writing administration requires bureaucratic functionalism, a kind of following of rules where the hardest decisions involve interpreting and implementing institutional requirements. Little is required in the ways of intellectual work and decision making in this formulation. Conversely, when it is understood as intellectual work, writing administration requires a great deal more. It requires a grasp of current research in composition and an ability to make knowledge of that research visible in the structures and operations of a writing program.

Reconceptualizing writing administration as intellectual work, as opposed to a management activity, certainly better reflects the work writing administrators already do. We make decisions every day that involve judging a situation against our knowledge of composition theory and research. But describing this decision-making activity as intellectual work does not adequately characterize that work, work that involves more than just applying knowledge, work that often involves making knowledge through action, a making that requires a kind of acumen or flair, a creative ability that is more than either bureaucratic functionalism or scholarly productivity. Taking seriously the unique abilities needed to bring research to light through institutional decision making means accepting writing administration as a kind of hybrid activity, one that is neither simply a managerial application of research nor wholly an intellectual pursuit of scholarship. Writing administration is clearly more than service and something other than scholarship. James Porter et al., use the term "zone of ambiguity" to describe the hybrid nature of such institutional roles as writing administration. A zone of ambiguity is the product of decision making processes, of "people acting through institutions," participating through their actions in the overlap, conflict, and mix among boundaries (625). These zones are locations where rhetorical reinterpretation of the structure of institutions is possible. They are the zones where the intellectual work of writing administration takes place.

If we understand writing administration as an action, as a doing that is neither merely managerial nor wholly scholarly, we have raised important questions about EIWWA and its current representation of writing administration. If writing administration is an institutional activity fraught with contingency—as Ross describes—and fundamentally a "pragmatic effort"—as Porter et al. might call it—then we must ask whether the work of the writing administrator is best evaluated by how well she or he puts research in composition into practice. How in our evaluation of the intellectual work of writing administrators do we account for bureaucratic or institutional obstacles to enacting composition research? For example, should we penalize a writing administrator for failing to implement a research-guided program revision when the failure was due largely to budgetary constraints or bureaucratic inertia? Is successfully enacting change in the face of difficult circumstances what we really mean by intellectual work? And exactly what kind of intellectual work is that? We raise these questions here because they have not yet been adequately answered. EIWWA may provide clearer criteria for characterizing and evaluating the intellectual integrity of a writing program, but as we document in this essay, writing administrators sensitive to these types of questions prefer a greater ambiguity as they characterize the intellectual work they do to implement program changes. The conflict between objectified standards in EIWWA and the self-characterization of writing administrators puts into relief difficulties we still have making convincing claims for the intellectual work of writing administrators in tenure and promotion committees.

Writing Program Administration as Disciplined Activity

In its attempt to provide convincing criteria to tenure and promotion committees, EIWWA describes five areas of intellectual work and provides four guidelines for evaluating administration as intellectual work. We summarize the guidelines here to characterize the ways in which our talk about the intellectual work of writing administration is and is not made a tangible disciplined activity in the language of the statement. Guideline one names the five areas of administrative activity acceptable as intellectual work: program creation, curricular design, faculty development, program assessment and evaluation, and program-related textual production. Guideline two describes the activities and products of intellectual work as application of research, possession of expert knowledge and discipline-specific problem solving skills, and the production of publications and presentations that can be evaluated by peers. These first two guidelines, then, serve as useful characterizations of administrative activity and its intellectual character. In both, the criteria, if not easy and straightforward, are at least familiar.

The third guideline provides criteria for evaluating the quality of writing administration by introducing language for discerning the scholarly merit of administration, identifying the key categories for evaluating quality as "innovation," "improvement/refinement," "dissemination," and "empirical results." The fourth guideline calls for peer evaluation as the most appropriate method for judging the quality of a writing administrator's scholarly contribution to an institution and to the field. It makes sense that peer evaluation be used to provide testimony to the merits of a writing administrator's work. Standards of "innovation," "improvement/refinement," "dissemination," and "empirical results" appear to ground evaluation of writing administrators in relation to scholarship in composition. Here, intellectual work responds to and extends research in composition, improving, refining, disseminating that research within specific institutional contexts.

However, evaluating such things as improvement or refinement in terms of research raises important questions: Is every change in curriculum or pedagogy an innovation? When do revisions become improvements or refinements instead of inconsequential changes? What results are the best measures of innovations and by what methods should such results be measured? Such questions can be asked of any important intellectual activity and the authors of EIWWA have reasonable general answers. For example, a revision to a writing program becomes an improvement or refinement when it can be shown to "distinctly and concretely lead to better teaching," with better teaching and positive and productive results measured in accomplishments evidenced by "pre- and post-evaluative measures, written testimonials from students and staff, teaching evaluations, etc." Here, the intellectual work of producing better teaching through administration requires more from the writing administrator than doing what composition scholarship says to do. Whatever better teaching is, it is measured intersubjectively, discerned as much from analysis of student writing as from the perceptions students and teachers have of curriculum, of pedagogy, and of each other.

Yet, EIWWA discusses outcomes and their measures only, avoiding mention of the kind of interpersonal and institutional work required to change perceptions among students and teachers. Silence on the interpersonal becomes in EIWWA a misrepresentation of the intellectual work of writing administration. An example from the guidelines illustrates the point:

> Let us presume that the director of a first-year writing course is designing an in-house placement procedure so that students new to the college can be placed into the appropriate course in the first-year composition sequence. She will need to decide whether to use direct or indirect measures of writing ability; will need to assess the implications that the placement proce-

dure will have on high school curriculum; will want to con-
sult research on such things as the nature of writing prompts,
whether an objective test and a writing test should be used
together, and the optimal amount of time for the exam. Thus
what some see as a simple decision (place students according to
an ACT score) is, in reality, complex intellectual work involv-
ing disciplinary knowledge, empirical research, and histories
of practice.

Granting that this characterization of the intellectual work of the writ-
ing administrator is accurate as far as it goes, it does not go far enough as
a characterization of the work involved in implementing an in-house place-
ment procedure. Experienced writing administrators know that whether an
objective and a writing test are used in conjunction to make placement deci-
sions depends on compromising among such things as admissions practices,
testing procedures, and staffing constraints. Negotiating these compromises
by meeting with people and working out the details occupies the greatest
part of a writing administrator's work day. The results of such compromises
are more often than not less than, or different from, the ideal placement pro-
cedure suggested in composition scholarship. To characterize the intellectual
work of writing administration as conceptualizing a placement procedure out
of an assessment of disciplinary knowledge, empirical research, and histories
of practice is to ignore the interpersonal work required to implement any
institutional change and it is a mischaracterization of the intellectual work
of the writing administrator. The most appropriate placement procedure we
might develop through a careful weighing of our disciplinary knowledge,
empirical research, and survey of histories of practice will rarely, if at all, be
the placement procedure we will end up using. The weight we give to knowl-
edge, research, and practice, separately and together, will depend on specific
institutional contexts and constraints, a contingency that is, to recall Ross
here, "messy" and unpredictable. We would not want to say that such com-
promise makes the work of the writing administrator any less intellectual;
yet, the product of that work, the new placement procedure, could appear
less innovative or less of an improvement as a result. EIWWA gives us no
way to represent such circumstances to tenure and review committees. We
have no way to say, "It was a good placement procedure in theory . . ."

As products of intellectual work available for evaluation, such things as
placement procedures simply stand or fall independent of both the institu-
tional realities and decision making that give them final form. But, because
institutional realities and decision-making capacities contribute so much to
the final form of things such as placement procedures, more appropriate and
accurate evaluation of the intellectual work of writing administration must

take account of activity and contingency. We must have some vocabulary with which we can describe a writing administrator's persuasive facility with composition scholarship. It is only through their ability to persuade in specific contexts, to make decisions about how to draw on research in response to institutional realities, that writing administrators can make programmatic changes. In the next section, we review efforts of writing administrators to put into words the persuasive abilities they consider most important. As we describe it, these efforts, in and of themselves, fail to provide a regular and reliable account of the intellectual work of writing administration.

Writing Administration as Improvisation

Where EIWWA sets the terms for assessing the intellectual work of writing administrators so far in the direction of scholarship as to slight the importance of interpersonal interactions in writing administration, writing administrators time and again reach beyond scholarship for vocabularies to describe the interactional work they do. In reaching outside the boundaries of composition studies to describe the situations they encounter and the compromises they make, a pattern of talk emerges among writing administrators, a pattern of which we should make ourselves aware if we want to accurately describe and evaluate the intellectual work of writing administration. That pattern is hinted at in the title of Diana George's collection, *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours*. Kitchen cooks, plate twirlers, and troubadours are practiced at their craft, self-taught, guided more by instinct than by intellect. George's title captures the general sense writing administrators have of their work, and the essays in the collection reflect on the interrelations between personal and professional lives, moments of disjuncture in professional settings that call up personal rather than disciplinary expertise and interludes that allow insight to arise from performance rather than scholarship. Lynn Bloom develops this sense of it in her forward to *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource* by drawing parallels to the well-known parenting book written by Dr. Benjamin Spock. Through her reference to *Baby and Childcare*, Bloom makes the point that the best advice writing administrators can follow is the advice with which Dr. Spock introduces several hundred pages of information and expert insight: "Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do" (ix). Such advice makes a great deal of sense. For writing administrators, understandings of writing instruction gained through graduate seminars, knowledge about teaching gained from experience, and insight into administration gained from interaction with other writing administrators all provide a wealth of awareness and insight that should be trusted. Trusting ourselves is a good start, but it does little to describe, guide, or evaluate the quality of our administrative work.

Bloom's comparison of an advice book for parents and a resource book for writing administrators is clearly more suggestive than descriptive. Its very suggestiveness derives from the extent to which we have already fashioned the intellectual work of writing administration as somehow the kind of activity one should trust oneself to do. Here, trust is not confidence in the scholarship as much as it is comfort with creative use of scholarship. Faced daily with unanticipated demands for decision making, for problem solving, for interpersonal conflict resolution, we draw on the theories and judgments for which our disciplinary training in composition studies provides us, but we also often find ourselves in territories not charted by that disciplinary knowledge and so we draw as well on whatever background knowledge we may have to get us through crisis moments. Unscripted and unrehearsed, we improvise. Characterizing writing administration as primarily improvisation leaves the work largely up to chance or talent. We need to be able to say more if we want to characterize writing administration as intellectual work. Unfortunately, general emphasis on improvisation across the collections discussed here limits our vocabularies even as it introduces useful terms.

In his contribution to *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource*, Douglas D. Hesse describes the work of the writing administrators in terms of a need for political expertise. Hesse justifies the need for political savvy as a consequence of the writing administrator's limited authority and the need for collective action. As Hesse puts it, "Because the quality of a writing program depends largely on the conditions in which the program exists, and because the WPA has limited control of those conditions, political action is vital" (41-42). Hesse's proposal for writing administrators to acquire political expertise makes sense as a proposal developed out of his extensive experience. The political acumen Hesse describes is clearly something more than administrative work. Political savvy is also, however, something more than intellectual work as that is traditionally defined. Knowing how to lobby for a cause, knowing which causes to pursue and which to let go, and knowing how to acquire authority through social encounters are more than knowing which classroom practices best teach students to write. The work of administration Hesse describes as political work is really the work of encouraging and engaging people in institutions. The combination of political theory and composition theory required to effectively administer a writing program within a complex institutional system requires, in Hesse's formulation, raising administrative activity to the level of engaging the work of intellectuals. At the same time, Hesse's formulation denies that administrative activity can rise to the level of intellectual work because it is, in the end, a kind of work that is more intuitive than deliberative. Significantly, it is precisely deliberation that Hesse and others are claiming to value and attempting to introduce to the execution and evaluation of writing administration.

Here, every argument can require reaching outside the discipline to find the available means of persuasion, so that improvisation becomes, in a curious way, routinized, but routinized without being systematically useful. The solution, in a sense, is therefore no solution. While we are more than willing to accept that the perspectives already discussed can make us much more adept at meeting our daily crises, it does so by encouraging what we urge writing administrators to avoid—the ongoing demand for improvisation.

In another example of the tendency of characterizing writing administration as improvisation, Stuart C. Brown, in *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource*, turns directly to ethics. Brown grounds his discussion in the decision-making challenges posed by several scenarios writing administrators typically face, such as confronting a creative and experienced teacher who discards a standardized syllabus, or weighing raising course enrollments against hiring additional adjunct faculty. The scenarios chosen by Brown provide the kinds of hard cases that challenge us to stretch our understanding of the decision-making work of writing administration. For Brown, "a useful mode for constructing these 'interventions' is to cast them within an ethical frame" (157). The ethical frame introduced by Brown allows him to extend the distinction between administrative work as managerial and as intellectual. "Moral dilemmas often arise when conflict occurs between what seems the 'right' thing to do and what seems the 'easiest' thing to do" (157). In this passage, Brown has anticipated our view that the opposition between managerial work—the easiest thing to do—and intellectual work—the right thing to do—does more to introduce a different criteria for making and evaluating decisions than it does to characterize decision making.

At the same time Brown introduces an ethical dimension to writing administration by linking managerial work with intellectual work, he does not otherwise provide a vocabulary for articulating work in the ethical dimension. As Brown tries to put it, "matters of fact, which involve identifying what can be known about the participants and the issues at hand; and matters of consequence, which are more speculative" (159). The speculation here does not rise above the level of weighing benefits and costs, it does not rise to the level of the intellectual work of critique that can enact structural change. It does not rise fully to the level of scholarship.

In her contribution to *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist*, Carrie Shively Leverenz also makes a case for theorizing ethics as a writing administrator. She argues that the work becomes ethically complex because the performance of multiple roles—teacher, scholar, administrator—raises conflicts among those roles and dilemmas among their respective responsibilities. She proposes that we give up the search for the one best way to adjudicate between competing demands and instead begin to foster

ethical theorizing by writing administrators. She proposes that in the wake of the effort to construct a universal theory, we begin theorizing through these three forms: "(1) ethical awareness, (2) ethical action, and (3) ethical inquiry" (111). She defines ethical awareness as "a habit of mind in which one consciously reflects on the contingent nature of the ethical problems one faces" (111), asking always what is ethically at stake in our decision making. Ethical action in her scheme takes on a common-sense meaning of "doing the right thing," but she points out that ethical action is different than applying disciplinary theory to the problem at hand. Ethical action requires instead foregrounding the interests of the local community and addressing the power relationships at play. The third form Leverenz proposes is ethical inquiry, not, she argues, with an eye for the applicable, but instead "with a goal of making knowledge about how moral reasoning operates, how ethics are applied within the field" (112). Leverenz provides a stronger vocabulary for ethical theorizing and an opening for the making of new knowledge, but she foreshortens that opportunity when she returns the discussion to applications in the field. As we have seen before, the effort becomes not how to contribute to the making of knowledge about moral reasoning itself, but how to make knowledge about disciplined practice. This, we argue, is one of the central problems in both our evaluative criteria and in our talk about our work as intellectual activity.

If the guidelines provided in EIWWA are insufficient because they are limited to the current state of disciplinary knowledge and so cannot move beyond disciplinary bounds to explain the hybrid nature of writing administration, the improvisations that writing administrators regularly perform are inadequate because they are not pursued as knowledge-making opportunities. Improvisations arise in the face of a crisis. Because we cannot anticipate every demand that will be made of us, every change in institutional structure that will impinge upon us from sources beyond our control, improvisations are unavoidable and frequently necessary. We improvise in order to stabilize an unstable situation, and our improvised performances frequently do just that. They re-establish order. But the order they reestablish is the old order. They do nothing to produce structural change.

In their contribution to *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist*, Ruth Mirtz and Roxanne Cullen turn to leadership theories to describe a prominent aspect of writing administration that extends beyond the boundaries of composition theory and education. Mirtz and Cullen open their essay by noting that many of us draw on the disciplinary expertise we have developed as rhetoricians and teachers, because, "[l]ike most WPAs, we've had no training as leaders, although we've done our share of leading (both poorly and successfully)" (91). After reviewing various models of leadership

drawn from experience, business, and educational psychology, Mirtz and Cullen discard them: those based on teaching experience are too dependent on the willingness of an audience to learn, those drawn from business are not applicable in a situation where the purpose of leadership is something other than producing greater profits, and those drawn from educational psychology offer ways of understanding relationships between leaders and followers but no agendas for producing action. Mirtz and Cullen propose that writing administrators return to their discipline of rhetoric and composition studies and develop a model of leadership based on Rogerian rhetoric. Describing scenarios such as proposals for programmatic portfolio assessment or the recurring staffing crises that comprise the daily work of administering a large writing program, Mirtz and Cullen bring Rogerian procedures for audience analysis and negotiation to the production of viable solutions.

Their proposal goes further than most in the direction of drawing directly from disciplinary knowledge in composition studies to theorize resolution of recurring problems. In the end, Mirtz and Cullen discount disciplinary knowledge, acknowledging that the model they produce is too indeterminate and so requires ongoing improvisation:

> While we may wish for a strong unified theory of leadership to guide us, we find, in reality, that our power and situation as WPAs are too random, too unpredictable, to allow one theory to fit all situations. Yet our work is too important to leave to randomness. […]Rogerian leadership offers us a practical skill, building on interests and skills we already possess, to find and use the available means of persuasion to create a relationship with our audiences, both faculty and administration, that leads parties to change. (100-101)

Here, the attempt to bring knowledge to bear on the intellectual work of administration fails because the models are developed in structures too incommensurate with academic administration to be applicable. Mirtz and Cullen provide here a striking instance of the ways in which academic administration and academic disciplines repeatedly misrecognize each other, and in misrecognizing each other, fail to productively engage each other.

Louise Wetherbee Phelps enhances her appeal to leadership theory with a turn to activity theory in an effort to both describe and address the inter-, intra-, and extra-disciplinary demands of writing administration. Phelps makes provocative use of activity theory, conceptualizing authority as "conceptual affordances" drawn from an understanding of administrative agency as power dispersed throughout the faculty and administration. The title of her chapter, "Turtles All the Way Down," reflects her claim that patterns of power are repeated throughout, a product more of institutional

structures than of persons. Phelps provides a valuable perspective on the nature of writing administration by describing the ways our capacities for getting things done are determined by the roles and relationships people occupy in institutions. A product of institutionally derived roles and relationships, Phelps explains that the "authority of an administrator is not a personal attribute or possession, despite those who improperly personalize it" (25). Instead, Phelps proposes a merging of the person with the power of the position to afford a perspective on institutional action, "A leader constitutes a node in a multi-dimensional network of power and information flowing in many directions. As leaders, WPAs catalyze, generate, align, and transmit power as it streams through systems of activity" (27-28).

While it may be far more accurate to characterize writing administrators as leaders who mobilize commitments rather than command resources, such a characterization can falter as a claim for the intellectual work of writing administration. If administration is a matter of coordination, it can be viewed as personal persuasiveness. Phelps attempts to avoid reducing administration to the personal by describing leadership as already fundamental to disciplinary knowledge in composition studies and as essential to the future of academic work, "To become equal partners in reform rather than futile resisters or passive objects of it, faculty themselves must develop thoughtful programs to foster the development of leaders from their own ranks—programs designed to operate seamlessly throughout a faculty career from graduate school to senior leadership roles in higher education" (4). As an integral part of any scholarship, leadership development of administrative authority produces roles and relationships that further the conditions for all intellectual work. Responsibility for nurturing the structures enabling scholarship disperses through all relationships to all the roles in an institution. In a certain sense, everyone is responsible.

But in the end, Phelps does not avoid reducing leadership ability to a capacity for improvisation. She concludes, "The principles that emerge from this analysis call educators to invent from the conditions and relationships of local situations ad hoc, flexible ways of achieving the matrix I have described" (35). Cultivating leadership as the ability to improvise, "like the composing of identity, is dynamic, lifelong, inseparable from [. . .] scholarly work, teaching, administrative practice, and personal lives, and an intrinsic aspect of the activity, genesis, and reformation of professional culture itself" (35). It becomes the capacity to act in the contingency of crisis.

Revising Our Evaluation

As recounted in the essays discussed, crisis is considered a regular feature of our daily work. We know a system is in dire need of revision when crisis becomes chronic. The regular eruption of crisis in our work and the inad-

equacy of our descriptive criteria for evaluating our responses to it suggest that there are at least three things we might do to enrich our evaluative criteria, expand the domain of knowledge in writing administration, and begin to foster structural change to our systems so that they sustain viable programs instead of regularly throwing them into crisis. We suggest we begin by first grounding our evaluative criteria in empirical studies of tenure review cases; second, expanding our descriptive and evaluative vocabulary so that it begins to take account of the how we do our work as well as what our work produces; and third, taking the moment of evaluation as an opportunity, as Porter et al. put it, to rhetorically reinterpret the institution and so shift the system.

Grounding evaluative criteria in studies of successful and unsuccessful tenure and promotion cases will require gathering and analyzing the documents produced for such occasions, including the self-evaluations submitted by the candidates, the evidence of scholarship, teaching, and service submitted, the comments of outside evaluators when they are part of the process, and the internal criteria against which the tenure case is weighed. But this analysis must also include reflections by decision-makers on which pieces of evidence or which arguments proved to them to be most persuasive or, alternately, least persuasive of the merit of the scholarship submitted for review. Working inductively from a thorough review of these cases, both as they have been submitted to institutional committees and as they are reflected on by writing administrators making the cases, we would learn a great deal about institutional decision making and effective participation in it.

We must also recognize as a field that silence on the interpersonal in our evaluative criteria leads to a misrepresentation of the work that we do, a misrepresentation thrown into relief by the multiple accounts of improvisation recounted earlier. It is precisely the interpersonal work we do to shift perceptions of students, teachers, and administrators that calls up our improvisations and draws us outside our field. Douglas D. Hesse calls the work of encouraging and engaging people in institutions political savvy, Carrie Shively Leverenz turns to ethical reasoning to guide the interpersonal and intrapersonal work required of writing program administrators, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps turns to activity theory to propose ways to understand how we lead people to take actions that accomplish the work of teaching students to write. It is the interpersonal that occupies our days and calls upon our knowledge and imagination to perform the work we do.

In order to develop the vocabulary and overcome the silence on the interpersonal in our evaluative criteria, we must do more than provide anecdotes of improvisations. We must more rigorously represent that work and reframe our improvisations as knowledge-making activity that we reflect upon to

produce richer descriptions and theories explaining, predicting, and guiding our decision making. We must reframe the self-descriptions of writing administrators as activities making knowledge to meet specific institutional demands as well as making knowledge of the structures of the institutions themselves. Understanding our improvisations as activity producing knowledge about the structures of our institutions asks us to expand knowledge-making activity to provide a vision not only of what is, but also of what should be. By asking what should be, of course, we are returned to the arena of ethics. And so it is here, we suggest, that we extend our intellectual activity to include making knowledge about ethics and making ethical reasoning the structuring principle guiding our work.

Our third proposal is that writing administrators take these moments of evaluation to foster the kind of structural change that will reduce the eruption of crisis in our work and sustain ethical decision making at all levels of our institutions. If we are convinced that the work of writing administration is a kind of intellectual work, but not the kind easily represented through the traditional categories used in our institutions, then we must consider not only what is evaluated but how it is evaluated. At present, most traditional scholarship offered for review by tenure and promotion committees consists of essays published in refereed journals and books published by scholarly presses. These publications are taken as evidence of scholarly achievement precisely because they are rigorously reviewed and adjudicated by scholars outside our local institutions who are experts in the field and who deem the works worthy of publication on their merits as intellectual work. If the intellectual work we do as writing administrators is not easily represented through traditional categories because none of those categories fully captures the relationships constructed and maintained between the categories, among the institutional systems, and through the networks that conduct the scholarship, then what counts as evidence of intellectual work is a writing program taken as a whole. And if writing programs are our intellectual work, then perhaps they are better evaluated as intellectual work by the same kind of outside review and adjudication to which other kinds of scholarship are subjected. Perhaps what should become the most prominent document in a tenure and promotion review of a writing administrator is a WPA Council review. If, however, we are to advocate making outside WPA reviews a necessary feature of a tenure and promotion case, we must also work to ensure that those reviews are conducted not as moments of advocacy for writing administrators, but as carefully deliberated adjudications of the writing program as a manifestation of intellectual work in the complex context of its local institution.

Even after all this, however, we may finally conclude that the work of writing administrators cannot be adequately characterized and evaluated through the categories of scholarship, teaching, and service. We may find that the very hybrid nature of the work makes it work not different in degree, but different in kind, and so finally too different to fit within those categories. Such a conclusion, however, would not mean that we must simply throw our hands up in the air in the face of a recalcitrant system. Concluding that writing administration baffles current evaluative criteria could become exactly one of those moments when we recognize a zone of institutional ambiguity and identify a place where a structural change in categories will reform institutions to better accommodate the emergence of a different kind of intellectual work.

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Doin' the Managerial Exclusion: What WPAs Might Need to Know about Collective Bargaining

Rita Malenczyk

Many, if not most, discussions of the politics of WPA work have focused on the position of the WPA within the academic institution, whether in the department, the school, or the university. In this essay I look at how WPA work is regarded by certain influential institutions outside of academia—specifically, courts and labor boards. If those of us who are union members (as well as those who are not) do not know where and why the law has historically placed people who do what we do, then we may be unpleasantly surprised when we find our jobs—and ourselves —defined by a discourse we had no idea we were part of.

My interest in legal and labor definitions of what WPAs do stems from my position as a leader in my institution's faculty collective-bargaining unit. Not an attorney myself, I often find myself struck by the seeming strangeness of lawyers', courts, and labor leaders' perspectives on WPA work (and, indeed, on the work of all faculty, a point I will return to later). What seems self-evident to WPAs conversant in their field—the claim, for example, that WPAs have a good deal in common both with management and with faculty, that they are hybrids who lie somewhere in the middle (see, for example, Janangelo; Schwalm)—might well escape the reasoning of a faculty contract arbitrator who has to put program directors into one camp or the other, simply because the wording of said contract allows him or her very little choice. For non-unionized WPAs, courts' or labor boards' lines of thinking can still provide a window onto the hidden complexities of any particular WPA position—and, again, this is all to the good. As Douglas D. Hesse has written, "WPAs cannot afford to act like composition studies centers in the academic galaxy, let alone the social, political and economic universe in which that galaxy exists. They should not be surprised when matters of cur-

riculum, policy or assessment that strike them as self-evident do not strike others the same way. [. . .] WPAs should analyze the broader context in which they and writing programs exist" (299-300).

Any discussion of colleges, labor, and identity must necessarily begin with that *locus classicus* of faculty-union angst, the 1980 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *National Labor Relations Board v. Yeshiva University* (known in faculty collective-bargaining circles simply as *Yeshiva*), which has to-date effectively barred faculty in private colleges from unionizing. The Court had agreed to decide the question of whether or not the Yeshiva University faculty was entitled to bargain collectively, as the NLRB had ruled, or whether—as the university administration was claiming—the faculty were excluded from collective bargaining rights under the National Labor Relations Act. The NLRA distinguishes among "employees," "professional employees," and "supervisors"; typically, the first two are entitled to collective bargaining, while supervisors (or managerial employees) are not. The reasons for the exclusion of supervisors from the benefits of collective bargaining are embedded in the purpose of the NLRA, which was passed to safeguard not only collective bargaining rights but also—and primarily— "the free flow of commerce." Strikes "and other forms of industrial strife or unrest" were considered, at the time of the passage of the NLRA in 1935, to be bad for business; hence, the NLRA was passed to rectify "inequality of bargaining power" between employers and employees (National Labor Relations Act). One of the things the Act does, then, is define who belongs on which side, in order to prevent conflicts of interest: supervisors are considered to act primarily in the interest of the employer and to implement the employer's policies. By contrast, the Act holds that employees and professional employees act in their own interest.[1]

In the context of the *Yeshiva* decision, it is worth quoting at some length from the NLRA's actual definition of "professional employee":

> [. . .] any employee engaged in work (i) predominantly intellectual and varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical, or physical work; (ii) involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment in its performance; (iii) of such a character that the output produced or the result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of time; (iv) requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning or a hospital, as distinguished from a

> general academic education or from an apprenticeship or from
> training in the performance of routine mental, manual, or
> physical processes [. . .]

Though this description, particularly items (i) and (iv), might seem beyond a reasonable doubt to apply to most college and university faculty, the Yeshiva administration had argued that the faculty were managerial employees because, professionalism notwithstanding, they had significant influence over university policy (*National*).

In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court sided with the Yeshiva administration. Since my purpose here is to demonstrate how WPAs are cast within a larger discourse, it is (again) necessary to quote at some length from both sides of the decision. The majority opinion held that

> The controlling consideration in this case is that the faculty of
> Yeshiva University exercise authority which in any other con-
> text unquestionably would be managerial. Their authority in
> academic matters is absolute. They decide what courses will be
> offered, when they will be scheduled, and to whom they will
> be taught. They debate and determine teaching methods, grad-
> ing policies, and matriculation standards. [. . .] On occasion
> their views have determined the size of the student body, the
> tuition to be charged, and the location of a school. When one
> considers the function of a university, it is difficult to imagine
> decisions more managerial than these. To the extent the indus-
> trial analogy applies, the faculty determines within each school
> the product to be produced, the terms upon which it will be
> offered, and the customers who will be served.

Regarding the seeming fit of faculty to the definition of "professional employee," the Court dismissed the NLRB's argument, saying that while the faculty might in fact act in its own interests, those interests could not be differentiated from those of the administration:

> In arguing that a faculty member exercising independent judg-
> ment acts primarily in his own interest and therefore does not
> represent the interest of his employer, the Board assumes that
> the professional interests of the faculty and the interests of the
> institution are distinct, separable entities with which a faculty
> member could not simultaneously be aligned. [. . .] In fact, the
> faculty's professional interests—as applied to governance at a
> university like Yeshiva—cannot be separated from those of the
> institution.

In such a university, the predominant policy normally is to operate a quality institution of higher learning that will accomplish broadly defined educational goals within the limits of its financial resources. The "business" of a university is education, and its vitality ultimately must depend on academic policies that largely are formulated and generally are implemented by faculty governance decisions.

"It is fruitless," the Court concluded, "to ask whether an employee is 'expected to conform' to one goal or another when the two are essentially the same" (*National*).

When I presented a version of this essay at the 2002 WPA summer conference in Park City, the appearance of the above passages on the overhead projector provoked head-shaking and snickers from the audience. The four-person dissent (which is a great thing to give your students if you want to show them how two parties can read the same data in two completely different ways) suggests why. Assailing the majority for its failure to recognize "fundamental differences between the authority structures of the typical industrial and academic institutions," and claiming that the majority "views the governance structure of the modern-day university" through a "rose-colored lens," the minority noted that

Unlike the purely hierarchical decision-making structure that prevails in the typical industrial organization, the bureaucratic foundation of most "mature" universities is characterized by dual authority systems. The primary decisional network is hierarchical in nature: Authority is lodged in the administration, and a formal chain of command runs from a lay governing board down through university officers to individual faculty members and students. At the same time, there exists a parallel professional network, in which formal mechanisms have been created to bring the expertise of the faculty into the decision-making process.

What the Board realized—and what the Court fails to apprehend—is that whatever influence the faculty wields in university decision making is attributable solely to its collective expertise as professional educators, and not to any managerial or supervisory prerogatives. Although the administration may look to the faculty for advice on matters of professional and academic concern, the faculty offers its recommendations in order to serve its own independent interest in creating the most effective environment for learning, teaching, and scholar-

ship. And while the administration may attempt to defer to the faculty's competence whenever possible [. . .] The University always retains the ultimate decision-making authority. [. . .]

Unlike the medieval university, the minority stated, "the university of today bears little resemblance to the 'community of scholars' of yesteryear"; administrations respond to concerns that may or may not have anything to do with education, as that word is commonly defined:

> Education has become "big business" [. . .]. The past decade of budgetary cutbacks, declining enrollments, reductions in faculty appointments, curtailment of academic programs, and increasing calls for accountability to alumni and other special interest groups has only added to the erosion of the faculty's role in the institution's decision-making process. (*National*)

The *Yeshiva* decision's effects on certain areas of academic life are hard to understate. Again, it has—with some small exceptions—kept faculty in private colleges and universities from unionizing (public institutions are governed by state labor statutes, not the NLRA, and are therefore not controlled by the decision). And though faculty with administrative responsibilities—e.g., WPAs—are not explicitly mentioned in it, the *Yeshiva* decision should stand as a benchmark for them, since it foregrounds and applies to all faculty the divide between the administrative and the instructional that WPAs embody within themselves. *Yeshiva* turned that private split into a public debate, one worth paying attention to if only for the seeming foreignness of the warrants applied on at least one side. As law professor Deborah Malamud has written: "Should professors be treated as professionals or as managers? If our self-image and the way others in our society perceive us are the criteria, clearly we are professionals. But the law need not take this approach. It is perfectly legitimate for legal decision makers to answer such questions with reference to the purposes of a statute [in this case, the NLRA]—even when the result is culturally jarring" (22).

One might argue, however, that most important for WPAs is the manner in which the Supreme Court's decision was reached. First, there is the attention of the Court to the particular nuances of the faculty members' job(s). Even though each side read that data differently—where the majority saw managers, the dissenting minority saw employees—both opinions were nevertheless based on the justices' understanding of the actual duties of the faculty *at Yeshiva University* (e.g., "They debate and determine teaching methods, grading policies, and matriculation standards"). Second, the Court asked the question, "In whose interest does the faculty act?" This question has been asked repeatedly over time: even before *Yeshiva*, courts and the

NLRB issued decisions which have, perhaps, even more relevance to WPAs in that they addressed the labor status of faculty who had certain administrative duties. These cases were decided by looking at what, exactly, the faculty members in question did; second, how much authority they really had; and third, in whose interest they were acting. In one 1974 case, the NLRB—deciding who belonged in a proposed collective-bargaining unit at the University of Miami—noted that department chairs should be included in the unit because not only could they be replaced by faculty vote, but their authority was drawn from, and circumscribed by, departmental consensus:

> The department chairmen [sic] are appointed by the dean of their school of their college, *after consultation with a committee of the departmental faculty concerned—whose recommendation is usually, although not always, followed.* [. . .]
>
> With respect to decisions on tenure and promotion, separate recommendations from the chairman and the department faculty are forwarded up the chain of command [. . .]. In most cases, the faculty and chairmen are in agreement, but when they differ, the higher academic officials give greater weight to a strong faculty recommendation than to a contrary recommendation by their department chairman. (emphasis added)

Noting further that, though both the chair and the faculty participated in hiring, "after consultation between the chairman and faculty, the chairman makes a recommendation to the dean that is in conformity with that faculty consultation," the NLRB determined that chairs were "not supervisors within the meaning of the Act [i.e., the NLRA]" and included them in the collective-bargaining unit. The chairs, then, acted in the interest of their department and, by extension, their field and their profession; hence their inclusion (*University of Miami*).

Similarly, in 1978 the first U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld an NLRB decision that department chairs at Boston University were not subject to what labor lawyers call "the managerial exclusion" (Rabban). Chairs at BU, the Court noted, retained their faculty status when they stepped down, "lack[ed] discretion in formulating" their budgets, obtained faculty consensus on promotion and tenure decisions, spent about half of their time teaching, and were effectively chosen by the faculty:

> While department chairpersons are selected by the appropriate dean, *the selection is usually based on a consensus of the faculty of the department.* [. . .] Based on this evidence, the Board was warranted in finding that the department chairpersons are not supervisors. Indeed, the selection process for department chair-

persons is such that they represent the interests of the tenured professors of the department rather than the University. (*Trustees;* emphasis added)

However, in a 1976 decision at the University of Vermont, where chairs were not only appointed but also evaluated by the dean, a different conclusion had been reached. Unlike the chairs at Miami or BU, chairs at UVM differed substantially from their departmental colleagues in salary and duties, spent a lot of time in meetings with high-level administrators, and were not expected to defer to departmental consensus when making a decision. Furthermore, they, and not the departments, were effectively the final arbiters of promotion, tenure, and hiring:

> The chairmen have the responsibility and the authority to run their respective departments. They play a critical role in hiring both full- and part-time faculty and in setting initial salaries. The chairmen have the responsibility of evaluating the performance of the various faculty members in their departments. [. . .] The record shows that the recommendations of the chairmen based upon these evaluations are highly effective in determining promotions, tenure, reappointments, and salary increases, and are generally accepted without question by the university authorities.

Noting further that chairs had control of departments' budgets and were able to "exercise disciplinary authority over their faculties," the NLRB determined that chairs at Vermont were, in fact, supervisors and excluded from the bargaining unit (*University of Vermont*).

Though the *Yeshiva* decision has pretty much mooted the point of whether faculty in private colleges are management or labor, the NLRB's procedure in the above cases reflects the line of thinking that continues to be applied today when state labor boards decide whether or not certain people belong in a collective-bargaining unit.[2] Any time a faculty at a state college or university unionizes, the state labor board decides upon composition of the union, and it makes its decisions in part by looking at the duties of the faculty on a particular campus. Such faculty might be writing program directors or writing center directors as well as department chairs, and they are subject to a variety of state and local laws which differ tremendously from one other as well as (in some cases) from the NLRA.[3] As Stephen Finner, former Director of Chapter and State Services for the AAUP's national office, puts it, "there is no easy or formulaic answer" to the question of whether WPAs or department chairs belong in management or faculty: when AAUP organizes a campus for purposes of collective bargaining, it "look[s] first to the

governing law, and second to the local politics combined with what these people actually do [. . .] there are 'directors' who look, talk, walk, and act like department chairs and therefore should be treated the same way, and 'directors' who clearly are not supervisors over other bargaining unit faculty and therefore for whom there is no question" (Finner).

It seems, then, that our professional conversation notwithstanding, there is outside of that conversation a slightly more complicated—and exceedingly local—way of looking at what WPAs do and where they fit in the academic hierarchy. We employ terms like "management" and "labor" in conference discussions and in essays (see, for example, Miller, Horner, Bousquet, Mountford); yet, with some exceptions, the use of those terms is theoretical, which is fine (and desirable) in the context of academic argument but not so helpful when it comes to helping someone understand their own job and its politics—or, I would argue, the facts of how WPAs are situated. Occasionally I flash on post-plenary-session question-and-answer periods at summer WPA conferences, during which someone sometimes claims that WPAs are management in part because they hire and fire. But seen in the context of how labor boards or courts define "management" and "labor"—in other words, when trying to decide who is or is not entitled to collective bargaining—such a claim becomes harder to support. Any assertion that one "hires and fires" is complicated by the reality of who actually makes *final* hiring and firing decisions, and whose recommendations are followed, at any given institution. Similarly, Roxanne Mountford's claim that "Unionization only brings into sharper focus the role of the WPA as a middle manager in the university hierarchy" (43) seems to me difficult to sustain if one examines what actually happens when faculties try to unionize.

The first lesson to be drawn from this look at courts and their decisions is quite practical. If the WPA works at an institution where the faculty is thinking about, or in the process of, organizing a union, it's important for her to know where she might fall within that union, to present her understanding of her duties clearly to whoever is at the helm of any organizing process, and to make sure she gets represented accurately to the state labor board. A WPA at an already unionized campus should know where his union contract places him, and why. (The union president is usually a good source for this information, if it isn't clear from the WPA's appointment letter.) Having this knowledge is, it seems to me, key to helping the WPA understand his job and the parameters of his authority. It's important, too, for union members to understand the faculty contract as a whole, as well as the local campus culture, when the contract is not as explicit on some points as it might be (again, the union president is a good source for this information, if the contract has not been provided to the WPA upon hiring). For

example, at my institution, very little is said in our contract about the day-to-day duties of program directors, who are in fact members of the union; however, program directors are required by contract to be members of academic departments, and throughout the contract it is made clear that it is academic departments acting consensually—not department chairs or anyone else acting alone—who "have responsibility for the content and development of courses, curriculum and programs of study within its discipline, research and service within its area, and for evaluation of the performance of all department members" (*Collective* 35). What this means for me is that the writing program I nominally direct is, finally, a collaborative product of the department of which I'm a member.

Which brings back that final question asked by the Supreme Court in *Yeshiva:* In whose interest do you act? If, for example, decisions about your program are made by a faculty committee, of whom is that faculty committee representative—the tenured faculty in an English department dominated by literature? A department of rhetoric? A department of language and linguistics? And are you, finally, acting for the party (or discipline) in whose interest you wish to be acting? This last question has implications that transcend our own working conditions or disciplinary integrity. In a recent essay in *JAC*, Marc Bousquet has argued compellingly that much WPA thinking which has focused on getting what we want from administrators—on the assumption that "non-market idealisms" will ultimately "be dismissed as the plaintive bleating of sheep"—has limited the goals of the discipline in disturbing ways. Some of us have, he says, lost sight of the goal of transforming institutions (which was, one could argue, one of the founding premises of the field of composition) and have settled for "pleasing the prince," a tactic which "seeks to curb the ambitions of our speech and rhetoric" (512). We need to consider not only the rhetorical and political situations our employment contracts, or the realities of our departments, construct for us but also whether, in fact, we want to be in those situations at all. Whatever position one ultimately finds oneself in, it seems odd, indeed, that in a discipline so collegial—in which new WPAs are welcomed by seasoned (and famous!) WPAs into conference discussions, parties, cocktail hours, not to mention journals—there may, at least in certain peoples' eyes, be no such thing as "us."

Notes

[1] Congress amended the NLRA in 1947 with the Taft-Hartley Act; it was this emendation, not the original NLRA, that excluded supervisors from collective bargaining rights. For a further discussion of the history of the NLRA and its history and purpose, see Malamud; Rabban. Except where noted, I'm using the two terms

"supervisor" and "manager" interchangeably for the purposes of this discussion, since that is what most discussions of *Yeshiva* do.

[2] More faculty are unionized than one might think. As of 1994, about 44% of full-time faculty in public institutions were represented by collective-bargaining agents ("242,221 faculty on 1,057 campuses"). If one excludes research-university faculty (who tend, by and large, not to be unionized) from that figure, the percentage comes to 89% (Rhoades 9).

[3] Connecticut's State Employee Relations Act, for instance, distinguishes between "supervisory employees" and "managerial employees." The first type of employee is typically entitled to collective bargaining, while the second is not.

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A Move toward "Academic Citizenship" [1]: Reading Emotion in the Narrative Structures of Part-Time Faculty

Patricia A. Stephens

According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), "44.5 percent of all faculty are part-time, and non-tenure track positions of all types account for more than 60 percent of all faculty appointments in American higher education." The "ADE (Association of Departments of English) Statement on the Use of Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty" suggests "the conditions under which most adjunct teachers are employed define them as non-professionals." Often hired as last-minute replacements on semester-to-semester contracts, part-time faculty are typically paid a fraction of what full-time faculty earn for teaching the same number of credits, and only a small percentage are eligible for benefits such as health insurance and retirement savings. Though the conditions under which they labor may relegate them to "non-professional" status in the workplace, many are, in fact, highly credentialed and experienced in their fields of expertise. According to the CCCC's "Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing," "nearly one-third of the English faculty at four-year colleges and universities work on part-time and/or temporary appointments. Almost universally, they are teachers of writing." Though statistics vary by institution, there is no question that part-time and non-tenure-track faculty are largely responsible for teaching the majority of required developmental and first-year writing courses across the nation.

Those who administer writing programs, then, frequently find themselves largely dependent on a pool of contingent labor to staff writing courses and in the position of "tacitly being asked to participate in the exploitation of a marginalized teaching staff" (Hansen 24). As Eileen E. Schell notes in "Part-Time/Adjunct Issues: Working Toward Change," many writing program administrators (WPAs) have long been at the forefront of addressing workplace concerns voiced by contingent faculty: working through profes-

sional organizations to create policy statements, conducting studies related to working conditions, and advocating for union representation and workplace equity (183-85). WPAs, many of whom are themselves in the process of earning tenure, often have limited power with which to advocate on behalf of part-time faculty and must do this work in addition to their myriad other responsibilities: attending to the needs and concerns of students, faculty, and administrators across the university; advocating for programmatic support and change as needed; providing leadership; and hiring, training, and supervising large numbers of part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants.

In her article, Schell provides a helpful overview and critique of change strategies that have been used to address workplace concerns for part-time faculty and argues for "four elements part-time and non-tenure-track faculty need in order to teach successfully: compensation, contracts [and professional support], conditions that enable quality teaching, and coalition building" (196). While each of these elements is critical to effecting significant change and dependent, in part, on the method or strategies used to address specific changes, for the purposes of this article, I want to focus specifically on her call for "professional support" for part-time and non-tenure-track faculty. What does, or should, such professional support and/or development look like? What kinds of support and development can and should be offered? And, how can WPAs, who have so many responsibilities on their plates, best provide much-needed training and support to the many part-timers who comprise their staff and whose range of experience and level of expertise is so varied?

In many programs, part-time writing instructors are frequently expected, if not required, to participate in ongoing professional training that is intended to serve at least two key functions: first, regular meetings can provide the kind of support new teachers often crave, in terms of sharing ideas about curricula and other pedagogical matters; second, staff meetings can help WPAs ensure at least some measure of programmatic consistency in terms of curricula, pedagogy, and philosophies of teaching writing. While most WPAs intend professional development sessions as forums for learning, growth, and support, this article examines how such opportunities can backfire if the way the program is structured and implemented does not take into consideration 1) the emotional impact of long-standing exploitation on those part-time and non-tenure-track faculty who comprise the program and attend the meetings, and 2) the wide range of expertise and experience of individual teachers in the program and how such teachers might best work together.

In her article, "More than a Feeling: Disappointment and WPA Work," Laura Micciche examines the factors that contribute to the "climate of disappointment that characterizes English studies generally and composition studies—particularly writing program administration (WPA)—specifically" (432). Some of these factors include inequitable working conditions (particularly but not solely for part-time faculty), scant employment opportunities after years of specialized study, questions about the status of composition as a legitimate academic field, and the need to constantly defend the intellectual value of the work done by writing program administrators. In her study, Micciche analyzes two WPA work narratives that focus on "disappointment as a central affective component of the job" (435). She convincingly argues that emotion always shapes work lives, and that WPAs have to wage battle against the kind of "disappointed hope" and "destructive disaffection" that can debilitate a program and its inhabitants—students, faculty, and administrators. Though her primary focus throughout the article is on the affective components of WPA work (and all that entails), my intention here is to explore the "structures of feeling" that Bill, a part-time faculty member with a PhD in composition and rhetoric, describes as he enters what Micciche calls the "climate of disappointment" in a writing program, bringing his own version of "disappointed hope" and "destructive disaffection." Bill's narrative, despite its limited perspective and bitter tone, makes visible the complex set of relations operating in and through the writing program in which he worked. My analysis of his narrative not only questions what WPAs and part-time faculty might do differently in similar situations but also considers how intricately interwoven are the configurations of academic workplaces, the layers of emotions workers bring into those work spaces, and the structures of the very stories we tell about lives within these spaces.

Making Sense of the Workplace: Bill's Narrative of Frustration

In *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*, Barbara Czarniawska "show[s] that narrative knowledge constitutes the core of organizational knowledge, that it is an important way of making sense of what is going on in the everyday life of organizations [. . .]" (167). Her argument that narrative—the telling of stories—constitutes and constructs the everyday world of the workplace supports my belief that, despite problems of subjectivity and the potential for unreliable narrators, much can be learned from listening to workers' stories about their lives in the workplace. I liken Bill's narrative to what John Van Maanen calls an "impressionist tale," in which "events are roughly recounted in the order in which they are said to have occurred [. . .]"(103). Van Maanen argues that in "impressionist tales,"

the "correctness" or truth of the story is not what finally matters. In my analysis of Bill's narrative, what matters most is his perception of how conflicts evolved, erupted, and functioned within the structure of the writing program because this perception is what drove his understanding of, responses to, and accounts of the situation he describes.

I first interviewed Bill (referred to me by a colleague) several years ago when I was researching a project on how faculty perceived and experienced power relations in their programs and departments. Rather than cull a narrative through a set of interview questions that I would pose to him, Bill requested to write his own narrative, using my set of questions as a jumping off point. According to Bill, the narrative he wrote was produced quickly, with little attempt on his part to fully represent and reflect upon the many complexities involved, both in terms of how he described the writing program in which he worked and his feelings and perceptions regarding his own status within that writing program. Throughout, his voice resonates with anger and cynicism even though he never once directly articulates the role these (and other) emotions play in his account of the workplace. Indeed, through his rather one-sided and curmudgeonly portrayal of events and other players, we find in Bill's account and critique (excerpts follow) of the professional training required of part-time faculty at the institution described important questions for consideration. For instance, how does one foster and maintain equity within a program staffed by a range of faculty whose status in the university varies from graduate students to part-time faculty to full-time, tenured faculty? How does one maintain programmatic accountability in terms of curricula and pedagogy and still support and encourage academic freedom and creativity amongst instructors who have widely divergent levels of education, training, and experience?

The following excerpt is taken from Bill's narrative description of his experience as a part-time faculty member in a writing program from which he ultimately resigned; publicly, he cited inadequate pay as the reason for his resignation, yet in his narrative he strongly suggests that, among other factors, inequitable working conditions within the writing program played a major role in his decision.

> In the "well-intentioned" form of faculty development, workshops/discussion groups—required of all adjuncts and TA's but not tenure-track faculty—[were] set up to keep everyone "in line" with Writing Program values. These groups [. . .] met for an hour or so once a week. Mentors were picked from people whom 1) had been around for awhile and 2) were in with the administration. When I asked on my first day in the group whether the groups served a surveillance function, I was told by

my mentor that they did not, but [I] got the non-verbal message from several of my colleagues that that was not the whole story. Come to find out that the majority of people stuck in the groups—many of whom, like me, had many years of teaching experience to their credit—despised the groups, which were supposed to give everyone a chance to share their expertise, experience, and materials but in fact just dragged underpaid, overworked people into the office once a week. Because these workshop groups gave the administrators something to manage on a regular, predictable basis, criticism of their form and function was not [. . .] taken lightly.

To put it bluntly, the administrators [. . .] kept the underpaid and overworked adjunct faculty virtually hopping with gratuitous demands and requirements which, since someone had to facilitate all programmatic activities, assured their own longevity. Since the arrangements kept them from having to do much of the dirty work, the full-time tenure-track faculty seemed willing to look the other way; this arrangement also had the consequence of cutting full-time faculty off from part-time faculty, but that's another matter—another way in which power was organized in the writing program.

After several weeks of suspending my disbelief and trying to make the best of my group [. . .] I wrote a long letter to the administrators questioning the value of the "mandatory" groups on several practical and theoretical grounds. In this letter, I was careful to admit that the problem might be my own but that I had several reasons to suspect otherwise. This letter was initially greeted with a curt, "thank you for sharing" note. When I pressed my mentor about the letter's reception, she said she would talk to the administrators and get back to me.

When she did get back to me, she told me it basically came down to this [question]: "What do you want?" [She was] implying, I think, that I could at that juncture have opted out of the workshop group, an unthinkable move, really, since it would have set me in opposition not only to my supervisors but to my peers and co-workers as well. I responded to this blunt question by saying that I simply thought there should be an open dialogue about the workshop group structure and that, as long as such a dialogue was underway, I would remain a team player.

But, I had made waves. When summer teaching assignments were handed out, I was denied on the grounds that my application was "late" (arriving by e-mail at 6:00 AM on the morning after the 5:00 PM deadline). Upon learning that my office mate [whose application was also late] was assigned summer teaching, I resigned my position in the Writing Program, citing insufficient pay for the time and energy required of the job, but word was quickly leaked back to the powers- that-be that my resignation was an intentional response to being punished for speaking up. When the tenure-track faculty finally got wind of my resignation there was, or so I understand, a confrontation between concerned faculty and the administrator responsible for handling summer teaching. But this confrontation was too little too late. With little or no room for critical dialogue, I could see no reason to re-enmesh myself in such a moribund social/intellectual environment. I suffered considerable economic hardship as a result of my stand and abrupt, non-negotiable resignation, the very same hardship that prevents many others from speaking with their feet, too.[2]

Notions of Autonomy and Expertise in the Writing Program

If, as Czarniawska suggests, it is possible to make sense of an organization by listening to workers' stories, what then, are we, as WPAs, to make of Bill's story, with his cynical and biting critique? What can we learn if we listen carefully to the perspective he brings to the table, even if we find his voice somewhat off-putting—angry, arrogant, and bitter? From the beginning of the narrative, Bill's sarcasm is marked by the quotations with which he encloses his descriptor—"well-intentioned"—of the professional development meetings required of part-time faculty and teaching assistants (TAs). His very first sentence reveals layers of skepticism on his part: first, about the real intentions of the meetings; second, about the flaws inherent in a hierarchical structure that mimics the tiered system the university sets up between full- and part-time faculty; and third, about the uses of such a structure to maintain particular programmatic "values." His distrust is made clear, when, at his first group meeting, he reportedly asks "whether the groups served a surveillance function." His word choice—"surveillance"— strongly echoes Foucault's description of Bentham's Panopticon, a trope not likely lost on his audience. Why did Bill, on his very first day in the group, choose to frame his question in this manner, using words that were likely to put the powers-that-be on the defensive? While I cannot be entirely sure why he made the

choices he describes, it seems safe to suggest that he is operating in the realm of what Micciche calls the "context of disappointment" within the academy, and that the bitterness and cynicism with which he tells this story evolves, at least in part, out of an emotional response to the exploitation he has felt as a part-time faculty member whose level of expertise and experience has not been acknowledged in a manner he finds satisfactory.

In *The System of Professions*, Andrew Abbot maintains that early sociological definitions suggest that professions are comprised of experts who 1) apply specialized knowledge, 2) are trained and credentialed, and 3) operate in accordance with certain rules (4). Eliot Friedson, in *Professional Powers*, adds to these three conditions a fourth: he argues that autonomy is also a key element of professional work and that those who consider themselves experts believe in the value of their work and formulate work ethics based on specific notions of "how work should be performed and of what work is interesting and worthy of their training" (170). One of Bill's unstated critiques, it seems to me, is about what he perceived to be a lack of autonomy in the workplace; in other words, he chafed at not being allowed to have a voice in how the workshop groups were structured and in assessing the efficacy of those required group meetings. Given his credentials—a PhD in Composition and Rhetoric—it is not surprising that, despite his part-time status, he might have expected to be treated as a professional, worthy of some of the autonomy and agency that supposedly comes with credentialing and expertise. Yet, it is, at least to some degree, his part-time status that impedes his autonomy in the writing program; as he sees it, he is unfairly lumped in with all part-timers, regardless of credentials and experience, and required to attend meetings that he does not deem worthy of his time. For Bill, the mandatory group meetings undermined the sort of autonomy he felt entitled to in the workplace; at the very least, he wanted some voice in determining what kinds of support he needed and when that support would be most useful to him.

From the point of view of a WPA, however, a writing program that relies on large numbers of part-time and non-tenure track faculty must provide some means of maintaining and ensuring consistency across the many writing sections taught. Given their accountability to others (students, faculty they supervise, colleagues, and other administrators), it is nearly impossible to grant full autonomy to part-time teachers working within the program, even for those who have been around for many years or who have credentials and experience in the field. While professional development meetings certainly serve to immerse new part-time faculty in the goals, philosophies, and pedagogies of the program, they can also, as Bill suggested, serve as a kind of "surveillance" tool, allowing WPAs (or others who facilitate these

meetings) to gain insights about what individual teachers are actually doing in the classroom. The problem, of course, is that despite a WPA's best intentions, such insights about consistency and pedagogy are sometimes gained at the expense of instructors who feel alienated by the process. The obvious question is about how to strike a balance, or perhaps more accurately, how to make sense of the relationship between the consistency a WPA strives for in a writing program and the level of autonomy granted to part-time and non-tenure track faculty who teach in these programs. Rather than set up a dichotomy that implies that programmatic consistency is reliant on the withdrawal of autonomy from part-time and non-tenure track faculty, it seems more fruitful to consider ways that the granting of autonomy throughout a program might ultimately contribute to its overall success.

In Bill's case, I want to suggest he might have become more of a "team player" if he had been given more options. For instance, if the administrators had responded more positively to his request for an "open dialogue," would he have opted to become a part of the team? Would he, for instance, have felt differently about attending the meetings if he had been given a choice about which meetings were more relevant to him? Would he have been more open to active participation if he had been given some voice in group membership and mentoring possibilities? Would he have responded in a more constructive manner if he had been made to feel (somehow) that his expertise was respected within the program? If funding had been available for professional support such as conferences and workshops, would Bill have been interested in participating? While these questions are speculative, I contend that they offer a sound place from which to start exploring how WPAs, despite bureaucratic limitations, might begin to assess and attend to issues of inequity and "disappointed hope" amongst the many writing instructors we employ. In my view, autonomy and agency for part-time and non-tenure track faculty are key to the long-term success of writing programs. Indeed, these two factors—autonomy and agency—contribute more to the quality of one's teaching than most professional development meetings because without them, one's sense of self as a teacher can be severely undermined. And, when that occurs, the "disappointed hope" that Bill exudes throughout his narrative is likely to become an insidious but powerful force working against the best intentions of even the best programs.

Managerial Control and the Accrual of Capital in a Writing Program

If we believe what Bill tells us about his first staff meeting—his question about "surveillance," his suspicions about the (c)overt function of the workshop meetings—then, it seems clear that he entered this particular part-time

faculty position as a writing instructor bearing the kind of "disappointed hope" Micciche describes. Nowhere in Bill's narrative do we get a sense that he ever believed in the efficacy of the staff development program offered. Throughout, his tone is one of derision, scorn, and disdain for those in power, particularly the administrators and mentors, who, in his view, simply "dragged the underpaid, overworked people into the office once a week" and "kept the adjuncts virtually hopping with gratuitous demands and requirements which [. . .] assured their own longevity." Part of Bill's resistance to participating in the meetings seems to stem from his belief that they served no meaningful purpose; indeed, from his perspective, the underlying yet unspoken function of the staff development program was simply to provide job security for a class of workers—mentors and administrators—whose positions granted them a small degree of power and status within the hierarchy of the writing program. In a sense, Bill played out his role in this scenario as if the script had been written for him in advance: he embodies the role of the embittered, under-employed, highly credentialed faculty member who is incensed at how his part-time status restricts his autonomy, agency, and sense of worth within the workplace. In my view, Bill's narrative (and others like his) offers yet another means by which WPAs can begin to learn from the scripts written by faculty in their own programs and to resist the worst effects of the proscribed roles we all find ourselves playing from time to time.

In Bill's view, the administrators and mentors rendered themselves invaluable by setting themselves up as gatekeepers who could effectively monitor and control the large numbers of part-time and non-tenure track faculty. Organizational theorist Gareth Morgan has argued that "by monitoring and controlling boundary transactions, people build up considerable power" in the workplace (167). For Bill, the gatekeeping mechanisms set up by the administrators served not only to reign in the part-timers but also to segregate them from the full-time faculty; in effect, if Morgan is correct, this kind of boundary-control, or segregation, among workers within a hierarchical system is one means of allowing some, but not others, to consolidate power.

Bill viewed the required weekly staff meetings, then, as an organizational tool that served, whether intentionally or not, to further separate the primary labor force (full-time faculty) from the secondary labor force (part-time faculty) through the use of middle management (administrators and mentors and their specific practices). With staff development required for TAs and part-time faculty but optional for full-time faculty, Bill's view of the program is that it simply sustained the notion that workplace autonomy be reserved only for those experts employed on a full-time basis. Regard-

less of whether or not Bill's perceptions about this particular program are accurate, his point about the impact of inequities and segregation amongst academic laborers inherent in these kinds of tiered systems is a valuable one. Given the "disappointed hope" with which many part-time faculty enter yet another part-time position, what might WPAs do to create the kind of open dialogue Bill requests? How might WPAs grant more autonomy in systems for which they are increasingly accountable for "outcomes"? How can WPAs change the scripts within particular scenarios? These are the questions I believe we need to be asking ourselves as WPAs, yet they are based on an assumption that WPAs will be operating from within (rather than without) the system in order to effect change.

Marc Bousquet poses a different set of questions (based on the assumption that change from within is near-impossible) in his article "Composition as Management Science: Toward a University without a WPA." Working within a Marxist framework of analysis, Bousquet suggests that the WPA is simply a low-level administrator, a "non-commissioned officer" whose "special task is to creatively theorize and enact procedures to the disadvantage of other workers" (498). Given their complicity with the academic institutions whose rewards they, too, seek, Bousquet suggests that the "heroic" WPA who sympathizes with the composition labor force and works toward building more full-time but non-tenure track lines within her/his program will never effect meaningful change at any level because s/he is simply too invested in the game as it has been defined by upper-level administrators. A large part of the problem, in his view, is that WPAs are unwilling to cede managerial control over the faculty, curricula, and pedagogy of their programs in part because that area of control might just be the ticket to further their own rewards within the system; further, he implies that the construction of the identity of the WPA is so closely linked to notions of control that it is simply not possible to disengage the two. Thus, he ultimately argues for ridding the university of WPA positions and practicing "social-movement unionism," large-scale change that would, in theory, transform the system and those within it. In his view,

> the consciousness of "class" [inherent within social-movement unionism] would invoke an identity of interests based not on workplace disciplines [. . .] but on the common experience of selling one's labor in order to live and on the desire—widespread in the academy, but also common in many sectors of service work—to be "productive" for society rather than capital. (517)

Pierre Bourdieu's work is useful in understanding the complexity of the problem Bousquet so clearly identifies: how complicity with the system undermines real transformation. Bourdieu argues that fields (his term for all professions) are best understood as "structured space[s] of social forces and struggles" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 242-43). In his view, the field is like a living organism, constantly emerging and re-emerging out of the struggles that occur among inhabitants of that field. He depicts the field as a game which follows certain rules, most of which are not explicitly defined, and suggests that "players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by way of a 'contract,' that the game is worth playing, that it is 'worth the candle,' and this *collusion* is the very basis of their competition" (98). Struggles, and thus fields, emerge out of consensus among players about the value of playing the game. As the game changes, players draw on various "trump cards, master cards whose force varies depending on the game [. . .]" (98). Players in the game are dependent on both how much (volume) and what kind of (structure) capital is held at any given moment and how that capital might evolve over time. Although Bourdieu believes that players in the field conform to the unwritten rules and that they frequently reproduce the status quo of the game, he, unlike Bousquet, also believes that players can and do use their accumulated capital to transform the rules of the game and that over time, different kinds of capital can come to be valued. In his view, inhabitants of the field "have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of the distribution" (108-9). When players attempt to subvert the distribution of capital, to disrupt the status quo, a space for change becomes possible.

Bill, despite the "disappointed disaffection" with which he enters the job described above, has invested himself in playing the game (for him, it is "worth the candle") even if he is not happy about all the various (written and unwritten) rules by which he has to play. Though a player in the game—one whose accumulated capital is quite limited by virtue of his position—he is critical of the ways he believes administrators and mentors use their accumulated social, cultural, and symbolic capital to consolidate their power (i.e., through increased managerial and bureaucratic control). In Bourdieuian terms, the administrators and mentors might be seen primarily as preservationists, attempting to maintain and reproduce the very little power they had accumulated within the bureaucratic system. While Bill might view himself as an outsider to that system, his stated willingness to play the game (up to a point) and to "remain a team player" if certain conditions were met might mark him, too, as a kind of quasi-preservationist, or at least as someone willing to accept a somewhat ambiguous role in maintaining the game. Bousquet, I believe, would view Bill—at least prior to his resignation—as yet one

more worker in the composition labor market who strives to get ahead in a system that is set up to segregate workers into preservationists of the very system that devalues them and their labor.

What, then, does Bill's resignation from the program really signify? Is it a move on his part to subvert the distribution of capital within this particular program, to call attention to the kinds of inequities workers suffer? To some degree, his decision to leave had the potential to render a once-familiar scene (for the WPAs, administrators, and mentors) unfamiliar: a taken-for-granted workplace structure in need of re-vision. In this regard, Bill's resignation might be read, in Bourdieuian terms, as a subversion narrative, the story of a part-time faculty member whose protest has the potential to subvert the distribution of capital within the system. On the other hand, according to the narrative, he attributes his resignation to "insufficient pay for the time and energy required of the job," making no mention of the key complaint articulated throughout his narrative: the inequitable and ineffective structure of the system. In my view, the omission of what seems to be his key complaint effectively enables the preservation of the very system he renounces because he fails to publicly cite the real shortcomings of the programmatic structure, as revealed in his narrative. Even so, and regardless of how one reads and responds to Bill's narrative, I contend that much can be learned from paying close attention to the nuanced concerns that drive Bill's story and its telling.

Conclusion

It is, of course, much simpler to criticize solutions that we do not believe will work than to come up with viable alternatives for change. While I lay no claim to large-scale solutions to the abuses of part-time labor in the academy, I contend that close readings of narratives like Bill's can help forge a path toward what Eileen E. Schell calls "academic citizenship," or the "responsibility to be informed [. . .] about academic labor issues" (119). Schell argues that becoming consciously aware of existing problems in our field—be it issues of part-time labor or the impact of (formal, informal, and/or emotional) structures on professional lives—is a first step toward fighting "the exploitation of part-time and nontenure-line faculty [through . . .] coalition-building and considered action" (*Gypsy Academics* 117). We cannot act on behalf of others or ourselves if we are not conscious of the complex range of issues facing our field, and in my view, workplace narratives like the one presented here offer a means of making sense of the nuances of workaday life for those whose primary labor occurs within writing programs. For WPAs, such

narratives can serve as a reminder of "what it's like to be managed" (Frank, cited in Bousquet, "Tenured Bosses" 231) and thus as a jump-start for the kind of coalition-building that we can help foster in writing programs.

A critic like Bousquet, however, might argue that such coalition-building from within an oppressive system will only reproduce oppression, that it is anathema to the kind of change desired. What would happen if we were to follow his suggestion to rid composition of the "bosses," the WPAs who have complicity with the system despite their best efforts to improve conditions for composition laborers? Would *abolish*[ing] the WPA as part of a more general abolition of the scene of managed labor in the academy" (Bousquet, "Composition" 519) create the possibility for substantial change in the inequities of academic labor on the whole? While I do not believe Bousquet is suggesting that a simple solution exists—rid the university of WPAs and unfair academic labor practices will disappear—I find his political idealism and naivete about change in the academy somewhat troublesome. His critique of the role the WPA plays in preserving the status quo may come very close to the mark, yet his suggestion that composition simply re-tool itself on the model of "collegiality and self-governance that obtains elsewhere in the academy" ("Composition" 519) seems to offer little more than a schema for enabling composition to become "one of the gang" (Bousquet, "Composition" 502) of other academic disciplines.

In my view, modeling the governance structure of composition on that of other academic disciplines, none of which is necessarily known for its collegiality and fair labor practices, will do little to bring about real transformation for part-time faculty laboring in the academic workplace, and more specifically, in writing programs. Likewise, I contend that ridding the academy of WPAs will ultimately weaken the position from which those who strive for change can negotiate with upper-level administration. I agree with Keith Gilyard that

> whenever we participate in the dominant discourse, no matter how liberally we may tweak it, we help to maintain it. Therefore, we are complicit in whatever that discourse accomplishes with respect to the unjust distribution of goods and services. Yet, not to engage in the dominant discourse may diminish some very real material possibilities for ordinary people struggling to do better. Obviously these are possibilities we should not oppose even if individual successes help to reify wider inequity. (268)

In other words, if WPAs simply opt out of the game, as per Bousquet's suggestion, then a more vulnerable position is created not only for WPAs themselves but for all those who work within writing programs: first, as Gilyard

suggests, we may limit the "material possibilities" for the many who work within our programs, and second, we reduce the potential for much-needed dialogue with university administrators about our concerns. Granted, such dialogue does not always manufacture desired results, but to render ourselves out of the game is, in my view, to vastly diminish the potential for any real re-distribution of capital or other substantive change.

If we trust Czarniawska's suggestion that workplace narratives offer a means of making sense of organizational life, then it is useful to consider what, specifically, we might learn about our own workplaces and practices from a reading of Bill's narrative. Through reading Bill's narrative, I became particularly aware of how notions of expertise can play themselves out not only through the ways in which WPAs structure professional development in their programs but also in how WPAs encourage and/or discourage autonomy and agency among part-time and non-tenure-track faculty. Much can be gained, in my view, by the granting of autonomy and agency to the many part-time faculty on whose labor we so clearly rely. In Bill's narrative account (whether we accept it as "truth" or not), for instance, instructors in the writing program might have valued professional development as an opportunity had they been offered more voice in the structure of the program itself (i.e., some leeway in deciding which meetings to attend and with whom they wanted to work). Likewise, given statistics on the low pay of part-time faculty, compensation for their time might have made a difference. In other words, an acknowledgement of their expertise and experience, in the form of agency, autonomy, and compensation could have offered a space for the re-distribution of capital. While Bill's narrative is clearly a subjective and biased account, I believe that, although we have to understand the nuances of local circumstances, "inhabitants" of writing programs—administrators and all tiers of faculty—stand to benefit from a careful and honest examination of how notions of expertise get played out in the very structures of the programs that constitute our work lives.

The conscious act of examining narratives like Bill's ensures, on some level, that WPAs never lose sight of the kind of "disappointed hope" and "destructive disaffection" Micciche so compellingly argues can be crippling not only to individuals (faculty and WPAs) within programs but to programs themselves. Like most organizations, writing programs might be viewed as a kind of Bourdieuian game where "players" are always maneuvering to either accumulate or redistribute the limited capital available. In this manner, those of us who play the game always find ourselves up against organizational and social structures that we do not so much choose as find ourselves living within; thus, the formations inherent in our work lives become deeply embedded in the plot, structure, and tone of the workplace

narratives we both live and speak. Bill's narrative is structured not only by his own identity as a player in the game and the identities of others who figure into the story but also by the web of social formations in which he finds himself tangled—to name but a few, the narrative history of composition into which he has been professionalized, the narrative of part-time labor abuses within the academy, and the narrative of disappointment as lived by the many well-credentialed faculty in composition whose expertise goes unrecognized. For Bill, opting out of the scenario he describes—refusing to play the game—is not a real possibility. The narrative, in a sense, and his next move as a player in the game has, to some extent, already been scripted for him, given the "context of disappointment" within the academy: as an underemployed but experienced PhD in composition, he will likely remain on the job market while simultaneously moving on to another program where local circumstances may differ but plot and narrative structures remain virtually the same.

If narratives like Bill's are a dime a dozen, what, then, is to be gained from reading them with such a careful eye? In my view, such narratives offer valuable opportunities for WPAs to become more informed about not only the economic issues affecting faculty in the field of composition but also about the emotional impact of long-standing exploitation on many of the part-time faculty working in writing programs. As Bousquet argues in "Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers," it is not adequate to simply acknowledge complicity in an abusive system (233). Some complicity is simply a given whenever one is employed in an organization, yet as we work to hear the narratives of the inhabitants of writing programs we administer, we can carefully examine the ways that exploitation insinuates itself in aspects of our program that we may be able to control, in places where we may be able to negotiate some measure of change, some re-distribution of volume and structure of capital. Likewise, as Schell suggests, there are at least four possible actions that professional organizations and concerned administrators might consider:

> converting nontenure-line positions to tenure-line ones (the conversionist solution), reforming and transforming the working conditions of existing nontenure-line faculty (the reformist solution), organizing unions and building coalitions among various professional organizations (the unionist/collectivist solution), and abolishing the required first-year writing course to reduce the overreliance on and exploitation of contingent faculty (the abolitionist solution). (*Gypsy Academics* 90-91)

Each of these proposed solutions has its own set of limitations, of course, and Schell argues that no one of these will sufficiently address the multifarious issues that are inextricably linked to the over-reliance on part-time labor in writing programs. Yet, with these in mind, and with a new attention to how emotion structures the narrative accounts of individual faculty and the cumulative accounts of life in the programs we administer, we can, in my view, gradually move toward the kind of "academic citizenship" that Schell suggests can lead to "considered action."

Notes

[1] This term is used by Eileen E. Schell in *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers.*

[2] Excerpted from a longer narrative written in response to specific interview questions.

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The WAC Matrix: Institutional Requirements for Nurturing a Team-Based WAC Program

Lisa Emerson

Introduction

The literature on WAC tends to take two forms: either a specific focus on a micro project, such as those described by Marsha Watson and Joan Mullin et al., or a general discussion of how to more broadly integrate writing into the structure of the university (i.e., a focus on the macro issues; see those described in separate studies by Susan McLeod, Barbara Walvoord, Richard Baldauf, and Leslie Parker).

It is a truism of WAC that WAC projects need to develop within a specific local context. For those of us working outside the United States, in a differently structured and assessed tertiary context, this can present problems. It also presents opportunities to gear something specific for a particular context. One size does not fit all in WAC; instead, we can tailor-make our programs as required. Yet, as Susan McLeod points out "the two basic WAC tenants—writing to learn and learning to write disciplinary discourse—are very translatable into other contexts and cultures" (10).

This paper is based on a four-year action research project that explored ways of integrating writing into the New Zealand tertiary science curriculum. This writing across the curriculum program used the literature on teaching writing in the sciences from North America and Australia and applied it to a very different New Zealand tertiary context. A specific design feature of the program was that it brought together teams of faculty from science and English and, using an action research methodology, melded the expertise of these teams to design and teach writing to applied science students.

We developed three writing projects as part of our WAC program. One project involved developing a writing in the sciences course, another developed a WAC strand across all courses within a specific science discipline;

both of these projects took a writing in the disciplines approach to WAC. The third project integrated writing into a horticulture program, using a more writing to learn technique. The details of these studies are outlined by Lisa Emerson, and Emerson et al.

The teams put together for each project conformed to none of the three models proposed by Lucille McCarthy and Barbara Walvoord. Unlike their first two models, focused pairs and reciprocal pairs, our teams were quite large: the smallest team was five people and the largest was fifteen. However, the teams also did not fit into McCarthy and Walvoord's third model: the chief researcher with many collaborators and informants. A key unifying feature of each of the teams was that they were designed so that power and expertise amongst group members was seen as equal; all members were equally engaged in the task and all were seen as having vital knowledge and expertise. All three teams combined science faculty, with specialist knowledge of the genres of their disciplines, and writing faculty, with specialist knowledge of how to integrate writing into a curriculum. We felt it was vital that each expert recognized the expertise of the other members to create a truly synergistic change environment. Our project teams saw themselves as being based on a consensus-driven interdisciplinary model of collaboration and used action research as a way of ensuring such a model of collaboration.

Instead of looking directly at the intricacies of how to integrate writing into a tertiary science curriculum using a team-based approach, this paper focuses on the macro issues. It does this in two ways. First, it summarizes those factors that this particular study suggests are necessary for the success of any WAC program that is taught by teams of subject specialists and writing faculty. Second, it looks at the broader question of whether such a WAC program could or should be developed across the university and how such a development could be implemented.

The projects gave us an insight into what was needed for a successful WAC program taught by collaborative teams of subject specialists and writing consultants. Four areas were seen as critical: the institution in which the WAC program takes place, the team developing the WAC project, the process used to implement the program, and the students within the WAC classroom.

The Importance of Institutional Support

The study clearly showed that an institution can inhibit or support team-based WAC projects in a number of ways: three factors in particular were seen as critical in this project: the use of standardized student feedback, a perceived teaching vs. research imbalance, and support at the administrative level.

Student feedback was essential to the success of the projects. Student feedback can be a valuable indicator that we are "off-track" as teachers, that we are teaching inappropriate skills or that we are teaching skills in inappropriate ways. Student feedback was one of the ways in which the groups in this study reflected on their strategies for integrating writing into the curriculum. However, one of the things we learned from this study was that feedback needs to be of a specific kind—feedback is not a virtue in itself—and it needs to be managed carefully if it is going to have a positive impact on the quality of the program.

We used a variety of methods for eliciting feedback from students, including directed journal entries and individual interviews. However, the importance of using appropriate student feedback methods is most successfully illustrated by contrasting two different forms of feedback which were important to all three projects: quantitative surveys and focus groups.

At the time that the projects were first being introduced, the university introduced its own student evaluation structure based on a quantitative survey (SET—student evaluation of teaching). This survey used a standard set of teaching indicators, rated on a scale of 1–9, rating the faculty member's performance in relation to other faculty teaching individual students, with two open-ended questions, chosen by the faculty member. Results of the test were computer generated and sent to the faculty members and the faculty member's head of department where they were integrated in the indicators for salary review.

While we did collect SET results as part of student feedback, we also used a more qualitative method: focus group interviews. These are small group interviews based on a semi-structured but fluid questioning format. Students were randomly selected to be involved in these interviews (although some actively sought involvement) and the interviews were based on questions designed by the teaching and research team. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then collated into report form to protect students' identities. Focus groups are a commonly used way of accessing open-ended, in-depth feedback (see R. Krueger, D. Stewart and P N. Shamdasani, and S. Robson for more detail about using focus groups interviews).

Interestingly, the SET evaluations proved to be threatening to some faculty involved in the project, and they provided largely unconstructive feedback that was damaging to faculty confidence and, at times, misleading. For example, one faculty member was heavily criticized in an SET evaluation for slow delivery of course content. The in-depth focus group interviews gave us a quite different picture, showing that the real concern was with depth: that the students would have liked the microthemes and in-class exercises to have been more demanding in relation to course content. The SET evalua-

tion was threatening because it merely criticized and, possibly worse, because that criticism was conveyed automatically to the faculty member's head of department, thus influencing promotion opportunities. It was also misleading because the very limited space available for open-ended student comments meant that comments did not focus on students' real concerns.

Focus group interviews, by contrast, provided accurate and detailed feedback in a constructive manner (i.e., suggesting solutions) and were less threatening since they were not automatically channelled to someone who had professional influence on the faculty member's career. From this feedback, faculty members were able to make adjustments to their teaching style and to reconstruct microthemes and in-class exercises to provide a greater intellectual challenge to the students.

As Meg Morgan emphasizes, all evaluation, including feedback, must contribute to increased quality. Unless feedback is accurate, constructive, and managed, there is a possibility of faculty dropping out of WAC programs or becoming disillusioned with developing new teaching initiatives that may be initially unfamiliar and/or threatening to students.

If the university is serious about teaching quality it needs to provide an environment that supports innovation and faculty learning and which encourages risk in pursuit of that learning. Risks are a necessary component of the journey toward quality teaching and learning. Undertaking an innovative WAC initiative is a move towards that quality: student feedback must be used positively to encourage faculty development.

Another issue that arose for some faculty during the development of the WAC programs was a perceived discrepancy between the value placed on research and the value placed on teaching in the culture of the university. The college in which the projects took place had a strong research culture. In the broader picture, the university as a whole has, historically, prioritized a research rather than a teaching culture, and this has become more of an issue in recent years as other tertiary institutions market themselves more aggressively as teaching institutions. While Massey University has high quality teaching as part of its strategic plan, and promotion is now influenced by teaching contributions, some faculty perceived research still to be the prime promotion indicator: given this perception, some faculty felt that time spent on a long-term teaching innovation was a luxury they could not professionally afford. Some faculty perceived this to be a major issue at the end of the two-year cycle. One participant put it this way: "[Teaching is seen] just as part of your job [. . .] it's the minimum standard thing. You do that, that's it [. . .] versus a paper in an international journal it [innovative teaching] is not worth a lot."

This quotation explains an apparent contradiction in this section: how can faculty be worried that a negative student evaluation will affect their chances of promotion while long-term commitment to teaching improvement is seen as damaging promotion opportunities? The answer lies in this quotation: if quality teaching is a "minimum standard" then commitment to innovative teaching is merely seen as maintaining the minimum standard; whereas a negative evaluation of teaching will suggest that faculty are falling below the minimum standard. The suggestion is that evaluations in teaching can only contribute negatively to promotional opportunities.

If this perception is an accurate reflection of reality, then until the university places more emphasis on teaching, faculty are unlikely to put their energies into developing WAC programs. A WAC project is a long-term commitment requiring time—time to retrain, to implement the program and to reflect. It is possible to publish in this field, of course, but a long-term qualitative study is far more time consuming than the quantitative studies of some disciplines, and it may require retraining in methodology for faculty working in primarily quantitative fields. Furthermore, faculty would be publishing in areas outside their primary research field, which may not be evaluated as highly as work in their primary field.

If this perception is inaccurate, it appears to be, nevertheless, reasonably widespread. In this case, the university needs to devise ways in which it can convey a changed message to faculty about the value of innovative teaching and its contribution to promotion opportunities.

A third key element that affected the extent to which the writing programs could be initiated and sustained was support from administration.

In all three projects support was sought and was forthcoming from senior administration. Two of the projects had the support of the head of department, and in one of the projects this support was hard won. Support for the third project was also achieved after several months of discussion and lobbying. For these three projects to have failed would have been to have risked professional embarrassment at best, and, for one of the projects, failure would have damaged the credibility of the entire degree program.

We may say that support from administration is essential to the success of writing in the discipline projects because that support makes possible the initial development of such a project and ensures the continued effort of those in the project team. This support may also contain a risk element in that team members may feel a strong sense of the responsibilities placed on them by those in power. This sense of responsibility may be the other side of the driving force to sustain effort, especially if resources are channelled into the project.

The Qualities of the WAC Team

The projects that are the basis of this study clearly showed that not every faculty member from within the disciples can be involved in teaching a WAC program. Specific skills are required, as well as a flexible approach to teaching.

We were fortunate in our three projects in that the majority of the faculty initially involved were there because they had a passionate commitment to the need for curriculum reform. Surveys of employers (which were commissioned by the administration of the college of sciences and disseminated to all faculty) had confirmed what these faculty members suspected - that students were graduating with an inadequate understanding of the genres of their disciplines, and so they had a strong commitment to change. Furthermore, most—but not all—of these people were very talented writers in their own disciplines with strong publication records. As the projects continued and expanded over time, however, other faculty were added to the project teams by the administrators of the college. These faculty often had just as strong a sense of concern about student writing but were unsure of their abilities to contribute effectively to the teams or were not themselves confident or practiced writers.

Two of the project teams worked very closely together, holding weekly meetings and debating each aspect of the curriculum and pedagogical approach. Decisions took time, often following heated discussion and negotiation, and some reflection and evaluation took place each week until the end of the semester when sustained meetings dealt with the co-ordinated data collection. The other project team held a series of meetings to establish the direction of the project and then each member of the team operated independently, co-ordinating only with the person collecting the research data, and reporting back to the team in a single meeting at the end of the semester.

Our study indicated the need for some specific qualities in faculty members using WAC teaching techniques. First, faculty involved in using WAC teaching techniques need to volunteer to be involved in such a program—press-ganged faculty members are unlikely to produce committed WAC faculty. Second, faculty from discipline areas need to be, already, good teachers, with a flexible approach to teaching techniques and an ability and willingness to reflect on their own teaching. Finally, faculty from the disciplines need to be good writers; poor writers are unlikely to have the confidence to teach writing, whatever level of support is provided for them.

Furthermore, if WAC is implemented using a team of English and subject specialists, our study suggested the team needs to have a number of key characteristics. Of particular importance is that leadership needs to come

from within the team. Allowing for effective leadership from within the team means that members of the team are more likely to have a sense of ownership of the project, which is also important. Group support is essential, as is an ability to critique one another's work. The team also needs to develop a mechanism for reflection, such as writing professional journals or conducting focus group discussions. Interestingly, the size of the teams does not seem to be important—large groups (one project team had fifteen participants) can work as effectively as small groups; what matters is ongoing support, evaluation, and discussion as a whole team.

Finally, a combination of subject specialists and writing faculty works well, but writing faculty must be sensitive to the needs of the discipline, rather than imposing a single version of writing (i.e., a humanities style of writing) on the group.

Process

Peshe Kuriloff discusses the importance of having a structured process for WAC faculty working with subject specialists. Our study confirmed this to be of particular importance. In WAC projects that integrate the work of English faculty and subject specialists it is critical that no one takes on the role of "expert"—in a sense, everyone in each team may be seen as an expert—the writing faculty have expertise in the area of writing pedagogy, but the subject specialists should be valued as experts on their subject-specific discourses. It is important, then, to use a structured process that both allows these two groups to work together as equals and brings structure to the process of integrating writing into the curriculum.

We chose to use an Australian model of action research because as well as providing a structure and a model for collaboration, it also allowed us to adapt our project to meet our specific context and to embed our action in the research process. Furthermore, action research provides a model for change. WAC is, critically, about change—changing the curriculum, challenging our perceptions of our roles as teachers, challenging our relationships across the university. Action research uses a controlled process to bring about this change. We recommend this as an appropriate model for similar groups.

Action research is generally characterized as a recurring spiral, with four "moments" within each cycle: planning, action, observation, and reflection. When one cycle is completed, reflection leads into re-planning and so the cycle begins again. This cycle is generally schematized as shown in Figure 1. The cycle, as it is characterized here, provides a model of rigorous and systematic action and reflection on which to base informed change.
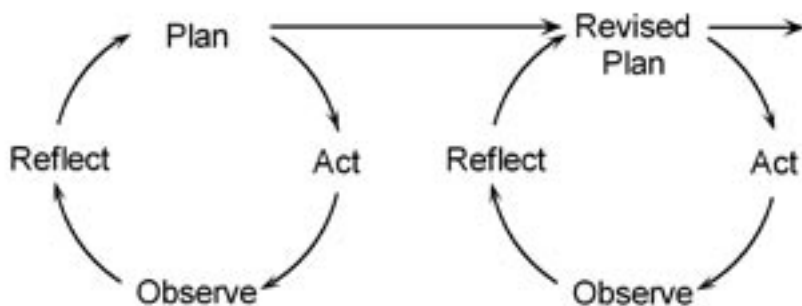
Figure 1. The action research cycle (Otrun Zuber-Skerrit)

Our project teams all used this model in slightly different ways. Each team spent considerable time at the planning stage. Planning involved four things: reconnaissance (looking at how writing had been incorporated into the curriculum prior to the projects), collecting relevant literature (in this case the material on WAC from universities outside New Zealand), designing an action plan based on present conditions and the relevant literature, and planning the data collection and evaluation strategies. The action plan involved identifying and setting goals and objectives (which focused on whether to use writing to learn and/or writing in the disciplines strategies, and whether to focus on academic or professional genres), appraising the level of students' skills and identifying students' needs and aspirations, and designing both assessment procedures and methods of explaining the new teaching approaches to students.

From here, the teams differed. Two of the teams continued to work as groups and to work the action and observation stages of the cycle in tandem. This meant that they met weekly with the person who was collecting the observation data to assess progress and to consider whether to adjust the weekly plan. On the basis of feedback, they used contingency planning to readjust the implementation of specific pedagogical techniques. For example, when student feedback suggested that students did not understand why they were required to write journals, the team decided to model journal writing to their classes and collected professional examples of how people in their discipline (e.g., horticulture) used journals to share with students. Similarly, when feedback suggested that the microthemes being set were too demanding, one team went back to the literature on microthemes to consider whether they had adequate understanding of the assignment type, and then adjusted the

kinds of themes being asked of students. At the end of the cycle (a semester), all the data from students was collected in report form and the teams engaged in lengthy assessment meetings to negotiate a new planning process.

The third team did not act as a team once the initial planning was established. Instead, team members acted individually throughout the semester-long research cycle, with team members independently incorporating the writing strategies into their classes, and the data collector operating independently. The team only reassembled to receive feedback from the data collector in a joint meeting at the end of the cycle.

A number of points can be made about the use of action research as a way of developing a WAC program. The first important point is that it provided us with a *structure* for group research, a structure which made everyone's contribution to the team equally important. We were concerned that power be shared within each group, that the writing faculty would respect the science staff's expertise in the genres of their disciplines, and that the science faculty would listen to the pedagogical expertise of the writing faculty. Action research, because of the way it required joint discussion, ensured this.

A second consideration was that the action research *process* provided us with a structure for our teaching and interaction, including a process of reflection and managed feedback.

We also need to note that the groups that engaged in ongoing reflection and evaluation produced more successful programs; clearly the action research cycle needed to be viewed as both a continuous cycle and a semester-long cycle, to ensure that feedback was speedily integrated into the action.

Students

Finally, the students have a major role to play in any WAC project, and we have already seen that constant student feedback is an essential part of the process. With this in mind it is essential that students engaged in a WAC project:

- engage in the feedback process;
- acknowledge writing as part of their professional training;
- use any support that is available to them;
- get involved in writing to learn activities such as journal writing; and
- be prepared to discuss theirs and others' writing in a safe environment.

Clearly, for students to be able to engage in this way, the faculty have to be prepared to set up a trusting and cooperative environment, and students have to feel that their feedback is being acknowledged (and, if appropriate, acted on). For example, in one project, the class asked if they could initiate an unscheduled focus group with the data collector, as they had some specific feedback which they wanted channeling into the teaching; that the team agreed to this and did incorporate the feedback into the project went a long way to developing student trust in the process. In another project, team members would occasionally read sections of their journals to the class as a way of illustrating how they were struggling with changes in teaching in the same way as the students were struggling with acquiring new writing styles. This also served as an effective way of modeling journal writing.

These, then, are the indicators from the four-year study, supported by the literature, that are needed for a successful WAC program, taught by teams of subject specialists and writing specialists.

Conditions for Developing an Institution-Wide Team-Based WAC Policy

It became clear in this study that the institution needs to provide a certain context in which team-based WAC might thrive across the university. For the features of this context, we need to look beyond a single study, into the broader literature. If the university—or indeed any tertiary institution—wanted to establish a team-based writing across the whole curriculum, what would it need to provide?

Janice R. Fauske identifies four institutional requirements for collaborative projects. The institution needs to:

- legitimize collaboration through philosophical and financial support;

- view collaborative research as legitimate;

- provide structures that facilitate collaboration; and

- institutionalize collaboration so that it is "woven into the fabric" of the institution.

Another factor that is implicit in much WAC literature is institutional leadership from either an English department (as promoted by Louise Z. Smith), a writing or learning center (see Mark Waldo), or an interdisciplinary committee (as outlined by Walvoord). Susan Gardner and S. A. Sutherland suggest that the institution must provide time, specifically time-release and funding, and that it should choose talented and experienced faculty whose teaching styles mesh together to undertake such a project.

Recent Australian studies, following North American initiatives, have focused on the need for universities to have an institution-wide *policy* on student literacy and communication. For such a policy to be implemented, they emphasize the following features:

- the policy needs to be "top-down," inasmuch as there has to be executive level support and structures which ensure that the ownership of the program is university-wide rather than ad hoc (see Baldauf, Parker, and Janice Catterall and Rosalind Martins for more discussion on this).

- an "advocate" at the executive level is important (at Curtin University the advocate had a strong research profile in the field, which gave added credibility to his support).

- expert advice (Baldauf) or "strategic initiatives" (Parker) on which to hang the implementation of the policy need to be already in place. These could include top-level strategies such as university-wide teaching policies or practical facilities such as the existence of a learning and language unit.

- "bottom-up" support from faculty and learning and language unit staff is needed to make the policy operational.

- feedback from employers is required at all levels to reinforce the importance of literacy issues.

- finally, Parker stresses the importance of developing the policy in a context-specific manner, building on existing institutional strengths, through "extensive consultation and negotiation, involving the reconciliation of at times conflicting perspectives and agendas" (31).

If we combine the features identified by the four-year project with the findings of the literature on the topic, we can generalize about the factors which are needed to ensure the success of a university-wide WAC program. The matrix in Table 1 summarizes these factors. Looking at this matrix, what should a tertiary institution do if it wishes to extend WAC across the curriculum?

First, the institution as a whole needs to establish WAC within its policy statements. It needs to acknowledge the messages from employers and graduates that we are failing to teach our students to write adequately and put an appropriate policy in place. This four-year study confirms the findings of other studies from Australian and North American institutions that suggest that a writing across the curriculum policy is more effective in changing curriculum than simply establishing a writing center or a generic writing course for all students because a WAC program is more likely to change student

Table 1. Institution-wide team-based WAC matrix

Institution	*Team*
• Executive level policy on literacy is needed • Support from administration for the WAC program is essential • Positive structures for eliciting and managing student feedback are needed • Institution must demonstrably value and support innovative teaching • Writing should be integrated in the broader curriculum • A university-wide writing or learning center is needed • Institutional structures that facilitate collaboration and communication are needed • Institutional leadership must be established and supported centrally • Financial support must be made available to fund time release for faculty and administration of the programs • An "advocate" at the executive level may be important • Feedback from employers is required at all levels to reinforce the importance of literacy issues. • Policy and program should be institution-specific, based on extensive negotiation and use of existing support structures	• Leadership within the group should be balanced by a sense of equal power and ownership • Group support and cohesion is needed • Participants should be confident writers • Participants should have a professional interest in teaching writing • Writing is more effectively integrated into new courses • Writing consultant/collaborator or resources are needed, with type of support determined by faculty confidence • Faculty need to have the ability and confidence to reflect on their performance • Talented and experienced teachers with meshing teaching styles should be used

Students	*Process*
• Students need to recognize the relevance of writing to professional goals	•Process must be flexible and contingent
• Student should actively use any support provided by the university	• Consensual action and established goals are needed
• Students should participate in opportunities to provide feedback to faculty	• Leadership is needed within the group
• Students should make their vocational priorities clear to faculty so that writing can be professionally directed (i.e. they can then be given tasks that relate to their professional development)	• Group support and cohesion needs to be developed
	• Continuous reflection is needed which brings feedback from all participants and relevant research into the process
• Students need to engage in writing to learn activities such as journal writing	• Teams should consider using action research as an effective method of ensuring the process features outlined above are in place
• Students should be prepared to discuss their own and others' writing in a safe and supportive classroom environment	• Positive structures for managing student feedback are needed
	• Feedback from employers concerning literacy requirements should be directly channelled to students

and faculty attitudes to writing; it is also more likely to ensure that students learn skills that are relevant to their future careers.

Alongside a policy statement, the institution needs to establish and support a program with a clear leadership responsibility. In other words, it will not be enough for, say, an English department to voluntarily take on this role without a mandate from the executive because resources are required and an English department is unlikely to be able to provide this kind of program and leadership using existing resources.

A mandate for leadership is needed. The appropriate place for leadership of WAC may be the department of English or rhetoric—or a writing or learning center, or a multidisciplinary writing team. However, if the English department or a writing center staffed by English majors takes on this lead-

ership role, it must take care not to fall into the trap of imposing a single appropriate writing style. Instead, it needs to work with subject specialists in a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach as outlined in this study.

The university needs to provide funding to ensure adequate administration and time release for those involved. Faculty who undertake a WAC program place themselves under considerable stress when they take on such retraining on top of their existing commitments.

The university needs to clarify the importance it places on teaching and teaching innovation and quality, and it needs to clearly communicate and demonstrate its position on this to all faculty. Faculty are not convinced by words in strategic plans: they need demonstrable evidence that teaching has improved their promotional opportunities and will continue to do so.

It is also important for an institution considering a team-based WAC program to consider the value it places on collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching and research. At present, the sciences and arts are very much separated, and while collaboration may take place within the sciences or within the arts, it is less likely to occur across the campus. If the university is to support team-based WAC it needs to put in place structures that allow for communication and collaboration across the disciplines. It needs to promote opportunities for collaborative research and ensure that a collaborative project is valued as highly as a project in an academic's specified discipline. In terms of teaching and research portfolios, this makes sense, as a collaborative project allows for more publications in a wider variety of literature.

The institution needs to take a broad and varied approach to evaluating teaching. A single, quantitative approach to eliciting student feedback is potentially damaging to innovative teaching. Instead, structures need to be put in place to triangulate evaluation processes and qualitative methods such as focus groups need to be used as well as, or instead of, simple quantitative methods.

Student support structures, such as a writing center or learning center, need to be in place. Such a facility needs to provide support to all students and might also provide resourcing for WAC groups. It could, for example, provide writing consultants to support the WAC teams.

Teams of faculty may be ideal to develop WAC programs, teams that combine subject specialists and writing consultants. Teams are necessary (rather than individuals working in isolation) because the impact of the WAC program is more sustained and satisfying for those involved when the program is initiated by a team. Members of these teams should be already good teachers and confident writers in their own fields. Each team should develop its own goals and objectives within the overall institutional WAC policy.

Finally, this study has suggested that action research is likely to produce a method of action highly suited to the needs of developing a WAC program. Action research has provided many necessary features—a flexible process with consensual and established goals, group support, leadership and ownership of the project, continuous reflection and management of student and faculty feedback, and linking of curriculum development with research opportunities. It is by no means the only possible method of developing a WAC program, but it is one that this study suggests is highly effective in a New Zealand context.

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Writing Beyond the Headline: Building a Writing Program at Princeton

Ann Jurecic

In December 2000, Princeton's faculty did something very surprising: they voted to support a proposal to restructure the teaching of writing at Princeton, a decision that led the university to build a new writing program from the ground up. Within nine months, Princeton instituted a new way to fulfill the writing requirement, committed funds to an independent program, developed a new pedagogy for first-year writing seminars, and hired a staff of lecturers to teach these courses. The change at Princeton appears so dramatic that the program was even featured in a front-page article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Why Johnny Can't Write, Even Though He Went to Princeton." Although the article surveyed the decisions to make changes at Princeton, Duke, Columbia, Brown, Penn, and Bowdoin, briefly sketching where these programs stand in their stages of revision, it was hard to see past the dismal headline and the opening hook. The piece began with a story about a student badly served under the previous structure of the writing requirement at Princeton, whose writing instructor "kill[ed] time and his students' enthusiasm," and whose father, a Princeton professor, was so outraged by her experience that he now teaches in the new program.

As a consequence of the slanted lead, the headline that evoked a critical moment in the history of literacy and composition, and the incomplete information about the featured programs, the article elicited predictably indignant responses. Letters to the editor chided the creation of topic-based seminars—"boutique courses to cajole reluctant students into writing-intensive classes"—and predicted, on the basis of no evidence, that "These solutions are doomed to the same failure as their predecessors because two crucial ingredients are missing: instructor enthusiasm and student understanding of writing's importance" (Gedeon; Sull). Another letter, from Theodora J. Kalikow, President of the University of Maine, proudly dis-

missed all the efforts at reform with the statement: "We could teach the big fancy places a thing or two. They should ask us." A few members of the WPA listserv joined the fray, with a lively exchange under the subject heading "A writing program crisis?" Fortunately, some of the postings to the list acknowledged that the article offered scant information on which to base judgments and also raised some provocative questions about whether or not program changes at high profile institutions are significant for higher education and the field of composition. Does it matter, for instance, that these programs tend to hire non-tenured faculty and administrators, most from disciplines other than composition and rhetoric? Is it meaningful that even institutions like Princeton now acknowledge that they need a writing program to assure that first-year writing is taught consistently and well? Or do such programs diminish the field by hiring "amateur" writing teachers into second-tier positions outside academic departments?

Those questions are certainly worth considering, but before I do, I would like to consider what these changes mean at Princeton, a story the *Chronicle* article simply did not tell. I begin by reading past the headline and the obvious appearances of change to consider the roles that a writing program can serve at a university as a product and also an agent of institutional change.

To clarify my terms, the writing program I refer to at Princeton is an independent administrative unit—not an academic department—that exists primarily to offer first-year writing seminars and to sponsor a writing center. While its mission is service, not research, and although few of its faculty identify themselves primarily as composition scholars, the program is home to a lively and continuous conversation about pedagogy and writing.

The term "institutional change" is a bit more challenging to pin down. In my most hopeful moments, I recognize a common goal with James E. Porter and his coauthors, Patricia Sullivan, Stuart Blythe, Jeffrey T. Grabill, and Libby Miles, whose Braddock Award-winning essay, "Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change," claims institutional critique as an "activity of rhetoric and composition" that "aim[s] to change the practices of institutional representatives and to improve the conditions of those affected by and served by institutions" (611). Here, Porter et al. identify the study and reform of institutions as core practices in composition. The work of Richard E. Miller has also argued for the centrality of institutional understanding and reform to writing program administration. Miller's work is particularly astute in pointing out, however, how closely frustration sits next to possibility when one attempts institutional change: "To pursue educational reform is thus to work in an impure space, where intractable material conditions always threaten to expose rhetorics of change as delusional or deliberately deceptive; it is also to insist that bureaucracies don't simply

impede change: they are the social instruments that make change possible"
(9). Following Porter et al. and Miller, when I write of institutional change,
I do not mean toppling the venerable institution I work for. Rather, I would
define agency as learning how to work *creatively* within constraints to alter
structures and practices so that the institution becomes more responsive and
humane to those within it.

When I think, therefore, of what would mark institutional change at
Princeton, I look beyond the account ledgers and the profile of the under-
graduate curriculum. In addition, I look beyond the question of whether
students are developing college-level writing skills in our seminars—which
they are—to whether the writing program has become a voice in the ongo-
ing conversation about undergraduate education. I also look to see if stu-
dents' experience of the institution as a whole has been enriched by the pres-
ence and work of the writing program—that is, to see if department faculty
are more confidently assigning ambitious essays of inquiry and argument.
Eventually, I'd like to hear that more professors are assigning drafts and
spending some time in class talking about writing assignments and defining
expectations. I'd like to know that juniors and seniors are being consistently
well guided and advised in their research projects. These are the changes in
practices—changes in teaching and in the place and value of writing—that
need to occur in order for the institution to have changed and to be doing a
better job of meeting the needs of student writers.

We're not there yet.

I'm in a unique position to be able to consider the nature and degree of
change at Princeton because in the mid-1990s, as I finished my PhD in the
English Department there, I worked for two years in the previous incarna-
tion of the writing program as the coordinator of the writing center and as a
lecturer. Six years and several jobs later, including a few years as an assistant
director in the Rutgers writing program, I returned to Princeton as an asso-
ciate director and to an entirely new and different program. The question of
how the program has evolved is one that I've pondered since my return.

For one who worked in the dark ages of the writing program at Princ-
eton, change appears dramatic. Let's start by talking real estate. In 1996, I
shared an office with the associate director of the program and this office
was, in fact, a closet. In addition to housing Ellen and me, this closet/office
contained the program's office supplies as well as its printer and, for a while,
its photocopier. The writing center that I ran was a small room with two
tables, some rickety room dividers, and two aged computers. These rooms, I
should add, were in a building on one edge of the campus, not far from the
library and other academic buildings, but not where the program and the

writing center got regular foot traffic. The main entrance to the writing center was from the building's dark interior alley whose distinguishing feature was a looming fire escape. Since material conditions can be a powerful sign of institutional importance, this portrait suggests—correctly—that the writing program had little institutional influence. Although arguments can and should be made about the potential power of marginal locations, at Princeton at this moment in time, writing instruction was tainted as remedial and therefore something to hide.

This interpretation of the symbolic value of the writing program at Princeton was clear to me when I first walked in the door as a tutor. Now, however, I can bring a bit more to my analysis. I am intrigued by Porter et al.'s use of spatial analysis as one of many frameworks that can be used to understand institutions (620). They use spatial analysis to study institutions and reform because they argue that "institutions are situated physically, that theories of change must account for such situatedness, and that attention to spatiality helps one fashion institutional change" (620). Their spatial analysis is informed by an understanding of institutions as multi-dimensional systems that extend from the local to the abstract, from the micro- to the macro-level. When we theorize institutions, we tend only to do so on the macro-level—for example, at the level of the discipline—but, in doing so, we inevitably limit our agency, at least as individuals. If we instead take a micro-level view of institutions, we can map the particular actions, policies, or spaces of an institution. Combining both macro- and micro-level institutional perspectives, we can see how different institutional formations relate to one another, to local practices, and to macro-level systems. It then becomes possible to understand how to move some of these pieces around, to re-imagine relationships, and to alter the organization and constitution of the map as it is presently conceived (Porter et al. 620-21). Porter et al.'s approach, in particular its attention to the multiple dimensions of institutional structures, helps to clarify not only the difficulties of the previous program at Princeton, but also how shifting conditions made possible the creation of a new program, and how further change might be imagined and implemented.

For hundreds of years, Princeton was content to have no formal writing requirement; students were expected to enter with strong skills and to develop those skills through regular course work. Through the mid-1980s, in fact, most students would have thought of Princeton's main writing requirement as their independent research projects in their majors—two junior papers and one senior thesis. Then, in 1990, Princeton created a small writing program and revised its writing requirement so that all students had to take a writing-intensive course. The program itself sponsored a small set of

topic-based courses. The program director defined goals and a structure for these courses and trained and supervised the advanced graduate students who taught them. The director was also nominally in charge of the array of courses throughout the university that fulfilled the writing requirement. These w-courses were typically large introductory classes across the disciplines that mixed lectures with small discussion sections taught mostly by graduate students. In order for a course to fulfill the writing requirement, students were supposed to produce a specified number of pages, compose drafts, receive feedback, and revise. At that time, however, the writing program director had no mandate to train instructors in the academic departments, nor did she have the institutional power to enforce compliance with the guidelines for writing-intensive courses. How, or even whether, instructors were trained and supported in the teaching of writing was left to the course leaders.

It will surprise no writing program administrator that this system didn't work. As the *Chronicle* article revealed in its lead, many of the students were unhappy, and I can assure you that those of us toiling away in the closet weren't having a great time, either. Joseph Harris spoke about such an untenable situation at the 2003 CCCC, when he criticized how writing programs are too often given responsibility without authority. In such conditions, productive change cannot occur or be sustained, and this is precisely what had happened at Princeton. The *Chronicle* could be interpreted as implying that the w-course system failed through negligence, as if no one knew or cared that there was a problem. In fact, the two directors who served in the previous incarnation of the program, Marvina White and David Thurn, wanted writing instruction to happen more consistently and well. They knew too well that they had a responsibility to solve the problem, but they also had no authority to do so. They fought to organize formal reviews, both internal and external, to examine the writing requirement and the place of writing in the university. They fought for the institutional influence and funding necessary to put together a stronger program.

One key macro-level change laid the foundation for profound change: the endowment's growth during the economic boom of the 1990s. This source of funding appeared in the context of several other changes in higher education and in elite universities that further prepared the university to commit to creating a more substantive writing program: increased investment in the "first-year experience"; the new status and attention to writing programs at institutions such as Cornell and Duke; and the decline of enrollments in the humanities along with the subsequent reexamination of the importance of pedagogy as a way of keeping students. Finally, I'd like to

add to this list of macro-level contextual changes that played a part in the decision to build a new writing program at Princeton the increased cultural currency of the field of composition.

As I've been thinking about how the current writing program came into being, I've also interviewed various players in its pre-history history. Collectively, they have given me insight into the importance of key micro-level agents and the local politics of the university that were, to those I interviewed, as important as the program reviews, and more important than the macro-level changes happening in higher education and the stock market. A few details should suffice to help me demonstrate my sense that the kind of changes that enabled the creation of the present Princeton writing program could occur only when, at last, macro-, micro- and mid-level stars aligned. After the mid-1980s, changes in personnel and the university's educational culture made the dean's office more receptive to the importance of teaching revision in courses that fulfilled the writing requirement. In addition, a powerful professor retired, one who had held a central place as a leader of one of the more popular w-courses that served hundreds of freshmen every year and thus brought potential majors to a small department. When those key changes occurred in the local landscape, arguments that the writing program directors had been making for years had a chance to be heard. In addition, the directors' repeated calls for the university formally to review the writing requirement led at last, in 1999, to an internal review of the program. This review, heavy with survey data regarding the inconsistency of writing instruction and student dissatisfaction, made a powerful case for the administration renewing its commitment to the teaching of writing. The external review done the following year recognized in stark terms the fundamental contradiction between the importance of advanced writing at Princeton and the place and status of writing instruction. This review sharply noted the contradiction that, although the senior thesis constitutes the academic pinnacle of a Princeton education, the courses in place to prepare students for these ambitious independent writing projects were peripheral and uneven.[1]

The review also argued that Princeton needed a program that could generate a vibrant and ongoing conversation about writing and teaching among faculty and graduate students from across the university, that it needed to define standards and assess outcomes, and that it needed to better and more consistently train and supervise graduate student teachers. It needed, in other words, a writing program that could more deeply effect substantial institutional change at the level of *teaching*.

As a consequence of this review, and as could happen only at a resource-rich institution, Princeton quickly built a new program. In 2001, the outgoing president of the university added a hefty line to the operating budget

to fund an independent writing program. The university then hired Kerry Walk from Harvard's Expository Writing Program, who deserves full credit for building the program in a few short months in the summer of 2001. She and the associate dean of the college hired a faculty that mixes full-time lecturers, advanced graduate students, and a few departmental faculty and university administrators. She then defined a pedagogy, a course structure and goals, grading standards, and a faculty training program. Now all first-year students take a topic-based, writing-centered seminar in which they learn to pose genuine questions about compelling problems, and in those courses they repeatedly practice developing academic arguments through engagement with sources. Because part of the program's mission is to help prepare students for the independent research writing they will do their junior and senior years, the students compose a research paper, and begin to learn how to find a variety of sources and to use them in multiple and complex ways in sustained arguments.

All I've reported seems to shout that institutional change has occurred. There's certainly been positive change. But I still wonder about the extent to which the creation of a freestanding writing program constitutes fundamental institutional change. Perhaps my hesitation will be clearer if I pose the question this way: Has the "problem" of student writing been solved by putting a strong first-year course into place?

Once I've revised my question, it's obvious that for the university to see a writing program as a single-course, add-on, quick-fix solution is to misunderstand the complexity of the problem the program was created to solve. Faculty at Princeton, like faculty everywhere, speak wistfully of a mythic time, long ago, but supposedly within their professional memory, when students wrote better. This is a particularly dangerous myth for a new writing program to face because it is accompanied by the expectation that a first-year composition course will easily solve that problem, clean the students up, and pass them on, so that the rest of the institution can go on functioning as it was meant to function, as it functioned back in the days when students knew how to write flawless essays without having to be taught to do so. One of the many logical fallacies here is the idea that a writing program can succeed without being accompanied by or causing institutional change—that is, without the institution shifting to value the *teaching* of college-level writing skills. If a university creates a writing program without a broad commitment to the teaching of writing, then to what extent has the institution changed?

One way to think about the question of institutional change and the new Princeton writing program is to return for a moment to spatial analysis and literal real estate as an indicator of the figurative place of the program within the institution. Now and for the next few years, we are in a large house on

the main social corridor—the Street—as the students call Prospect Avenue. The discussions about where we will go next, however, are revealing. The original plan was to move us about a quarter mile further down the street to a former private student club—a club that failed, significantly, because it was on a periphery of campus, on the opposite side of campus from the student residence halls. This plan did not bode well for the program. It threatened to make our classes, our faculty offices, and our writing center inaccessible, while also reinforcing the marginal place of writing instruction at the university. It threatened, in short, to undermine our mission.

Now, however, there is a new plan. Instead of being pushed to the margins, the writing program will be housed, by fall 2007, in a new residence college to be built among the existing residence colleges. One way of reading our move is this: we will be an intellectual presence integrated into student life; our classes and faculty will be more accessible than ever; the writing center will certainly thrive in a location that assures that students, in the grip of an assignment, can wander over for tutoring in their slippers. This reading of our move has real appeal because we are eager to take advantage of the opportunity we've been given to embed academic writing into students' lives.

And yet, I also recognize that this move may indicate something less positive about our place in the institution and the limits of the institutional change that has taken place. While our new home signals recognition of the centrality of writing to student life, it also separates the writing program, in type and location, from any other academic program or department, and runs the risk of isolating us further from the intellectual center of the university. While the gap between the students and the program will be productively narrowed by our move—all to the benefit of first-year writing—we will have to work hard to make sure that the gap between the program and the academic life of the university does not widen still more. The new location may make it even more challenging to fulfill the call of the external review to promote a cross-disciplinary discussion among faculty and graduate students about writing and the teaching of writing.

The truth is, of course, that this essential conversation will be difficult to start and sustain, no matter where we're housed. In order for it to take place, a deeper change must occur in the university—a change that did not, by fiat, occur with a reallocation of funds, the creation of a new first-year writing requirement, and the hiring of writing program administrators and a staff of lecturers. The daily improvisation and problem-solving that define our work always remind us that part of the very difficult job of a new writing program is to create the sort of institutional change that will enable that conversation to take place. The goal of that conversation is the fundamental goal of

writing in the disciplines and writing across the curriculum programs—to recognize the central place of writing and writing instruction in a liberal arts education, and also to recognize that the responsibility for helping students write with increasing complexity and maturity cannot entirely be borne by writing program faculty. Through hours of conversation and work, we have come to see our program as being *instrumental* to making good writing happen at the university; but we also recognize that we alone cannot be wholly *responsible* for making that happen.[2] Students' senior theses will improve not only because they have taken a first-year writing seminar, but because their experience as writers has been enriched throughout their undergraduate careers. And that is one change that we can only influence slowly—one professor, one graduate student, one tutor at a time.

This is the story that got left out of "Why Johnny Can't Write. . ."—a story about financial, cultural, and extra-institutional changes, about local politics and the power of data, and about changes that have laid the foundation for what we hope will be a deeper change in how teaching writing is understood and valued. It's another version of the oft-told story of writing program administrators as agents of institutional change and local reform. Arguments about this aspect of our administrative role have been made by James Porter et al. and Richard Miller, whose work I discussed earlier; many others have made valuable contributions to this thread of writing program administration scholarship, among them Lynn Z. Bloom, Toby Fulwiler, Anne Ruggles Gere, Daniel Mahala, Susan McLeod, Libby Miles, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps.[3] This truism of writing program administration, however, needs regularly to be rediscovered in our particular locations, in our daily work, especially in new programs, and emphatically at institutions as traditional as Princeton. Another truth is clear, as well: the institutional change our Program has caused and the change we hope to cause are probably not going to announce themselves in flashy headlines or catchy stories. I expect that if or when we realize our ambitions regarding institutional change at Princeton, the change we inspire will feel to many at the university like no change at all. Instead, this change is likely to be naturalized, becoming part of what makes the institution effective and habitable for both students and their teachers.

In writing the unwritten story of the Princeton writing program, I have yet to address the questions raised by the *Chronicle* article and the responses to it about whether the changes in the writing program at Princeton and several of its peer institutions have significance for the field of composition as a whole—that is, whether the new programs at elite institutions signal a professional crisis, professional possibility, both, or neither. The concerns typi-

cally raised are that these programs diminish the field because they are not academic departments; they employ faculty from across the disciplines to teach in untenured, temporary positions, thereby perpetuating composition's reliance on contingent labor; in contrast to Cornell, Duke, and Stanford, many of these programs have non-tenured leaders; and these programs are typically defined by the ethic of service that seems to some to have limited the field in the past.[4]

I'd like to be able to offer the definitive response to these questions and concerns, but to supply answers that will be acceptable to all critics doesn't seem possible, especially since my strongest justifications are simply pragmatic. At Princeton, local conditions have shaped the current program in ways that make the status of writing and writing instruction at the university ambiguous. Nevertheless, here on Prospect Avenue, the present structure appears to be a workable first step. Because we offer topic-based courses, we are able to introduce students to the conventions of inquiry-based writing that are so vital to their success here. Because we fulfill our service mission, the departmental faculty largely support us. They also appear to see value in our program's organization and purpose, despite our lack of departmental status, because we train post-docs and graduate students and enhance what these scholars can offer in the academic marketplace. In other words, as problematic as the program's structure is for the symbolic value of composition at the university, this structure enables us to get our job done here and now.

I acknowledge that such a pragmatic, locally grounded response may seem inadequate. Understandably and appropriately, many of our professional conversations seek common ground, and this answer offers none. But, inevitably, as soon as we start talking about the institutional structures and cultures that define so much of our work as administrators, our differences complicate communication and can feed misunderstanding and conflict. Especially in an era when state colleges and universities have recently faced unprecedented budget cuts, financial inequities between programs—which are admittedly gut wrenching, and even obscene—certainly contribute to the tension in the room.

So how can we talk productively about our institutional differences?

Recent WPA scholarship offers frameworks for conceiving new and broadened conversations. Jeffrey T. Grabill and Lynée Lewis Gaillet's work on "Writing Program Design in the Metropolitan University" seeks to expand our construction of writing programs as institutional structures by using the model of the metropolitan university—a university that is a system that coordinates work both within the university and in partnership with the community for research and problem solving. When Grabill and Gaillet

define writing programs as "a new type of institutional system with multiple purposes, functions, and activities tied to research" (61), they revise our understanding of their institutional nature so that their own writing program at Georgia State University can take a central place in professional conversations about administrative structures. This is a tempting new theory of an active, engaged, and productive system. Unfortunately, it leaves my writing program—which is funded to provide a service, not research, and which is not integrated into the community—still on the periphery and makes me hesitant to generalize about programs in ways that flatten the particulars of institutional difference.

Thomas Amorose's "WPA Work at the Small College or University: Re-Imagining Power and Making the Small School Visible," is more helpful in supporting my sense that that institutional structure makes a profound difference in the nature of our particular jobs as WPAs. Amorose observes that "the work of Writing Program Administrators at small colleges and universities goes under-reported and generally unaddressed" (85). In addition, he writes that the collective erasure of small-school WPA work has meant not only that small-school WPAs have been "under-served" by the discipline's discourse, but also that the large-university WPAs have missed out on the contributions and perspectives of a subset of the field (85-86). To begin to build an understanding of how a small-school WPA must operate, Amorose redefines the ways in which power, influence, and authority function in different institutional structures, and demonstrates how an appreciation of these differences is essential in enabling WPAs to become locally effective agents of change.

Like Amorose, I believe we must become more articulate about our institutional differences in our professional discussions of writing program administration. Such conversations have the potential to make us aware of unexamined assumptions about our own institutions and others, in addition to informing a broader and deeper understanding of how we can better function as agents of institutional change. Amorose's article, however, enables us to acknowledge only the small school/large university difference; our differences extend beyond this distinction and are complicated by institutional structure, history, geography, economics, and culture in all its manifestations. While I appreciate that Amorose has drawn our attention to one difference that hasn't been sufficiently acknowledged in the scholarship, and while I do think broadened conversation about institutional systems is profoundly useful, I remain, at this point, uncertain about whether it is possible to define a framework for a conversation across so very many divides.

In the end, however, even without a general framework, I maintain that the rise of new writing programs at high-profile institutions offers an occasion for productive cross-institutional conversations that directly address the

extent to which our jobs are defined by local structures, constraints, personnel, and personalities. We have long acknowledged that our students learn in different cultural, economic, and personal circumstances, and it is worth pondering, as well, how different settings, structures, and budgets require and enable different solutions to the problem of how best to teach our students to become college writers. It will take patience and skill to talk across institutions and to respect the local realities that disrupt our sense of what we have in common. But this talk about institutions and difference promises, if nothing else, to deepen our sense of how institutions function and thus to help us imagine otherwise unimaginable possibilities for reform.

Notes

[1] The external and internal reviews are private documents. Although I've been given permission to paraphrase the texts, I cannot quote from them or cite the authors.

[2] Gretchen B. Rossman first pointed out the useful distinction between instrumentality and responsibility to the administrators of the Princeton writing program in a conversation in January, 2003. Since then, it has helped frame our thinking about program assessment and our writing in the disciplines initiative.

[3] See: Lynn Z. Bloom, "Making Differences: Writing Program Administration as a Creative Process"; Toby Fulwiler, "The Quiet and Insistent Revolution: Writing Across the Curriculum"; Anne Ruggles Gere, "The Long Revolution in Composition"; Daniel Mahala, "Writing Utopias: Writing across the Curriculum and the Promise of Reform"; Susan H. McLeod, "The Foreigner: WAC Directors as Agents of Change"; Libby Miles, "Constructing Composition: Reproduction and WPA Agency in Textbook Publishing"; Louise Wetherbee Phelps, "The Institutional Logic of Writing Programs: Catalyst, Laboratory, and Pattern for Change."

[4] For an example of many of these criticisms, see Thomas Miller's comments, quoted in Peggy O'Neill and Ellen Schendel's "Locating Writing Programs in Research Universities," 206.

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CORRECTION TO WPA 27.1/2

The editors regret misspelling Mary Juzwik's name in our last issue. The correct and full citation of her article is as follows:

Juzwik, Mary. "Handling Curricular Resources: An Examination of Two Teachers' Tactical Appropriation of First-Year Composition Curricula." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 27.1/2 (Fall/Winter 2003): 40-58

Review

Pemberton, Michael A. and Joyce Kinkead, eds. *The Center Will Hold: Critical Perspectives in Writing Center Scholarship.* Logan, UT: Utah State UP: 2003. 225 pages. $21.95 (paper).

Melissa Ianetta and Dana Oswald

In the introduction to *The Center Will Hold*, editors Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead attribute to this collection a dual intent; it is to serve as "both an overview of Muriel Harris' continuing legacy and as a general framework for the writing center research that is yet to come" (2). As such, this volume acquaints the reader new to the field with Harris' many contributions to writing center studies even as it suggests some of the ways in which specialists continue to build upon her work. Such a two-fold goal not only seems highly appropriate to a collection dedicated to Muriel Harris— someone who has come to personify the commitment to welcoming inclusiveness and methodological plurality fundamental to this field—but also to the diverse audience of writing center tutors, scholars and administrators who will read this book with pleasure. Indeed, our own reactions as reviewers suggest the ways in which this volume will appeal to a broad readership; both Melissa—a writing center researcher and administrator—and Dana— a graduate student writing instructor and former writing tutor—found the essays in this volume accessible and enlightening.

The first three essays in the collection evidence the plurality of methods that is a hallmark of writing center studies. In Chapter One, for example, Michael Pemberton uses archival analysis to build an argument about the increasing professionalization of *The Writing Lab Newsletter* (*WLN*). He constructs the initial role of the *WLN* as a community-building *kaffeklatsch* (a descriptor borrowed from Robert Connors) by tracing the waxing and waning of such readily-identified *WLN* features as informal letters to the editor, new subscriber mailing lists, and conference summaries. As the *Newsletter*—and the field it represents—has developed, however, this casual, communal tone has been replaced by a growing sense of professionalism

in writing center studies. Thus, Pemberton notes, conference reports and mailing lists are replaced with more abstract concerns, such as meta-critical reflections on the role of research in writing center administration and methodological arguments concerning the possible modes of disciplinary inquiry. Dovetailing nicely with those early calls for research cited in Pemberton's essay, Chapters Two and Three respectively argue for the value of qualitative and quantitative research. In "In the Spirit of Service: Making Writing Center Research a 'Featured Character,'" Nancy M. Grimm calls for context-based studies, claiming that such research allows us to take advantage of "the unique level of access writing centers have to students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds" (43). Using the framework of New Literacy Studies, she forwards an ideological model of literacy which goes beyond "the words on the page" to include "not only the text, but also the conceptions, attitudes, and belief systems of the individuals involved in the literate activity" (46). While Grimm thus argues for the importance of qualitative research, Neal Learner, in his "Writing Center Assessment: Searching for the Proof of Our Effectiveness," focuses on the intersection of writing center scholarship and statistical analysis that lies in assessment studies. First pointing out shortcomings in extant quantitative writing center studies, Lerner then goes on to propose an alternate model of statistical analysis. Rather than merely tallying students who walk through our doors, he contends, we need to broaden our assessment to include surveying such elements as student need, student satisfaction, and campus environment. Ultimately, then, both Lerner and Grimm argue for broadening the context of writing center research, albeit with differing methodological emphases.

While these opening contributors reassess past, present and future methods of writing center research, the following three essays offer new perspectives into current disciplinary perceptions and practices of tutoring. Harvey Kail reads tutor training manuals as an "initiation story, a *bildungsroman* of sorts [. . .] that can tell us, like all good stories do, a bit more about who we are and what we care most about" (75), for example, while Peter Carino examines the long-standing problematic relationship between authority and authoritarianism in collaborative tutoring. Offering a counterpoint to Carino's compelling argument for accepting the power of expertise as an inescapable component of tutoring is Michelle Eodice's lyrical and moving "Breathing Lessons or Collaboration Is . . .." Partially an epideictic meditation on the creative powers of collaboration and partially a critique of the collaborative paradox at the heart of writing center work, this essay is one of the high points of the collection. Eodice examines the collaboration between tutors and writers, writing program directors and other campus administrators

and, in fact, between the essay's reader and Eodice herself. Taken together Carino and Eodice invite us to reconsider our individual assumptions about the role of collaboration in the writing center.

The next two chapters in Pemberton and Kinkead's collection focus on the work of writing program administrators and their preparation for that work. Josephine A. Koster interrogates our rhetorical role, arguing that just as we encourage our tutors to learn to work with writers from across the curriculum so too must we work to communicate with campus factions whose agendas and discourse practices differ from our own. Rebecca Jackson, Joe Law and Carrie Leverenz focus on our preparation for this task, combining a survey with case studies to examine the ways in which the increasing professionalization of writing center directors is reflected in the coursework intended to ready graduate students for this position.

The final two essays in the collection examine the spaces of the writing center. Leslie Hadfield et al focus on the former by using architectural philosophy and design principles to develop an imaginary writing center free of such real-world concerns as the availability of space and money. In the process of developing an ideal writing center, the authors both imagine what a writing center might one day become and suggest how principles from interior design might be applied more immediately in extant writing centers. James Inman and Donna Sewell also consider the present and potential spaces of the writing center community, but in "Mentoring and Electronic Spaces: Using Resources to Sustain Relationships" they primarily focus on virtual space, examining the manner in which WCenter has served as forum for mentoring relationships in the writing center community.

As might be suggested by this review, *The Center Will Hold* is characterized by such a variety of topics and approaches that it is difficult to identify a tightly unifying theme throughout the volume. Accordingly, when attempting to describe the contents in the introduction Pemberton and Kinkade use five subtopics to categorize the ten essays, indicating perhaps the editorial struggle to articulate the distinctive focus of the collection. We note the multiplicity of this volume less as a critique, however, than as a testimony to the range of Muriel Harris's research, which is woven throughout all the essays in this collection. Like Harris's contribution to writing studies, then, the appeal of *The Center Will Hold* lies in the heterogeneity of its multifaceted contribution to the field and it will surely become a standard resource for writing center professionals.

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Announcements

The Council of Writing Program Administrators invites you to three exciting events during July 11-18, 2004, at the University of Delaware: The Summer Workshop for new WPAs on July 11-15, 2004; the Assessment Institute on July 15th; and the Annual WPA Summer Conference July 15-18th.

Workshop for Writing Program Administrators (Limited to 25 participants). This year's workshop will take place at the beach community of Lewes, Delaware, at the University of Delaware's Virden Center on the Hugh Sharp Campus for marine studies.

- Workshop Leaders: Kathleen Blake Yancey and Irwin (Bud) Weiser
- Fee of $795 until June 21; $845 after June 21. Fee includes all materials; housing July 11-14; and all but one meal, from dinner July 11 through lunch July 15.
- Early registration is strongly encouraged.

Assessment Institute (Limited to 25 participants). This one-day Assessment Institute will take place at Clayton Hall on the main campus of the University of Delaware in Newark, DE, just prior to the opening of the 2004 annual conference. (Please note: The Institute overlaps with the WPA Workshop, scheduled from July 11-15, 2004).

- Institute Leaders: Susanmarie Harrington, Marlene Miner, and Dan Royer
- Fee of $140 until June 21; $165 after June 21. Fee includes all materials as well as lunch and an afternoon snack.
- Early registration is encouraged.

Summer Conference for Writing Program Administrators. This year's conference will take place at Clayton Hall on the main campus of the University of Delaware. Fee of $195 until June 21; $235 after June 21; special graduate student fee is $165. Fee includes breakfast July 16, 17, and 18; lunch July 16 and 17; banquet dinner July 17; receptions July 15, 16, and 17; morning and afternoon breaks on July 16 and 17. Lodging is separate. (Please note: Residence hall apartments at affordable prices will be available. See complete information on conference Web Site.) Visit the Conference Web site at www.english.udel.edu/wpa2004

The 4th Symposium on Second Language Writing, "Second Language Writing Instruction in Context(s): The Effects of Institutional Policies and Politics," will take place from September 30 to October 2, 2004, at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA. Invited speakers will include:

Danling Fu, University of Florida
Ilona Leki, University of Tennessee
Sarah Weigle, Georgia State University
Jessica Williams, University of Illinois at Chicago

The theme for this year's Symposium is "Second Language Writing Instruction in Context(s): The Effects of Institutional Policies and Politics." While the majority of work done in second language writing addresses instruction, the focus of much of this scholarship is on what happens in the classroom as opposed to how the institutional contexts outside the classroom shape instructional practices. To help remedy this imbalance, this symposium will focus on institutional polices and politics and how they influence classroom practice. We refer here to policies on assessment, placement, credit, class size, course content, instructional practices, teacher preparation, and teacher support and to politics in terms of the relationships and interaction between second language writing professionals and their colleagues at the program, department, school, college, and university levels and beyond.

Presenters will explore how instructional policies and politics affect instructional practices. The Symposium will also provide many opportunities—both formal and informal—to interact with presenters as well as other second language writing specialists.

Special Event: Graduate Student Conference on Second Language Writing. In addition to the regular two-day symposium, we will host a graduate student conference on Thursday, September 30. We hope many people—both graduate students and experienced second language writing specialists—will participate in this event, which aims to bring together the next generation of second language writing specialists.

For more information, please visit: http://symposium.jslw.org/

Second Language Writing Series, Parlor Press. Series Editor, Paul Matsuda, University of New Hampshire. Second language writing emerged in the late twentieth century as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, and an increasing number of researchers from various related fields—including applied linguistics, communication, composition studies, and education—have come to identify themselves as second language writing specialists. The Second Language Writing series aims to facilitate the advancement of knowledge in the field of second language writing by publishing scholarly and research-based monographs and edited collections that provide significant new insights into central topics and issues in the field.

This Series seeks submissions that expand, refine or challenge the existing knowledge in the field by using various modes of inquiry, such as philosophical, historical, empirical (quantitative and qualitative) and narrative. Some of the possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- the nature, backgrounds, and characteristics of second or foreign language writing and writers;
- issues in second language writing instruction, assessment, and program administration;
- the experience of second language writers, writing teachers, and writing program administrators;
- institutional policies, politics, and practices that affect second language writers;
- instructional practices in various institutional and disciplinary contexts;
- implications of technological innovations on second language writing;
- the relevance of theories developed in other fields;
- the definition and historical development of the field and its relationship with other fields; and
- approaches to inquiry in studying second language writing and writers.

Manuscripts that explore the implications of second language writing issues in other related fields are also welcome. Following the common practice in the field, submissions to this Series should follow the current APA style. Queries should be directed to Paul Kei Matsuda, Department of English, University of New Hampshire, Hamilton Smith Hall, 95 Main Street, Durham, NH 03824-3574 USA. Email: matsuda@jslw.org. For complete submission guidelines, see <http://www.parlorpress.com/submissions.html>. Your proposal should outline the rationale and projected audience for the book and its relation to other books in the field; include the book's table of contents or a chapter outline, the estimated length and the timetable for completion, and the introduction and a sample chapter. Please also send the c.v. of the author or editor.

Contributors to *WPA* 27.3

Lisa Emerson is a member of the School of English and Media Studies at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Her key research interest is WAC in the science curriculum, and the use of action research to develop effective WAC teams. Her recent publications include "Writing in a New Zealand Tertiary Context" in *Language and Languages* and "Challenging the Pedagogy of Tertiary Level Horticulture" in *HortTechnology*. She has written and edited five books for students on writing in the disciplines and was one of the founders of the Tertiary Writing Network of New Zealand.

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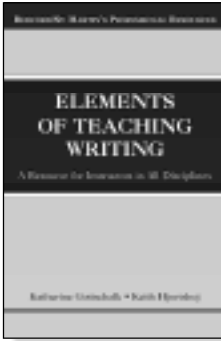
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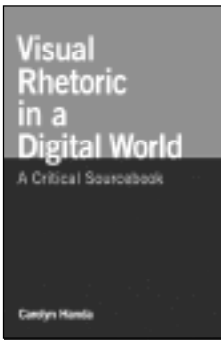
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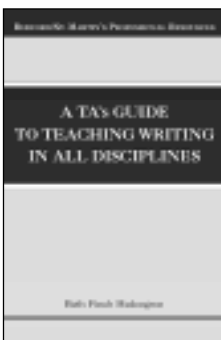
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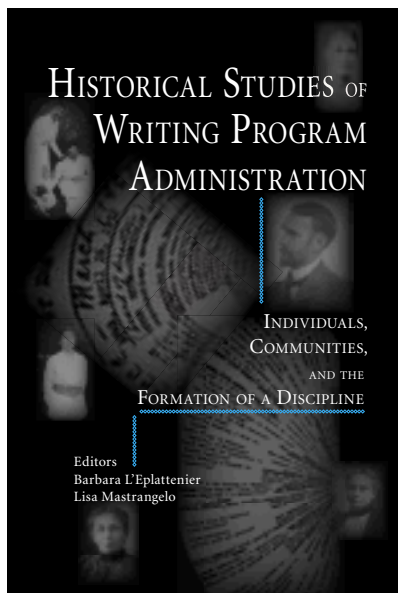
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