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Literature Requirements in the Curricula of Writing Degrees and Concentrations: Examining a Shifting Institutional Relationship*

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Setting the Stage

In the early 1980s, the writing faculty in the Clemson University Department of English, a significant minority in the department, developed a proposal for a master's degree in technical communication. When the proposal was presented to colleagues at a department meeting, it was overwhelmingly voted down by the literature faculty. A member of the committee that developed the proposal recalls that a literature professor who vehemently opposed the proposal insistently equated the study of technical communication with auto mechanics.

Over the next decade, Clemson's English department underwent changes that made it a more hospitable environment for writing faculty. The department hired four full-time writing specialists; three former literature specialists increasingly focused their teaching and research on writing, and several new upper-level courses in writing were approved and taught. Even to the more traditional literature faculty members in the department, it was obvious that writing enjoyed considerably more prominence within English studies than it had previously and that its stature as an academic discipline had significantly increased in recent years. In this improved climate, the writing faculty felt the time was right to resurrect the plan for a graduate degree in professional writing.[b]

Determined not to repeat the mistake of their predecessors, the writing faculty shared drafts of the proposal and solicited feedback from other departmental colleagues throughout the development process. A suggestion had been made to require at least three credits of literature in the program's course requirements, but the writing faculty had decided not to take that

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suggestion on the grounds that many of the students who matriculate into a "professional writing" program would have neither the background to succeed in a graduate-level literature course, nor would they have an interest in literary study. Yet when the proposal came to the full department for a vote, the literature faculty, which still represented a substantial majority of the department, insisted that they could not approve an *English* department degree that did not include a literature requirement. Rather than face the defeat of this second attempt to institute a graduate degree, the writing faculty reluctantly agreed to require three credits of literature in exchange for the department's approval. To this day, students in the program are required to complete a minimum of three credits of literature.

Framing the Questions

The preceding case clearly illustrates the influence of power and departmen tal politics on curricular outcomes. But how representative is this scenario? The present study seeks to determine whether the experiences in this particular department typify the relationship between literature and writing in English departments. This study focuses on three questions raised by the preceding case as they apply to undergraduate and graduate degrees and to concentrations in writing. The answers to those questions will give WPAs a national perspective on the curricula of writing degree programs, as well as give them insights into trends in the evolution of those curricula.

The first question is whether and to what extent degrees and concentrations in writing require students to complete literature courses. John Schilb, for example, indicates that "most graduate programs in [composition] still make their students take some courses in literature" (168). The question does not assume that required courses in literature are inimical to the goals of a writing curriculum, although they may well be, as suggested by the preceding case in which graduate students who may have no academic interest in literary study are required to complete a literature course.

Assuming that some English departments do require literature in the curricula of their writing degrees and concentrations, the second question to be asked is "Why?" On what basis do English departments require such courses? What is the department's justification or rationale for the requirement?

Finally, as the case also illustrates, the eventual approval of a graduate degree in writing depended on a change in the literature/writing dynamic within the department. Surveys conducted by the Modern Language Association (MLA) and its subsidiary the Association of Departments of English (ADE) confirm that English departments throughout the United States experienced a similar transformation in the relationship between literature

and writing during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Many English departments established new degrees in writing, enrollments in many writing degrees increased while those in many literature degrees experienced declines, and writing faculty now wield considerable influence in many English departments. For example, in "The 1981–82 Writing and Literature Survey: Courses and Programs," Art Young reported, "Many departments have recently made curricular changes in response to demands for writing courses from students, from faculty in disciplines other than English, and from employers. These changes include new bachelor and graduate degree programs, new writing options in existing programs, new minors in writing, and numerous new writing courses" (par. 6). The following year, in "The 1982–83 Writing and Literature Survey: Courses and Programs," Young and his colleagues Mike Gorman and Margaret Gorman found "[…] evidence that English departments are changing, that the emphasis on writing courses is increasing and the emphasis on literature is decreasing" (par. 17). According to their survey findings, a combined 70% of PhD-, MA-, and BA-granting institutions reported that enrollments in writing courses had increased "significantly in the last five years," whereas 32% of the same sample of institutions reported that enrollments in literature courses had decreased "significantly" during that same period (Young, Gorman, and Gorman Table 7). In their "Report on the 1983–84 Survey of the English Sample," Bettina J. Huber and Art Young confirm this trend as it applied specifically to the "technical communication major": "[. . .]although technical communication is the least common undergraduate degree program in English, it is the most likely to have grown. . . . [A]lmost three-quarters of the departments offering a degree program in technical communication reported growth, as compared with one-half for creative writing and two-fifths for the English major" (par. 30). Moreover, Bettina J. Huber reported in "Undergraduate English Programs: Findings from an MLA Survey of the 1991–92 Academic Year" that the percentage of four-year departments permitting a concentration in "Writing (e.g., professional, technical)" number had increased to 45.9% from the 29.2% reporting such a concentration in the 1984–85 survey (Table 4, 66).

In "Report on the 1983–84 Survey of the English Sample," Huber and Young found that these trends applied to graduate English degree programs as well. Of the English departments in their sample that offered a graduate degree in rhetoric, 78.3% reported that the degree program had "experienced growth," as compared to the 25.8% that reported experiencing growth in their graduate degree programs in British and American literature (Table 1).

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Thus, a final question to be asked is whether such changes in the writing-literature balance in English departments have influenced the practice of requiring students in writing degrees and concentrations to complete one or more courses in literature.

Conducting the Study

For answers to the preceding questions, I designed a survey instrument (see Appendix), which I mailed to the 722 members of the Association of Departments of English (ADE) in fall 2002. With 2,722 postsecondary English departments in the United States, the ADE member departments represent 26% of the total.[c] I received 245 responses, which represent 34% of the ADE membership or approximately 9% of the postsecondary English departments in the United States. Because the survey inquired exclusively about the inclusion of literature courses in writing degree curricula, only responses from departments that offered degrees (or degree concentrations) in writing were usable.

Of the 245 anonomized responses, 89 indicated that they did not offer degrees in writing (including nine that offered only the associate's degree). In other words, 65% of the responding departments offer at least one degree, or degree concentration, in writing.[d] Because some responding departments offer more than one writing degree, the 156 usable responses (22% of the sample) represent 218 writing degree programs, which break down as follows by degree-granting status: 16 PhD programs, 64 MA programs, 138 BA programs.

Tabulating the Results

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether students enrolled in the writing degree program were required to complete a course in literature. Overall, the breakdown of writing-degree curricula that include literature as a requirement is as follows:

Table 1.
Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Level of Degree	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
PhD	16	6 (37.5%)
MA	64	42 (65%)
BA	138	116 (84%)
Total	**218**	**164 (75%)**

These results confirm that literature courses are required in a majority (75%) of writing-degree curricula. However, as the writing degrees become more advanced, the number of degree programs that require literature decreases significantly, with only 37.5% of PhD writing-degree programs requiring literature, as opposed to 65% at the MA level and 84% at the BA level. Such evidence that literary study is excluded from the curricula of many advanced writing programs, at the very least, invites questions about the justification for housing literature and writing in the same department.

The survey results also justify a further analysis based on the specific title or focus of the degree. Tables 2 through 6 indicate the correlation at each degree level between the specific degree titles or specializations and the inclusion of literature in the curriculum.

Table 2.
PhD Writing Programs: Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Title of Degree	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
Rhetoric and Composition*	11	3 (27%)
Professional Writing**	2	0
Creative Dissertation	2	2 (100%)
Discourse Theory	1	1 (100%)
Total	**16**	**6 (37.5%)**

* The term "Rhetoric and Composition" is also used generically in all relevant tables in this essay to refer to such degree titles as "Writing," "Writing and Linguistics," "Rhetoric, Writing, and Language," etc.

** The term "Professional Writing" is also used generically in all relevant tables in this essay to refer to such degrees as "Professional Communication," "Technical Communication," "Technical Writing," "Technical & Professional Communication," "International Technical Communication," "Professional Writing and Editing," etc.

Table 3.
MA in English with Writing Emphasis: Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Title of Concentration	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
Rhetoric and Composition	16	13 (81%)
Professional Writing	4	4 (100%)
Creative Writing	8	8 (100%)
Total	**28**	**25 (89%)**

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Table 4.
MA Writing Degrees: Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Title of Degree	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
Rhetoric and Composition	10	6 (60%)
Professional Writing	12	1 (8%)
MFA	11	7 (64%)
Other*	3	3 (100%)
Total	**36**	**17 (47%)**

* Teaching of English; Writing, Theory & Criticism; Writing & Literature

Table 5.
BA in English with Writing Emphasis: Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Title of Concentration	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
Rhetoric and Composition	33	30 (91%)
Professional Writing	18	17 (94%)
Creative Writing	29	29 (100%)
Other*	7	7 (100%)
Total	**87**	**83 (95%)**

*Language, journalism, public relations, communication arts

Table 6.
BA Writing Degrees: Literature in the Writing Degree Curriculum

Title of Degree	Number of Degrees	Number and Percentage of Degrees Requiring Literature
Rhetoric and Composition	4	4 (100%)
Professional Writing	28	11 (39%)
Creative Writing	16	16 (100%)
Other*	3	2 (67%)
Total	**51**	**33 (65%)**

*Journalism, communication arts, literature and writing

The responses in the preceding tables suggest three notable conclusions:

1. A degree *in English* at either the BA or MA level will almost certainly include a literature requirement, regardless of the specific writing concentration or emphasis.

2. A degree in professional writing is the least likely to include a literature requirement, with the incidence of such a requirement apparently decreasing with each higher degree level: 39% of BA programs in professional writing require literature in contrast with 8% of MA programs in professional writing require literature. (Although neither of the two PhD programs in professional writing that responded requires literature, the number reporting is too small to support any generalizations.[c]) To some respondents, the relative infrequency of literature requirements in professional writing programs reflects a perception that such programs pursue fundamentally different goals from those of other English programs. As one respondent whose department offers a degree in professional writing puts it, "Literature is not included because the writing faculty are more interested in technology."

3. A degree in creative writing, at any level, is likely to include a literature requirement. To a slightly lesser extent, that is also true of degree programs in rhetoric and composition. This finding may suggest that the field of "rhetoric and composition," with its enduring ties in many programs to literature and essayist literacy, is conceptually associated more closely with the field of English than is "professional writing," which tends to focus more on workplace communication and, increasingly, on information management.

Explaining the Literature Requirement

The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate the principal rationale for including literature in the writing curriculum. Responses to this open-ended question fall into four broad categories:

1. Reading directly enhances writing (33%, n=52). Respondents who presented this rationale contend that reading literature leads to improved writing, with some insisting that becoming a good writer necessitates literary study. Reading and writing are seen as necessary complements, with eighteen respondents explicitly stating that writing requires reading, and another eight respondents insisting that writers need to be exposed to models of good—even "the best"—writing through literary study. Eight other respondents believe that

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literary study benefits writers by broadening their perspective on discourse and rhetoric.

2. *Literary study inherently benefits students* (20%, n=31). Nine respondents insist that literary study humanizes students and contributes to their liberal education.[f] Eight others believe that literary study is necessary to develop students' critical and analytical skills. Similarly, fourteen other respondents support the requirement of literary study because it cultivates skills that prepare students for future employment.

3. *Literary study is integral to English studies* (20%, n=32). As implied by the finding above that a writing concentration within a degree in *English* is most likely to require literature, 25 respondents declared that degrees in English presuppose literary study, with several stating that it was inconceivable to award a degree in English without requiring literary study. The following statement summarizes that position: "The majority of our department cannot fathom a student getting a degree in English without that student having significant literary exposure. To most in our department, English = Literature." Another seven respondents believe that all majors in English departments should experience the breadth of the discipline, which must include literary study.[g]

4. *Literature requirements reflect the distribution of power in English departments* (15%, n=24). Nineteen respondents claimed that literature requirements in writing degree programs reflect the dominance of literature faculty in English departments. As one respondent expressed it, "All of our full professors and the great majority of our associate professors are literature specialists who do not want to give up literature as central to English and even central to the liberal arts." Documenting a similar but inverse influence of departmental politics on curriculum, five other respondents indicated that a shift in dominance within their departments from the literature to the writing faculty had resulted in the reduction or elimination of literature requirements in their writing degree programs.

Examining a Shifting Relationship

Although change in English departments is alleged to move at the speed of glaciers, the final example in the preceding section illustrates that departments are not static and that changes in departmental demographics may entail corresponding changes in curricula. This survey confirms that the

inclusion of a literature requirement in writing degrees is one of the places where such changes may become manifest. Table 7 records the responses to the survey question about whether and how the literature requirement of writing degrees had changed since 2000 (a year arbitrarily selected as the cut-off point simply to determine whether revisions in writing degree curricula had been recently implemented).

Table 7 confirms that a large majority (79%) of writing degree programs that include literature as a requirement had not changed this requirement in the three years prior to the administration of the survey in fall 2002. While this finding overwhelmingly affirms the legendary stability of academic curricula, the fact that more than 20% of the respondents reported a recent change in their writing degree's literature requirement suggests that this issue is a node of ongoing debate within English departments. And, while the numbers are still too small to speak of a trend, the survey results also show that writing degrees requiring literature are five times more likely to reduce or eliminate the requirement than they are to increase it.

Table 7.
Changes in the Literature Requirement of Writing Degrees since 2000*

Title of Degree	Number of Degrees Requiring Literature	Literature Requirement Increased	Literature Requirement Unchanged	Literature Requirement Reduced	Literature Requirement Eliminated
PhD in Rhetoric/	3	0	0	2	1
PhD in English w/ Creative	2	0	2	0	0
PhD in Discourse Theory	1	0	1	0	0
MA in English	25	0	23	2	
MA in Rhetoric/	6	0	4	1	1
MA in	1	0	1	0	0
MFA	7	0	5	2	
BA in English w/ Rhetoric/	30	0	26	2	2

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BA in English w/	17	0	14	3	0
BA in English w/ Creative Writing Emphasis	29	2	26	1	0
BA in Rhetoric/	4	0	2	1	1
BA in	11	1	2	6	2
BA in Creative Writing	16	3	12	1	0
Other	12	0	11	1	0
Total	164	6	129	22	7

* This table reflects only those degree programs that reported having a literature requirement. The "unchanged" column does not include any degree programs without a literature requirement that had not added such a requirement.

None of the increases in the literature requirement occurred at the MA or PhD level. The only increases in the literature requirement occurred in baccalaureate degree programs, with five of the six reported increases occurring in creative writing degrees. The one respondent who reported an increase in the literature requirement of a BA in professional writing degree explained that "the slight increase in [the literature requirement of] the professional writing program reflects the addition of a departmental core which includes a literature course."

In contrast, respondents at every level and in nearly every degree category reported that the literature requirement of its writing degree(s) had been reduced. Graduate degrees in writing either made no changes in the literature requirement or they reduced it. The reductions indicate that some departments are reconsidering the appropriateness of literature in the curricula of advanced writing degrees. A respondent representing a PhD program in English with a concentration in rhetoric and composition volunteered that the department had converted its literature requirement from a requirement to an elective "to give students more leeway in putting together their programs." BA degrees in professional writing exhibited the most dramatic patterns of reducing or eliminating the literature requirement, with more than 70% of the degrees reporting such changes.

When asked to explain any changes in the literature requirement of their writing degrees, a number of respondents indicated that literature requirements had been reduced in response to increased offerings of advanced and specialized courses in writing. Whereas several respondents noted simply that more writing and communication courses were now being offered, one respondent described the gradual erosion of the literature requirement as a natural result of the growth of his English department's professional writing degree:

> We started out as a minor in the English dept. And had five courses in technical communication and all the rest were literature. We slowly replaced one lit class after another with courses such as Design of Manuals, Instructional Design, Designing Online Information, Designing Information for the Web and so on to our original five courses. Now we have no literature requirement in our TPC [BA in Technical and Professional Communication] curriculum. Our majors take one literature class just as every other student in the university to fulfill their liberal arts general education degree.

Other explanations for the decrease in or elimination of literature requirements included such diverse responses as dropping a Shakespeare requirement, reducing the overall hours in the curriculum, or converting to the semester system. Two respondents specifically attributed a reduction in their literature requirements to student opposition to taking literature courses, with one noting that "not all writing students want to write about literature" and the other commenting that "the non-lit faculty and students oppose too much emphasis on lit." One respondent also confirmed the correlation between degrees in English and literature requirements that was noted earlier: when the department converted from a BA in English with a concentration in technical communication to a BS in technical communication (and from an MA in English with a concentration in rhetoric and composition to an MA in rhetoric and composition), "literature became one elective among many."

Several survey respondents also indicated recent changes in the literature requirement of writing degrees, even though the requirement had not specifically been reduced. For example, one respondent mentioned that the literature requirement had been loosened to allow students more freedom in the choice of literature courses. Another mentioned that the literature requirement in a graduate degree had been changed to a prerequisite. A third noted that substitutions were being increasingly allowed for literature courses, and a fourth observed that fewer writing degree candidates were electing to fulfill a cognate requirement by taking literature courses. Describing the

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rationale for its substitution of a "texts in context" requirement for a literature requirement, another department had concluded that exposing writing students to a broader base of texts would do a better job of cultivating their analytical skills than a narrowly conceived literature requirement. Without further explanation, three other respondents similarly stated that the literature requirement had been changed but not reduced.

These indications of change in the literature requirement of writing degrees may not tell the whole story, however. Reporting on writing degree programs that had *not* changed their literature requirement, several respondents volunteered that some degrees were approved too recently to have undergone curricular revision. Respondents from fourteen departments[h] stated that their writing degrees were less than three years old, with some having been approved the previous year and with two still pending final approval. Although these new degrees at the baccalaureate level typically include a literature requirement ranging from three to twelve credits, whether the degrees will opt to retain the original requirement will probably not be apparent for a few years.

Tentative Conclusions

This survey convincingly demonstrates the persistent association of degrees in English with the study of literature. However, the survey suggests that the presence of literature requirements in some writing degree programs may not necessarily reflect the will of those who teach in and administer those degree programs, but instead reflect the distribution of faculty and power within English departments. As one respondent explained, "The rationale for those required literature courses is not one developed by the writing faculty." Another respondent elaborated as follows about the fundamental philosophical and cultural differences separating those who teach literature from those who teach writing in the department:

> [T]here is a very great difference between the ways that some of our faculty, trained in composition and rhetoric, see the project of teaching reading and writing, as opposed to the ways that literature folks approach these tasks. In practical terms, it is hard to get good and appropriate questions asked about our new course proposals, hard to teach our Personnel Committee to read evaluations of our classes, and hard sometimes to hold a discussion with faculty who assume that we share a belief that the study and practice of language started with Shakespeare. I think this difference is felt more acutely by the comp/rhet folks than the literature folks, and our students feel it as well.

Responses to the survey nevertheless indicate that curricular changes in many departments are leading to a redistribution of that power and to concomitant changes in the culture of English departments.[i] Instead of rejecting the development of writing programs as inimical to their mission and encouraging the separation that some compositionists have called for, many English departments have adopted a strategy of accommodating the increasing demand for writing courses and programs, however begrudgingly. Not only had fourteen of the responding departments recently approved new degrees and concentrations in writing, three others volunteered that they were either "developing" or "considering developing" separate degrees in writing. As three other departments indicated, even some traditional literature curricula are being revised to incorporate more writing courses, with one "considering a path in the literature major that includes more writing," and another "slowly working toward the possibility of 'loosening' the core requirement for the English major, making it possible for professional writing and rhetoric students to take fewer literature courses." Moreover, the survey indicates that many English departments are relaxing their insistence that literature be included in the writing curriculum. Although two of the responding departments stated that they had recently reviewed and reaffirmed the literature requirement of their writing degrees, 29 of the 164 writing degrees that require literature had either reduced or eliminated the requirement between 2000 and 2002.

Support for the proliferation of degree programs in writing may be interpreted as a pragmatic response by English departments to a dramatic shift of student interest in English department offerings, as well as to a significant decline in public support for liberal arts education (cf. Hersh). John Guillory has critiqued this social depreciation of literary study as a "cultural capital flight," which he explains as follows: "[t]he professional-managerial class has made the correct assessment that, so far as its future profit is concerned, the reading of great works is not worth the investment of very much time or money" (46). In contrast, he notes that students now "regard composition as a necessary prerequisite for entry into professional life" (81). But few writing specialists would comfortably identify with Guillory's attributing composition's "new institutional significance" to its "providing the future technobureaucratic elite with precisely and only the linguistic competence necessary for the performance of its specialized function" (264). Linda Ray Pratt raises the same concern when she warns that "what the public and our colleagues in other disciplines want from such courses is grammatical competence and computer literacy, not the self-reflexive writer who is conscious of rhetorical strategies and how language reveals values" (29). Concerned

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that independent writing programs will be hard pressed to promote the values of the liberal arts, Pratt's recommendation is to reaffirm the link between literature and writing:

> [F]ew of us would want our departments either reduced to little more than a core composition curriculum or split so that writing becomes a separate area from its connections to literary study. Disconnected from the study of literature, composition will face more pressure to serve vocational interests as just a literacy tool for business and information technology. *English* as I use the term describes a loosely organized discipline that attempts to integrate and theorize the study of literature and writing (27).

WPAs in independent writing or rhetoric departments are probably not the only ones who would bristle at this suggestion that literature somehow empowers writing programs to resist pressures to serve narrowly defined vocational interests. Still, Pratt does raise a serious issue that should concern anyone who teaches in English departments when she notes that "in many institutions, business and engineering colleges have already set up their own alternative composition courses tailored to teach the kind of writing that supports the skills of students they aim to produce" (29). Serving a narrowly functional conception of writing, writing programs such as these threaten to impoverish writing instruction in higher education and to deprive students of the critical aptitude they will need to communicate effectively as professionals or to make informed judgments as citizens. In the face of such developments, WPAs must either take an active role in challenging these misappropriations of writing or lobby for an active role in their administration. But writing programs do not need literature to authorize such initiatives. Instead, I would argue that writing programs belong in English departments not because they require the proximity of literary studies to ensure their integrity but because writing and literature programs share a fundamental commitment to cultivating students' complementary critical literacies as writers and readers, literacies which are integral to their liberal education, the very point Guillory makes when he affirms "the institutional interdependence of composition and literature, widely misrecognized as a disrelation" (79).

For it is not simply that writing programs have proliferated in response to increased demands from students and from information managers but rather that writing programs have evolved within the professional lifetime of our more senior English teachers into disciplines whose academic stature and rigor equals that of literature programs. In many English departments, tenure-line faculty members with PhDs in rhetoric and composition or professional writing teach an assortment of advanced undergraduate and graduate writing courses and publish research in respected journals. Composition programs, writing centers, and undergraduate and graduate degree programs in English departments throughout the United States are now directed by WPAs with those same academic credentials. Yet, as this survey reveals, faculty members who have neither been part of nor understood that evolution still wield considerable influence in many English departments—faculty members whose attitudes about writing courses and programs were shaped at a time when writing in the department consisted of a literature-based composition course and a business writing course contemptuously dismissed for teaching document formats. Such ingrained attitudes may account for the reluctance of some literature faculty to accord writing programs the respect that they enjoy outside of English departments and go a long way toward explaining the insistence on including literature requirements in the curriculum of writing degrees.

The results of this survey suggest these attitudes appear to be losing sway. Such changes are surely attributable to changes in the landscape of many departments that have resulted in greater prominence—and presumably more influence—for writing faculty, courses, and degree programs. But, as the following particularly thoughtful response dramatizes, the shifting relationship between literature and writing may also reflect a concomitant adjustment in the underlying attitudes of some literature faculty, notably those concerning the status of professional writing as a discipline:

> At the undergraduate level, the requirements for the specialization have increased at the cost of advanced courses in literature. Respect for the TW [technical writing] courses has also increased. These courses seem to outsiders now to be equivalent to literature courses in substance and depth. (I think they always have been, but the perception has changed.) Constraints on the TW curriculum have relaxed. We no longer have to require students to take literature for their souls or to redeem the corruption of their association with business. (You will hear sarcasm in that statement, but the words are not mine. My own Ph.D. is in literature, and I love literature, but I also respect what happens in TW courses and do not think it demeans the people who study it.)

As this survey documents, these are the kinds of changes that have led to a reduction of literature requirements in nearly one out of five departments that offer writing degrees. Insofar as many writing concentrations and degrees are new and several others under development, the number that does not require literature may be expected to increase.

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Appendix

Survey of Members of the Association of Departments of English (ADE) in Fall 2002

1. For any writing degree programs offered by your department, please supply the information requested below about the literature component of the curriculum.

Please fill in below the title of any writing degrees offered by your department (e.g., B.A. in Rhetoric & Composition, B.S. in Technical Communication, M.A. in Professional Communication, etc.)	Are any literature courses included in the writing degree curriculum?		Please check to indicate whether the literature component of the degree is required or elective.		How many credits of literature are included in the writing degree?	Please check below the box corresponding to the term that best describes any change in the literature component of your department's writing degree curriculum in the last three years.			
	Yes	No	Required	Elective		Unchanged	Increased	Decreased	Eliminated

2. Please briefly explain your department's principal rationale for including literature in the curriculum of any of your department's writing degree programs.

3. Please briefly explain any changes in the literature component of your writing degree curriculum in the past three years.

Notes

[*] Preliminary results from the survey upon which this essay is based were presented at the CCCC in New York, March 2003. Special thanks to Jeanne Rose and Sandy Feinstein for organizing the panel, and to Art Young and the late Candace Spigelman for their invaluable and generous comments on early drafts of this essay.

[1] Throughout this article, the term "professional writing" is also used generically to refer to such degrees as "professional communication," "technical communication," "technical writing," "technical and professional communication," "international technical communication," "professional writing and editing," etc.

[2] These data were supplied by the English programs office of the Modern Language Association in July 2003.

[3] Although I did not originally intend to include "creative writing" programs in the survey, sufficient responding departments included information about their creative writing degrees to warrant including those data in our results. As respondents identified the specific title of any degree for which they provided data (e.g., PhD in Rhetoric and Composition, MFA, BA in English with Writing Emphasis, etc.), there is no possibility that this study confuses "creative writing" programs with other programs in writing. Moreover, as the survey results indicate, creative writing programs stand out among writing programs as those most likely to require literature.

[4] In their study of 1995–2000 graduates of doctoral programs in professional, technical, and scientific communication, Cook, Thralls, and Zachry make no mention of literature in their review of the curricula of such programs at twenty-one institutions, supporting my survey finding that the PhD programs in professional writing do not require literature.

[5] Persistent beliefs about the inherent benefit of studying literature belie serious and widespread concerns that have been raised about the current state of literary study. As Linda Ray Pratt observes in her contribution to the *ADE Bulletin*'s special issue on "The Future of English," "Distinguished scholars such as Robert Scholes and David Damrosch have said that the trouble is we've lost confidence that the study of literature means anything" (27). Carl Woodring notes that "Few have questioned that the humanities are capable of preserving values that enhance human life," but he adds that "Literary study today, then, may be humanistic more by classification than by method or creed" (ix–x). Having abandoned "the search for pure truth that once justified their special status," the humanities, according to Scholes, are "finding it difficult [. . .] to explain to the public and to our trustees just what it is that we do—and we are finding it even harder to justify our doing it, especially if we tell the truth about what we are doing" (46–7) John Guillory makes a similar point when he points to "the absence of a rationale for the literary curriculum" (262). Similar arguments have been made by Dinesh D'Souza, Eugene Goodheart, and Roger Kimball, to name but a few.

[6] Suggesting the pervasiveness of this perception, John Schilb writes of having to remind the members of a department that is "fairly congenial to composition" that " 'English' is not synonymous with 'literature'" (175).

[7] These include three MA-level writing programs, five BA degrees in English with a professional writing concentration, three BA degrees in English with a concentration in rhetoric and composition, and three BAs in professional writing. Because the survey did not specifically ask respondents how old their writing pro-

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grams were, the number of programs that reported being under three years old is not reliable, but it does suggest that the curricular stability of some programs may partly reflect that they are relatively new programs.

[8] John Schilb has observed a "marked growth of tenure-track jobs in composition," which he attributes to "that field's increased professionalization as well as society's burgeoning need for information managers" (178). As a result, he surmises that "the employment prospects of literature specialists are not likely to brighten soon" (179). An article about the 2004 MLA convention corroborates Schilb's prediction: noting that "[a]bout 50 percent of the graduating Ph.D.'s each year get the full-time tenure track jobs they are looking for," the article announces that "students in composition and rhetoric face far better chances than those in literature" (Smallwood).

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