Negotiating Expertise: The Strategies Writing Program Administrators use to Mediate
Disciplinary and Institutional Values

Jessica Marie Beckett

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Sheila Carter-Tod
Bernice L. Hausman
Carlos Evia
Katrina M. Powell

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SCHOLARLY ABSTRACT

Writing Program Administrators continually act within a situation where their discipline is being mobilized by their institutional work. This condition of tension—the values, allegiances, and material structures of the institution in relationship with the values, allegiances, and material structures of the discipline—is mediated daily by the work that WPAs accomplish. In this dissertation, I explore the institutional and disciplinary inputs into the writing program. After outlining the way these inputs interact within the writing program and create a condition of tension, I locate the specific strategies of Requesting, Enriching, Learning, Showcasing, Collaborating, and Aligning as value-based forms of action that WPAs take to navigate this tension in positive ways. This dissertation accomplishes two things: it makes the duality of WPA work explicit, and it offers a set of existing strategies that WPAs apply in practical situations.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

A First Year Writing program is an academic unit that manages the curriculum, budget, teaching faculty, and other aspects of writing classes for first year students as part of a university's general education curriculum. Throughout their daily tasks, the directors of these programs must work with the requirements of their institution, must build relationships with their administrators and campus stakeholders, and must work within the mission and values of their institution. However, as higher education becomes increasingly corporatized, these institutional constraints are sometimes at odds with the research, best practices, and theories of language and learning that these program administrators know and use. In this dissertation, I explore the way these differences in institutional situation and research-based practice affect the writing program. After outlining the way these inputs interact within the writing program and create a condition of tension, I locate the specific strategies of Requesting, Enriching, Learning, Showcasing, Collaborating, and Aligning as value-based forms of action that program administrators take to navigate this tension in positive ways

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge my husband Malcolm who, every day for the last two years, has asked me "is your dissertation done yet?" I can finally say "Yes."

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"As a discipline and an endeavor, writing program administration is marked regularly as a space of tension—between crisis and change, discord and direction, promise and peril—because of the political, ethical, and programmatic challenges of both being an endeavor attached to a simultaneously poorly respected discipline and one that involves stakeholders with varying degrees of commitment to this discipline and its theories, practices, and interests." (Charlton et al. 10).

First Year Writing (FYW) courses are part of complex institutional constellations of accreditation standards, general education curricula, and university values. A writing program administrator's work is an enactment of a relationship between this institutional system and an academic discipline—they are what Marc Bousquet terms "Managerial intellectuals" (24). The majority of scholarship into writing program administration, however, largely presents the institutional and scholarly responsibilities of Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) as separate and isolated, rather than as integral components of the same process. In this dissertation, I use the concept of inputs and outputs as a way to contextualize the work of writing program administrators within their institutions, in order to understand how the institution affects the writing program as a mobilization of the composition discipline.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the tension between the institutional purpose and the disciplinary purpose of First Year Writing programs, and then I will situate the WPA as managerial intellectual within this tension. Following this discussion of background on the problem, I will provide a problem statement, state my research question, describe the nature of this study, and explain my conceptual framework. Following this exploration of my research design, I will describe the broader endeavor of this dissertation through a research objective and a stated research purpose.

First Year Writing as Disciplinary and Institutional

First Year Writing (FYW) programs are university programs that govern required courses in written composition for first-year college and university students. Sometimes these courses are called First Year Composition (FYC) courses in order to encompass a broader definition of composing acts of communication, whether they are oral, written, or multimodal. Sharon Crowley defines First Year Writing as "universally required introductory courses used as a gate to the university," and writing programs as the institutional or departmental programs associated

with budgets, labor, curricula, and endeavors that are part of the implementation of these courses (ix). These courses provide introductory writing education—often skills-based—as preparation for students' writing experiences in and beyond the academy. This preparatory purpose means that the FYW program serves all majors and disciplines through its compulsory general education courses. Despite this introductory purpose, however, classifying a FYW program as a service unit is contested in the field of composition and rhetoric.

Many scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric suggest that service is antithetical to the intellectual work of teaching and studying written composition. Jonikka Charlton claims that as a classification of programs built on scholarship into the teaching and learning of writing, First Year Writing programs are disciplinary in the sense that they are the locus of a thriving discipline of study into their goals, methods, positions, labor, and administration (103). In "An Ethic of Service in Composition and Rhetoric," Linda Adler-Kassner and Duane Roen claim that the term service reduces the knowledge and authority of composition and rhetoric, privileging conceptions of writing that are potentially antithetical to those held by experts in the field. They claim that "when viewed disciplinarily, the label of service can strip legitimacy from the scholarship that defines the work of first year writing, and position these programs and courses as subordinate to the expertise of those outside of its borders" (N. p.). As Charlton, and Adler-Kassner and Roen suggest, this disciplinary belief of expertise built on research is paired with a fear that to define First Year Writing as a service is to cede power over First Year Writing courses and the best practices determined within its research.

In spite of this fear of the label "service," foundational composition scholarship offers several ways to conceptualize FYW as more than skills-based service. For example, David Russell claims that writing is a contextual response to a situation, and that general skills cannot be taught in the absence of authentic writing situations. Russell claims, by way of a comparison, that athletes learn various skills by learning and practicing specific sports, not by taking courses in general ball handling. Russell proposes Activity Theory as a method for conceptualizing writing as situated communication, rather than as general skills instruction (57). Robert Connors similarly claims that the "static abstractions" of decontextualized skills cannot transfer across various writing situations, and that student need to encounter more authentic writing experiences (287). In "Righting Misconceptions, Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs cite Connors when they call for FYW courses to transition from skills courses lacking in content to courses that introduce

students to the discipline of writing studies—courses in which writing is practiced through the academic study of writing and critical literacy.

Russell's activity approach, Wardle and Downs' writing studies approach, and even scholarship that argues against these approaches, demonstrate two things. First, they show the difficulty of labeling First Year Writing as a service. Second, they locate this difficulty in conversations about the transfer of writing skills. As I will discuss in chapter 2, scholars who resist the label of service locate their arguments in concerns over control, transferability, and expertise regarding how writing is taught to students as a set of transferrable skills.

Despite efforts to recast First Year Writing as a discipline, the field and its courses have continued to maintain an ethic of service that was developed in the 1890s. Sharon Crowley writes that "despite attempts to update or expand the definition of its service ethic . . . the required introductory composition course has always been justified, at bottom, in instrumental terms" (2). Crowley explains that introductory composition courses were created to inculcate students into the modes and methods of correct writing reflective of educated citizens. This mode of service is and has been the rationale for such courses, as they have existed since. It is in these courses, when they were introduced in 1890, when Crowley writes in 1996, and now in 2016, that "those who are new to the academy learn to write its prose" (2). This is the expectation from administrators, from students, and from the public. Writing within conversations regarding the complexity of labeling First Year Writing, Doug Downs suggests that administrators, students, students' parents, faculty, and GTAs all see the function of First Year Writing differently—as skills based, as key experiences, as bureaucratic and educational hoops through which they must jump ("What is First-Year Composition?" 51). Despite the variety of purposes ascribed to it by various stakeholders, a writing program is a deeply embedded unit where the disciplinary best practices of writing education potentially conflict with the stakeholder needs and institutional constraints of FYW programs.

Stemming from the ethic of service as the purpose for FYW programs, the administrative and budgetary structures that surround these courses prevent such programs from isolating themselves as disciplinary, rather than as part of their institutional systems. FYW programs always operate in response to both the discipline and the institution. Within the dual institutional and disciplinary propose, the WPA is the agent of the writing program, managing, balancing, and negotiating these dual missions.

The WPA as Managerial Intellectual

In composition and rhetoric scholarship, the writing program is cast both disciplinarily and within an ethic of service, creating a condition of tension regarding the function, purpose, and autonomy of the writing program. This tension is manifest in the Writing Program Administrator (WPA), because the WPA acts as agent for the writing program and, more importantly, because the WPA is both a university administrator and a disciplinary scholar. WPAs inhabit a complex space in which their duties relate to both the form and content of a first year writing program. They work with the theories of language and education from the field of composition and rhetoric to build curricula, to train and develop faculty and graduate teaching assistants, and to develop program assessments. Yet they also work within the curricular structures of their university's general education program, manage budgets, interact with stakeholders, advocate for funding, and manage their writing programs as bureaucratic units within their higher education institutions.

The tension of a WPA's role originates in distinctions between faculty and administrators in higher education, and the epistemological differences that divide these positions. The dual roles of manager and academic intellectual place the WPA, as a very low level institutional leader, in what David Schwalm claims is a problematic position between administration and faculty (18). In his work on the way transfer articulation agreements reveal the dual roles of faculty and administrator, Schwalm outlines the balance of these competing identities, claiming that WPAs must manage issues of tenure, labor, expertise, the role of the writing program, and a variety of stakeholder values.

Marc Bousquet bestows the title "managerial intellectual" as a warning signal for WPAs to scrutinize their participation in the hegemonic structures of bureaucracy, which he depicts as an anti-critical, anti-humanist value system ("Composition as Management Science" 24). There is a collection of WPA scholarship that Donna Strickland casts as unionist narratives, which offers Marxist critique of the bureaucracy of higher education and its departments and programs. Marc Bousquet, for example, claims the WPA who engages in pragmatism ceases to engage with critical theory and the true nature of humanism. However, WPAs straddle the line between critical humanism and bureaucratic managerialism every day.

Not all writing program scholars share Bousquet's strong indictment of managerialism—Jan Swearingen goes so far as to call him a "Gucci Marxist" who is contributing to

composition's marginalization (quoted in Strickland 8). However, many scholars do point to the competing value systems WPAs inhabit. Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk suggest that "WPAs are often caught in untenable positions between their own program's beliefs and values surrounding language and learning and the institutional politics of the university," suggesting that the epistemological or value differences Birnbaum and Schwalm point out are also differences in belief about language and writing (Fox and Malenczyk 316).

Eileen Schell suggests that Writing Program administrators are treated in composition scholarship either as change agents or as members of the managerial class (180). This is because WPAs inhabit a complex space in which their duties relate to both the management of the writing program and the disciplinary content of the program. Schell claims that scholarship that casts WPAs as change agents creates a distinction between managerialism and WPAs as members of the academy, drawing a line between the two.

It is not uncommon for writing program administrators to engage in political maneuvers, and even become embroiled in conflicts with stakeholders regarding the basic premise and design of their writing program. These political conflicts can have an impact on the material conditions of the writing program, and on its integrity as an academically rigorous, research-based practice.

The tension of a university system and the discipline of study as multiple service objects, in terms of both input and output, can be a strength of a writing program. Tension between these systems means that the discipline of composition can function in response to the realities of higher education, and that higher education system values can be enriched by research about writing education, creating a feedback loop. Yet much of the literature presents these elements as divided epistemologically and in need of mediation from a disciplinary base. Despite the fact that higher education and society at large clearly place value on writing and writing education, these existing narratives of division reinforce a view of writing programs as isolated from or superior to their university communities.

Writing program administration as an identity and as a position has been stretched to encompass graduate WPAs (gWPA) and junior WPAs (jWPA), and sometimes academics and graduate students even claim the WPA identity before they have ever achieved or sought out WPA jobs, as Shirley Rose described in "Creating and Context." This shift positions WPA work as its own growing field, as an area of study and preparation, not simply as the fate of English

faculty who must take their turn serving the department by leading the writing program. Despite growing scholarship, however, Louise Wetherbee Phelps argues that most faculty members who take on administrative roles are "woefully unprepared," because administration is still largely an afterthought, rather than a skill to cultivate in graduate school (3). While Charlton, et al provide an overview of areas in which graduate students can learn the skills necessary to take on administrative roles, they offer a series of questions that remain to be answered, including "What do we know about writing program administration and WPA lives [and] what else do we need to know?; What constitutes WPA work [and] how does that work vary depending on contextual factors like institutional type and size, programmatic vision, and more?" (*Gen Admin* 83). As well as "What are important areas of inquiry in writing program administration?" (83). In their explanation of the Generation Administration Philosophy, Charlton et al. cite Virginia Anderson and Susan Romano, who call for increased WPA preparation in "*rhetorica utens,* in the arts of deploying disciplinary knowledge and the skills of establishing relationships and ethos, from programs that have listened to and acted on news from the field" (13). In a field where administrators are also expected to be researchers, teachers, and members of the discipline, Writing Program Administrators must continually deal with the push and pull of two different systems of thought and practice.

Problem Statement

As a graduate student, I have had the opportunity to work firsthand with the complex interconnections of institutional constraints and the implementation of scholarship and best practices in a writing program. While graduate training in Writing Program Administration is growing, I believe that new and future WPAs still need to see the practical realities of writing education as institutional service, strengthened by best practices from the discipline, and mobilized in response to the needs of its clients and stakeholders. If WPAs are to learn "*rhetorica utens,*" for forming their programs as part of the institution, as Romano and Anderson suggest, we need more first-hand accounts of how WPAs enact the relationship between the institution and the discipline by looking at the kinds of constraints and possibilities that are associated with those institutional contexts and how WPAs work within those contexts to negotiate the two. According to Doug Downs, who describes the purpose of FYW as institutional in nature, if a writing program cannot serve the needs and expectations of its university then it has failed ("What is First Year Writing?"). As the host of WPA resources on practical university

matters would suggest. WPAs need to know how to think about their work structurally and as part of a system, how to navigate institutional systems, and how to bring the scholarship of composition into their programs as part of the system—not as separate endeavors.

To address this problem, I use this research to examine the kinds of possibilities and constraints posed by various institutional contexts at both public and private 4-year colleges. Following that, I compile a set of strategies that WPAs currently use for navigating institutional constraints and possibilities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the variety of engagement strategies that WPAs utilize to navigate the tension between the institutional and disciplinary influences of their programmatic work, and to offer recommendations for applying these strategies in various institutional contexts. Higher education institutions are full of minor differences in funding structures, departmental hierarchies, and programmatic formation. First Year Writing (FYW) programs can be located in a variety of departments and offices, receive their budgets from a variety of funding sources and models, and operate with differing pedagogical and theoretical foundations. While the basic function of a First Year Writing program is the same across institutions, as I described in chapter one, each program has its own nuances of purpose, many of which relate to the student populations and institutional values at a given college or university. In addition, the stakeholders of such programs maintain a variety of expectations and assumptions regarding the purpose of the first year writing program.

The purpose, structure, and responsibilities of the Writing Program Administrator (WPA) roles created to manage these varying programs create a condition of tension. WPAs must navigate their own pedagogical goals and research agendas, the material conditions of their programs, and the expectations, requirements, and perceptions about the teaching of writing that come from a variety of university stakeholders.

Research Questions

The research question I set out to answer is:

How do writing program administrators meet the expectations of their higher education institutions while balancing disciplinary integrity with programmatic demands from the university?

This question incorporates three distinct areas to define and collect data. First, I use existing literature on the purpose of First Year Writing to establish the expectations an institution has of the writing program; second, I use case study research to explore the constraints a university places on a first year writing program as part of its general education curriculum; third, I examine the way WPAs define and maintain disciplinary integrity in their programs.

Nature of the Study

In this project, I conduct a series of case studies of writing program administrators in order to observe and map out the methods they use to balance their own disciplinary expertise with the requirements, desires, or imposed constraints from university stakeholders. I conduct six case studies, examining writing programs located in a variety of departments, colleges, and university programs. In these case studies, I interview WPAs, and occasionally their university collaborators, and collect a variety of programmatic and institutional documents. I borrow from participatory methodology and contextual design to allow my participants the opportunity to co-construct terms, identities, and their vision of these processes in highly contextualized ways.

I triangulate the data from these case studies with disciplinary documents from the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), as well as with a survey of writing program administrators on the role of the composition discipline in their writing programs. In this research, I found a variety of formal and informal mechanisms that WPAs use for the process of negotiating institutional needs with disciplinary beliefs. These mechanisms embody stances WPAs take towards writing program stakeholders, and emphasize the role of power within institutional relationships.

I contextualize a writing program as part of an institutional system, in order to engage with the ethic of service and the institutional purpose of writing education. I emphasize processes and interconnections by focusing on the inputs of various aspects of the writing program within the institution and consider the implications of these connections.

In figure 1 below, I situate the writing program in relation to elements from its institutional system, demonstrating stakeholders, institutional values, and the composition and rhetoric discipline as inputs and outputs in the writing program.
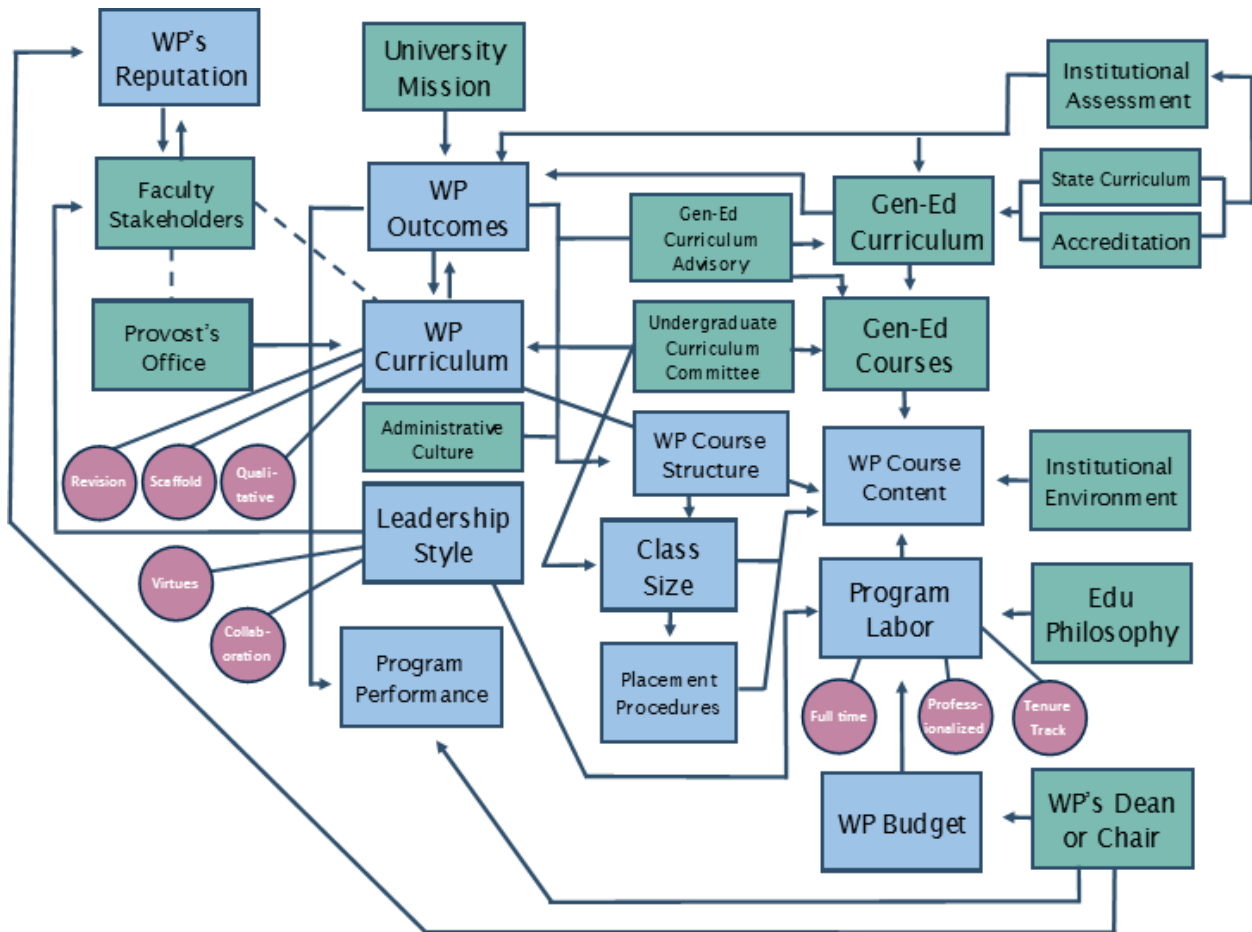
Fig. 1. The FYW program with institutional and disciplinary inputs.

In this figure, various aspects of the First Year Writing Program that are identified by my participants are depicted, they are connected to other institutional units and to several values and practices from the discipline of composition and rhetoric, both of which comprise inputs that my participants indicated in their responses about their work. In addition to these institutional inputs, various values and practices from the discipline of Composition and Rhetoric are also inputs of the FYW program, because work in the field is based on the experiences of its teachers and directors, and the work of the program is directly influenced by the values, principles, and best practices of the discipline.

Building on the ethic of service Crowley posits and the FYC charter Downs describes, I situate the institution as the primary source of inputs into the writing program. The institution becomes the frame through which the discipline is understood and applied in the writing program. While the discipline enriches the work of the writing program and helps WPAs make

sense of institutional work, the institution is the filter or lens through which each WPA reads the discipline, as I will discuss in later chapters.

Composition and rhetoric exists as a discipline because it helps teachers and directors theorize and research the institutional work of teaching writing. This diagram visually emphasizes the foundation of the discipline in institutional service, and it further illustrates the way this institutional service shapes the knowledge the discipline produces—processes which are depicted through the arrows signifying inputs and outputs.

In this dissertation, I contextualize the work of writing program administrators within their institutions in order to understand how the institution affects the writing program as a mobilization of the composition discipline. Writing programs have a variety of stakeholders and are answerable to the students, administrators, accreditation standards, and programmatic structures that they are governed by and serve. I conceptualize these factors as part of the larger endeavor of teaching writing in higher education.

Research Objectives

My objective is to generate a set of contextualized examples of WPA practices through a description of this process and of the methods that WPAs use to accomplish it. I intend to offer new and existing WPAs with a set of methods, but I want to emphasize the way those methods are related to institutional contexts, so that the actions of other WPAs are properly adapted. This project will begin to describe how WPAs navigate university systems, what competencies they feel they need to have, and how to think about institutions and their relationship to the discipline.

First Year Writing programs represent densely political climates of disciplinary and institutional values. This presents a site of tension in which the WPA is described by many scholars as being caught between two different systems of practice. In this research I explore the ways WPAs navigate these two systems by figuring the writing programs an institutional unit in which it is a site for these two systems to come together.

In chapter two I provide an overview of current literature on writing program administration as a site of tension, and I explore the way current literature frames negotiation strategies. I situate my research within this literature, building on existing studies into defending and explaining the values of the writing program. In chapter three, I describe the methods I use

to collect and analyze data. In addition, I offer a methodological frame that guides my research design and explore the concept of tension in a more nuanced way. In chapter four I focus on the higher education institution, offering examples of the way the institutional context affects the disciplinarily-grounded writing programs of my participants. In this discussion of my analysis, I explore the types of institutional relationships and values that impact the work of the First Year Writing program. In Chapter five, I shift focus to the disciplinary grounding of the writing programs in my study, and examine how the discipline feeds back into those institutional structures discussed in chapter four. In chapter six, I offer a set of strategies my participating WPAs employ in their negotiation of these interrelated objects, further exploring the disciplinary-grounding and the institutional context that affect the strategies they implement. In chapter seven, I provide a synthesis of my findings, and I describe the basic framework these WPAs employ for understanding and implementing strategies, in order to offer my readers a set of transferable practices that can be applied in various institutions.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"There is not one holy map that captures the relationships inherent to the understanding of an institution, all of these relationships exist simultaneously in the lived—actual and material— space of an institution." (Porter et al. 623).

       The title Writing Program Aadministrator (WPA) represents a set of occupational responsibilities and a professional identity that suggest a complex situation of scholarship, leadership, and work with a range of stakeholders from across a given university. The nature of this process means that WPAs must balance a range of duties as well as a range of goals and ideals about education and management. In 2009, Jonikka Charlton and Shirley K. Rose replicated Linda Peterson's 1986 survey of *Council of Writing Program Administrators* (CWPA) members on writing program administration as an identity and an endeavor. In their analysis of WPA identity within the context of workload, tenure, evaluation, and assessment, Charlton and Rose suggest that "a WPA's work is not defined only by the official or formal responsibilities of the role but also by how those responsibilities are carried out" (114). Charlton and Rose' emphasis on "*how* those responsibilities are carried out" highlights the individual decisions WPAs make based on their goals and values (114). The actions that comprise engagement with writing program stakeholders from across programs, disciplines, academic units, and levels of administration are greatly effected by a WPA's identity and value systems, both in terms of composition pedagogy and in terms of the purpose of higher education, as I will explain below. While these individual decisions may vary, WPA scholarship shows several specific stances that inform the WPA's actions and goals.

       WPA research represents a growing body of work into all facets of this academic role, including a large corpus of practical solutions for common institutional issues that span across program types (see, for example Malenczyk, Myers-Breslin, Ward and Carpenter, and Brown and Enos). Underlying this advice scholarship is a series of assumptions about the relationship between the writing program as an extension of the discipline, and the managed university in which it operates. This collection of viewpoints illuminates the nature of this engagement process, revealing a variety of stances and a range of actions that various WPAs might take in pursuing this work. In this review, I will examine current literature on the negotiation of the institutional context, acknowledging the values that underlie current approaches and contrasting

them with the approach I will take in this study. First, I will examine literature that represents the occupation of WPA as a site of tension in which negotiation or engagement with others is crucial. Second, I will examine a variety of engagement strategies for this process, exploring the prevailing narratives that define those strategies. Third, I will examine key scholarship on mapping these institutional stakeholder relationships in order to situate my own work of contextualizing the strategies my participants use.

Rhetorical Tensions

In their book on the identity and nature of work of contemporary WPAs, Colin Charlton, Jonikka Charlton, Tarez Samra, Kathleen Ryan, and Amy Stolley describe Writing Program Administration broadly, as being "marked regularly as a space of tension—between crisis and change, discord and direction, promise and peril" (10). They describe the "political, ethical, and programmatic challenges" of directing a writing program as a process by which "we negotiate the rhetorical tensions between what we want for our programs and the environment in which our programs exist" (12). This notion of tension carries through WPA scholarship, both in the titles invoked in Charlton et al.'s statement and in a variety of scholarly stances on the work, as various writers describe the WPA inhabiting a space that is stretched between binaries and WPA work as a negotiation of those binaries.

When Charlton et al. describe this tension between "crisis and change, discord and direction, promise and peril," they reference three edited collections on WPA work: *Composition in the Twenty First Century: Crisis and Change, Discord and Direction: The Postmodern Writing Program Administrator,* and *The Promise and Perils of Writing Program Administration* (10). These collections and their titles show the field's continued attention to examining the binaries that surround WPA work—binaries that span the purpose, positionality, and even identity of writing programs and their directors. The nature of this divide is portrayed in WPA literature as an epistemological tension between the values and beliefs of composition and rhetoric and those of the increasingly-corporatized institution. In this review, I show the way scholars describe WPAs as being caught between opposing beliefs about writing, between the types of authority and identities that are part of being academic and administrator, and between the epistemological foundations of socialism and capitalism. After reviewing key sources who describe the nature of WPA work as tension, I will show the way WPA advice scholarship operates within this dualistic thinking.

Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk explicitly define WPA work as a tension of opposing beliefs about writing, which they suggest affect the work of Writing Program Administrators. Fox and Malenczyk claim that "WPAs are often caught in untenable positions between their own program's beliefs and values surrounding language and learning and the institutional politics of the university" (316). They suggest that higher education institutions generally maintain "a[n] understanding of writing as skills-based, preparatory, formal, and transferrable," and that when WPAs do not expand this definition, they allow the university to "covertly [keep] in place acontextual standards of language" (320). Fox and Malenczyk describe the WPA caught in the middle of this binary of values about writing, a position they claim that WPAs cannot fully inhabit because the university acts in opposition to the foundational values of the writing program (319).

This prevailing notion of the institution operating under misconceptions about writing is often generalized in WPA literature, as Fox and Malenczyk describe the institution in very general terms and the competing ideas of writing vaguely as contextual and acontextual. However, Fox and Malenczyk do point to the vast number of stakeholders in a writing program, each with their own goals, values, and institutional power, which affect the control Writing Program Administrators have over their programs. While tenure can offer some protections to the WPA, the role of the program as a skills-based service, reinforced by a decontextualized view of writing, means that a WPA must often work within a densely political climate. Fox and Malenczyk suggest that examining WPA narratives can illuminate this power structure, allowing WPAs to "parse out the politics" of their work (319).

In contrast to Fox and Malenczyk's pronouncement that WPA work is a tension between different beliefs about writing, other WPA scholars describe WPA work as a troubled balance between the binaries of academic and administrator. These academic and administrative identities that WPAs balance are tied to the nature of their duties and to the modes of authority they possess in each of their roles. For example, Richard Bullock suggests that WPAs operate in a binary of professor and administrator, and that issues only arise when they fail to acknowledge *both* of these aspects of their jobs. In a review essay of the edited collections *WPA as Researcher* and *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours,* Richard Bullock claims that WPAs often model their understanding of their work on that of literature professors, because of composition's historical relationship with literary studies. Bullock suggests that when a WPA's work does not

mirror that of their literature colleagues—in terms of research time, faculty autonomy, and scope of the job—they begin to express animosity towards the bureaucratic nature of the institution (673). This animosity, which prevails in many of the WPA narratives I examine in the next section, is due not to the dual nature of Writing Program Administration as academic and administrative, but to the failure of WPAs to look to both of these as equally valid domains of work.

Bullock's figuring of the divide between academic and administrator is supported by Robert Birnbaum, who claims that this divide is a prevailing feature in higher education institutions, based on the nature of academic authority (9). According to Birnbaum, organizational structures place faculty as merely skilled laborers in academic institutions (13). Issues arise with this role, however, because faculty are also are experts in their fields, where they maintain a higher status than they do in their institutions. Faculty members are granted professional authority, but placed in a leadership structure that subordinates them to administrative authority. Faculty exist in this model to perform the work of serving two primary university missions, teaching and research, and they possess no actual power over their institutions or the structures that govern these missions (Birnbaum). WPAs embody both the professional authority over their subject matter in teaching and research, and this administrative authority over some of the institutional structures that govern the professional work.

According to Theresa Enos and Shane Borrowman, WPAs traditionally begin first as academics, and thus from the professorial ranks (15). This emphasizes the issue of modeling WPA work on that of the literature professoriate, as Bullock illustrates, and it means that WPAs are often brought into their positions with a developed sense of powerlessness or animosity towards the administrative ranks. In the section below, I will show the way this division creates a narrative of conflict, based on this rhetorical depiction of the WPA as caught between the binaries of academia and administration. Cristyn Elder, Megan Schoen, and Ryan Skinnell describe the boom in graduate preparation for Writing Program Administration through graduate schools and professional organizations. In addition to this evidence of the WPA role as a career choice, Charlton, et al. showcase narratives of many WPAs who forego traditional tenure track positions or who take on the work before achieving tenure. This shift away from the tenure-first warning that is found repeatedly in WPA scholarship is indicative of a shifting mindset among new WPAs who recognize the potentials of administration, who view WPA work as the core of

their professional identity, and who do not bring the same sense of animosity, fueled by prior experience with only professorial authority.

However, Birnbaum's claim of the powerlessness this divide creates in academics pervades WPA scholarship and perpetuates this sense of the pulled and divided WPA. Academics and administrators operate in sometimes-competing values systems, they wield conflicting modes of authority, and they answer to a different set of principles and objectives. In essence, these two groups serve very different functions within the university structure, but the role of the WPA brings them together in an overlapping set of responsibilities. In addition to figuring this work as a binary of beliefs about writing and as a binary of conflicting modes of authority, several WPA scholars also depict WPA work within a precarious divide between the epistemologies of socialism and capitalism.

Bill Hendricks suggests that WPAs continually navigate the tension between first year writing programs and the managerial bureaucracy of higher education, which he believes position the WPA between the purity of the discipline and the market forces to which higher education panders. In a critique of Keith Rhodes' "Marketing Composition for the Twenty First Century," Hendricks suggests that WPAs should educate their universities about the role and beliefs of the writing program, which he believes are vastly different, a claim Fox and Malenczyk also make. Rhodes believes that WPA work is a "negotiation between social actors" at various levels of the managed university, where differences exist and where WPAs must proactively engage those differences (85). Hendricks critiques Rhodes' proactive solution of marketing writing program values, because it falls within utilitarian approaches to writing program administration, and therefore operates in the epistemology of corporatization. Hendricks depicts the WPA within a binary of capitalism and socialism, and suggests that WPAs need to avoid participation in this capitalist turn. In fact, Hendriks suggests that when a WPA strategically engages with a capitalist activity, they are only acting in self-preservation, not on the values of the composition and rhetoric discipline.

Marc Bousquet shares this view of the WPA stuck in the middle of the binary of capitalist and socialist forces. In the introduction to a collection he coedited with Tony Scott, Lep Parascondola and Randy Martin, Bousquet suggests that material managerialism and reliance on pragmatism are damaging stances, because they betray the fundamentals of a liberal education and turn it into a capitalistic endeavor. What their collection points to, then, is not a problem with

writing programs or the field of composition and rhetoric, but a structural problem in the institutional models of managerialism. Like Hendricks, Bousquet seems to consider the pragmatist who focuses on materialist managerialism as a sell-out. He claims that such practically-minded WPAs have abandoned their theories and have joined the capitalist machine.

Throughout WPA scholarship, program directors are depicted as working directly in the middle of these rhetorically-rendered binaries that divide writing as contextual or acontextual, work as professional or administrative, epistemologies as socialist or capitalist, and WPA identities as change agents or managers. These binaries mean that the WPA is cast as inhabiting a dual identity. Charlton et al. describe this as "a tension between what we want for our programs and the environment in which our programs exist" (12). While Fox and Malenczyk call this position "untenable," Charlton et al. suggest that it merely presents a site for negotiation (316).

WPA scholarship does not end with a list of binaries. Instead, as Charlton et al. suggest, there is a large body of literature that describes actions for mediating these binaries that scholarship defines. Many WPA scholars offer strategies and actions that their colleagues can take in order to foster healthy and strong writing programs. Charlton et al. term this kind of literature "advice scholarship" (11). However, as I will show in the section below, these advice narratives are engendered with some of these binaries, and thus are imbued with a sense of tension and foreboding.

Narratives of Strategy

Within a field that characterizes writing program administration as a site of epistemological tension between binaries, many WPA scholars have written about the actions and strategies that WPAs can take to improve their writing programs. Within these narratives, many WPAs address the epistemological divide between institution and program, and describe their strategies as a way to act upon this difference.

WPA strategy narratives offer both actions and principles, with varying degrees of granularity. For example, Doug Downs suggests that because WPAs operate in a tension of what they believe they should teach and what their stakeholders and administrators expect them to teach, WPAs should engage in six principles for managing this tension: "Make writing the content of the course," Write meaningful outcomes," "Work on misconceptions," Engage an activity system," Emphasize rhetoric, ceaselessly" ("What is First-Year Composition?" 60). In contrast to these specific principles, Margaret Shaw, Gerry Winter, and Brian Huot suggest a

broader approach to strategies, calling for WPAs to see the institution, to seize "kairotic moments," and to act on theoretical and epistemological foundations (155). Also operating on a broad scale, Keith Rhodes suggests that WPAs should create brands for their writing programs, and then work to market those brands to their writing programs' stakeholders. Linda Adler-Kassner firmly disagrees with Rhodes, claiming that WPAs should seek careful engagement with their stakeholders, and should base their actions on principles (*Activist WPA*). Adler-Kassner avoids prescribing specific actions, and instead offers a series of questions for WPA reflection, and provides a general stance that WPAs can take. This variety of strategies is not unbiased, however.

The binaries WPA scholarship asserts, and the tension Charlton et al., Fox and Malenczyk, and others claim these binaries create, are embedded in narratives of Writing Program Administration. In order to critically engage with WPA advice scholarship on negotiation strategies, it is important to read the narratives of tension that shape such strategies. Charlton et al. call these offerings of strategy "advice scholarship," and claim that they often comes in the form of either victim narratives or hero narratives. They suggest that these narratives actually restrict our field's notion of who is capable or able to conduct such work, and over-simplify the complex tasks of the position, creating an "incomplete profile" of the WPA and their work (55). Caswell, Grutsch McKinney, and Jackson suggest that this incomplete profile also serves to create a false advice narrative, because it recommends specific actions for WPAs that are predicated on belief in these binaries rather than on the specifics of a given WPA's context (6).

Amy Vidali claims that perpetuating hero narratives creates an ableist lens for viewing WPA work, describing only a certain type of person who is capable of filling the position of Writing Program Administrator and cementing unrealistic expectations of the quantity of work a WPA should be able accomplish. On the flipside of these hero narratives, Vidali suggests that victim narratives are just as damaging, because they do not account for complex situations and tend to falsely—or incompletely—attribute depression and anxiety to WPA work. These critiques of the common narratives of WPA scholarship establish a few of the dangers of decontextualizing the experiences of the WPA and of reifying those decontextualized experiences in advice scholarship. In my review of these advice narratives, I suggest that the way

these narratives presuppose a relationship between the binaries that shape a program, casting the writing program and its institution in a relationship of conflict.

Just as WPA scholarship casts the work of the WPA into binaries, it also places value judgements on the units in these binaries. Advice narratives implicitly or explicitly cast writing program administration as an ongoing act of conflict, a particular stance that is rooted in a particular set of beliefs regarding the purpose of higher education, its governance structures, and the value systems they embody. For example, Marc Bousquet writes that the nature of higher education has changed from a high class endeavor to a preparatory experience for the middle class worker, with a new governing structure that is overtly managerial ("Introduction"). Colleges and universities now place emphasis on career readiness, and highly manage and assess the education process. As I discussed in the previous section, Marc Bousquet does not believe that WPAs should act as members of the managerial class, because their pragmatism is capitalistic in nature and does not account for the experiences or conditions of the program's laborers. Instead, Bousquet believes that managerialism promotes efficiency above personal satisfaction and allows market forces to dictate the conditions of workers. This stance places university leadership and the whole endeavor of a managerial system in opposition to the values of writing education.

While many writing program scholars do not adopt Bousquet's full socialist argument, some, such as Jeanne Gunner, Donna Strickland, David Downing, Steve Parks, Tony Scott and David Brodsky do share Bousquet's belief that the corporate governance model of higher education is damaging to education, and that administrators who cooperate with such a model may bring harm to their faculty, their students, and the future of higher education. This stance places stakeholder engagement as a form of warfare. For example, David Brodsky uses combative terminology, claiming that upper level administrators maintain an "arsenal of weapons" used to "strike" or "weaken" the practices that writing and humanities faculty hold dear (114). Brodsky's language betrays not only the pending detriment he sees in administrative complicity; it also positions the discipline-derived values of the writing program in a combative relationship with the structures of the institution.

Like Bousquet, Jeanne Gunner believes that writing program administration is a middle class endeavor in which WPAs seek out benefits and trample on lower class faculty members

("Among Composition People"). In their co-authored title *The Writing Program Interrupted,* Donna Strickland and Jeanne Gunner together suggest that embracing managerialism has provided a host of problems, such as the reinscription of individual action over unionization and community effort, the continual undervaluing of teaching as a historically feminized practice, and the exploitation of labor while reinforcing the elite professoriate class (63). Jeanne Gunner argues individually that writing program administrators can use their unique dual identity to act as agents on behalf of the writing program, working to combat these issues. Gunner reiterates the epistemological separation between the writing program and the managed university, and suggests that WPAs should act as change agents within the administrative ranks, proselytizing and converting higher level administrators to the values found within composition studies. This strategy of becoming a change agent is predicated on the idea that an institution needs to be changed, because it is somehow anathema to the values of a First Year Writing Program.

Within this notion of the writing program and the university inhabiting positions of epistemological conflict, many active WPA scholars offer stances for engaging with this conflict. Building on Marc Bousquet's pronouncement that "the core self-understanding" of the compositionist is one of "a managerial intellectual," Donna Strickland suggests that WPAs should not consider management to be beneath the work of composition (Strickland 8). Despite her claims with Jeanne Gunner that managerialism is part of an antithetical philosophy, Strickland also claims that WPAs should not consider managerial work less valuable than the intellectual work of composition scholarship. Instead, she suggests that WPAs can make a difference when they immerse themselves in information about hierarchies, negotiation, and management. Strickland forwards a message of self-education, and suggests that WPAs need to understand and work within existing systems in order to maintain control over their writing programs. This strategy privileges the expertise of WPAs as compositionists, over the expertise of any program stakeholders or university values.

Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk suggest, as I discussed in context of the binaries governing Writing Program Administration, that falling prey to institutional values reinforces "a[n] understanding of writing as skills-based, preparatory, formal, and transferrable" and thus allows the university to "covertly [keep] in place acontextual standards of language," which are at odds with composition scholarship (320). These value differences exist because Writing Program Administrators possess value-laden knowledge about writing education. In response to this

ongoing conflict, Matthew Heard, Chris Anson, Keith Rhodes, and Linda Adler-Kassner suggest that decisions about the teaching of writing need to be based on disciplinary expertise.

According to Matthew Heard, every writing program should maintain a firm, researched foundation, and should foster a strong program culture—which he calls "writing sensibility" (38). Heard suggests this stance is a way of spreading confidence in and support for the writing program. In contrast to mere program culture, Chris Anson suggests that this foundation should be based on empirical research, in his article "Intelligent Design." He calls for more rigor in writing research, suggesting that as a field, composition withstands attacks by using empirically defensible pedagogy. Regardless of how that disciplinary foundation is created, Keith Rhodes offers marketing as a way of engaging with stakeholders while maintaining disciplinary authority in his article "You Are What You Sell." Rhodes believes that WPAs should not negotiate with stakeholders regarding program formation or curriculum, but rather that they should know what their program represents and then do a good job of selling that value to other units, departments, students, and administrators. In the "WPAs in Dialog" section of the journal *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, Linda Adler-Kassner responds to Rhodes, agreeing with ongoing sentiments that writing programs need a firm, empirically-derived foundation from which they can negotiate with those outside of the discipline ("Response to Keith Rhodes"). While Adler-Kassner calls for alliance building and connection across value systems, as opposed to marketing, she too, calls for the maintenance of program principles as a touchstone for engaging with conflict. These advice narratives give WPAs a means for engaging with the tension created by the epistemological binaries of the writing program and the managed university, and offer ways for WPAs to navigate their institutional purpose.

Doug Downs emphasizes the role of writing programs in general education curricula and suggests that service to university curricula is of vital importance in a WPA's work, because they must fulfil what he terms the "FYC Charter" (58 "What is First Year-Composition?"). Downs relies on the work of Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, Susan Miller, and David Russell to suggest that first year writing exists for three primary reasons. He defines these as the democratization of higher education, the equivalence of literacy with morality and of "writing" with grammatical correctness, and the vocational role of higher education (Malenczyk 51). Downs writes that no matter what innovations or instincts WPAs have in the teaching of writing, the higher education institution expects these three functions, and WPAs must work with their

university stakeholders to either revise these expectations or meet them. For Downs, this charter represents a responsibility the discipline has to its university stakeholders.

Contextualizing Binary Relationships

Working within the idea of negotiating difference, several WPA scholars approach the issue of engagement by advocating for contextualized knowledge of stakeholders, values, and actions. Peggy O'Neill offers a way of navigating the disciplinary and institutional tensions that WPAs encounter by calling for an examination of a given institution's relationship between the local standards and performance standards that are placed on student learning. As her figure below depicts, the hierarchy of higher education is a nested one, in which participants at each level are engaging in a set of goal-directed actions, with reasons, standards, and a rationale for how they manage the aspects of education that are within their purview.
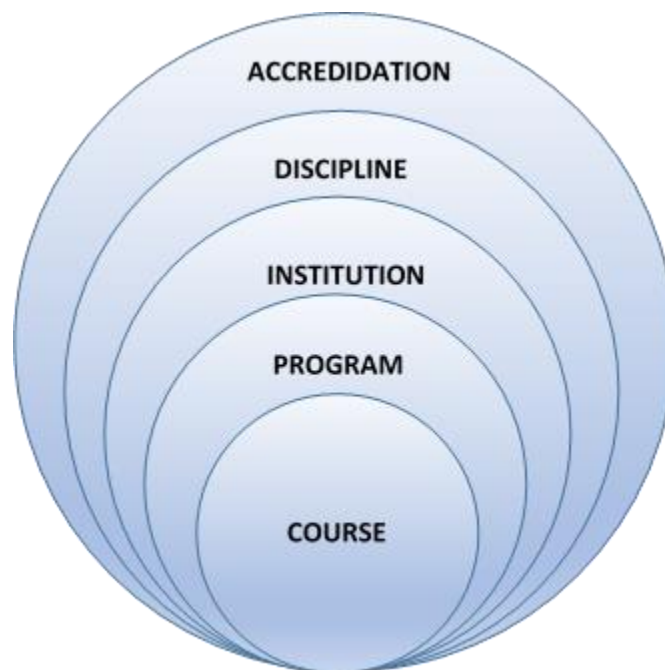

Fig. 2. O'Neill, Peggy. "What Are Educational Standards?" *A Rhetoric for Writing Program Administrators*. eds. Rita Malenczyk and Tom Fox. Anderson: Parlor Press. 2013. Print.

O'Neill's work suggests that the way navigating differences within institutions requires a WPA to see their courses placed within their program, their program placed within their

institution, their institution placed within the discipline, and all of these levels then placed within accreditation (341). O'Neil's stance calls for WPAs to know and understand the context for their work, and to learn and acknowledge the reasons or goals of those higher in the institutional structure.

Prior to much of her work on WPA identity, Jonikka Charlton researched the process of engagement for her dissertation, under the direction of Shirley K. Rose titled "Explaining Ourselves to Others." I will build most directly on Charlton's study for the design of my own project on WPA negotiation. Charlton conducts a series of case studies designed to explore the ways several writing program administrators defend or explain their humanities-based programs to stakeholders who do not highly value the humanities. Jonikka Charlton opens her discussion with a quotation from Doug Hesse, which states: "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" (65). Operating under the assumption that WPAs *do* engage in this political action, Charlton set out to learn how WPAs respond in rhetorically adept ways to a variety of audiences who have stake in the work of the writing program.

In this project, I intend to operate under the same assumption as Charlton: that WPAs are actively or passively engaged in some form of interaction with their stakeholders that is political in nature. I see my work deviating, however, in the ways my research design assumes the writing program is complexly interrelated to its institutional context. While Charlton acknowledges the circumstantial nature of WPA work and cautions against decontextualizing the work of WPAs, her research design also treats writing programs in isolation, as though WPAs have the authority to make any decisions they choose, and simply need to defend or justify their work on occasion. While Charlton's language suggests that she does not believe this to be the case, her focus on justification positions writing programs in this way. Instead of examining defensive strategies , a framing built on the notion of conflict between binaries, I intend to explore the various constraints stakeholders pose, and the ways that WPAs manage or negotiate those constraints, defensively, collaboratively, or otherwise.

In her study, Charlton identifies a variety of responses that range from maintaining authority ("my-way-or-the-highway") to ignoring discontent ("the rhetoric of silence"). However, an important conclusion from Charlton's work is that WPAs are rarely asked to justify

their programs. Those stakeholders who demand justification are the stakeholders most actively engaged in the work of writing education, such as faculty teaching writing intensive courses in different departments or disciplines, graduate teaching assistants teaching composition courses, and rhetoric faculty also teaching composition, with differing theoretical backgrounds. This finding highlights our need to move beyond defense, and to examine other forms of engagement or negotiation.

Charlton defines a series of stakeholder values, such as "those who see no value in teaching writing at all," those who "want a different curriculum," and the "job-driven constituency" (66). The actions WPA undertake in response to these values represent a series of material responses to stakeholder needs within writing curricula. Charlton's claim that WPAs are never asked by deans, provosts, or even the state coordinating board to justify their programs offers an excellent area to contribute to WPA scholarship. While upper level administrators may not ask for justification or explanation, there is a series of constraints, briefly illustrated in Charlton's stakeholder categories, that affect the work of the WPA. These include accreditation requirements, general education requirements, state requirements, and university missions or culture. Charlton's study reveals that the actions WPAs use as response are highly contextualized. I intend to build on this conclusion, examining the forms of action that WPAs use to negotiate with stakeholder constraints placed on their writing programs and situating those actions in institutional contexts. Charlton closes her study with this claim: "instead of waiting for others to attack what we're doing, we need to explain ourselves to our stakeholders. To do that, we need good arguments. We need a creative, but pragmatic approach. And we need to be taught better how to do it." (80). Building on the work of Charlton, O'Neill, and others, I intend to locate the actions that embody these rhetorical responses. In order to answer Charlton's call for teaching WPAs how to respond to critique or constraint, I want to offer a more thorough understanding of what those constraints are, and of the methods and actions that WPAs frequently use to work within those constraints.

Richard Bullock's work suggests that an important component to studying the constraints that affect the WPA's work is an examination of the strategies WPAs use. In his review essay, Bullock suggests that a large part of the "humanist-oriented apathy towards organization life," which he sees in victim narratives, is a lack of understanding or acknowledgment of the material reality of managerial work—what he refers to as "institutional blindness" (673).

Bullock suggests that these depressing narratives of overwork and bureaucratic burdens contain the message "WPAs are not in control: their jobs are defined by university policies that are not of their making and in which they have no voice" (674). He suggests that these narratives communicate the message that "to be a WPA is to be out of control" (674). Bullock's claim that WPA fatalism is directly related to their notions of control implicitly suggests that WPA research needs to shift its focus to the reality of administration. By depicting WPAs as more than faculty members, and by refusing to contrast the nature and values of their work with that of other faculty, we can strip this preoccupation with lack from WPA research (674-675).

Several WPA scholars suggest that mapping social and organizational space can create a connection between what Chris Anson terms the "social processes and the 'material structures,'" such as those of the writing program budget (234). Tim Peeples offers postmodern mapping as a way to see the WPA endeavor in a more complex light. Echoing the notion of binaries, Tim Peeples claims that "WPAs aren't 'only' faculty members: they are also administrators, and the two roles require very different skills and lead to very different sets of expectations and behaviors that WPAs must deal with, simultaneously" (88). In order to depict this complexity, Peeples assembles an array of narratives and maps. He suggests that any mapping stills the dynamic complexity of the moment, and privileges a particular perspective, while obscuring another. Therefore, Peeples claims that mapping must be complemented with multiple perspectives and narratives (154).

So much current WPA literature casts the institutional work of Writing Program Administration in opposition to the values of the WPA. Working with dozens of narratives that emphasize the conflict of this rhetorical divide, I map the interconnected nature of the Writing Program Administration as both disciplinary and institutional. I offer a map, in a few brief figures, only as a way of conceiving of this connection, and offer this integrated perspective While many of the WPA scholars who in some measure object to the corporatized system of higher education suggest that WPAs should become activists (Adler-Kassner) or change agents (Gunner), Changing a system is not easy. Ogawa et al. and Meadows both remind their readers that Systems self-perpetuate, in order to maintain their processes (90, 15). In addition, Meadows suggests that changing a system requires locating leverage points—which will be unique to each system—which are places where the impact of parameters that affect a portion of the system is

large enough to alter a function on a higher level. Without these leverage points—and sometimes with them—the systems themselves rarely change.

By situating their writing programs as complex components of their institutions, WPAs can avoid the futility of their attempts to enact bottom up change to elements of the system that will not be changed. Instead, this perspective allows WPAs to see what is happening, to see where they fit in with the larger picture, and to work within the system's boundaries—and if they choose to work against them, they may do so consciously and purposefully By working strategically, WPAs can demonstrate and enact the values of their traditionally marginalized domains, and participate productively in the system of which they are a component. The merit of this approach is that WPAs can gain a clear perspective in which to act, by viewing a map of their work and its interconnections.

While WPA scholarship represents the institution as a barrier to the real work of a writing program, Doug Hesse's demonstration of the FYC charter asserts the necessity of working with the institution, and his and Peggy O'Neill's' claim that a WPA must gain local but generalized perspective emphasizes the need for a careful examination of the way Writing Program Administrators are actively engaging with their institutional constraints in the daily work they conduct.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

"As researchers begin to fully articulate the socially constructed nature of their inquiry, they will discover that their research questions and findings are as provisional and changing as the communities of writers they study." (Kirsch 266).

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways Writing Program Administrators navigate the highly contextualized act of balancing their knowledge from the discipline of composition and rhetoric with the institutional requirements of their universities. First Year Writing programs operate in a variety of institutional contexts, each with their own set of material expectations. This research is designed to locate the balancing work of WPAs within these material contexts and extract a set of practces or strategies that WPAs implement. In this chapter, I provide background on the research I use to situate the design of my own project, I describe the institutional and disciplinary tensions that my project seeks to intervene within, and I describe my research question and methods.

Background

In his 2002 piece "The Writing Program Administrator in Context," David Schwalm walks newly appointed WPAs through a series of self-reflective acts of contextualizing their new roles in the university. Schwalm identifies nine levels of context awareness that he believes are crucial to the work of a WPA. These levels are: task, position, program type, institutional hierarchy, department affiliation, institution type, articulation relationships, the national state of higher education, and inter- and intra-institutional budgetary relationships ("The Writing Program Administrator in Context" 10). Schwalm's instructional chapter suggests that many new WPAs have no sense of their institutional positionality because they are pulled from faculty ranks and are not trained as directors or administrators. In his writing on transfer agreements between colleges, Schwalm claims that WPAs are caught in a problematic position between administration and faculty because they are trained intellectuals whose work is designed to transcend the institution and are now being given tasks and positions that require them to know and work *with* the institution ("What Is Transfer Articulation?").

There is a substantial body of scholarship that casts WPAs as either victims or heroes in a position of conflict (Bullock, Charlton, et al.). Some scholars treat this conflict as a sign of the downward spiral of higher education, while others view it as an opportunity—or duty—to

engage with stakeholders from competing value systems. And despite a growing set of practical guides for directing composition programs as institutional units, current scholarship in the growing sub discipline of Writing Program Administration still maintains a division between the pedagogical and the bureaucratic. While scholars such as Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk describe this divided position as "untenable," the notion of tension —the WPA caught between the pull of competing systems—can be a positive force of identity, challenge, and diversity within the profession, as I will discuss below (316).

Operating within these narratives of conflict, Jonikka Charlton's study into how WPAs defend or explain their work positions writing programs as semi-isolated units with the autonomy to defend themselves to scrutiny (*Explaining Ourselves to Others*). What her findings show, however, is that rather than maintaining a distance from which to defend their own design of their programs as they see fit, WPAs consistently work within existing requirements, adapt to the situation, and enact a key role in larger organizational processes. In contrast to Charlton's premise of defending programmatic territory, my research question positions institutional service as the purpose of First Year Writing, simply because as an endeavor and as a discipline First Year Writing does not exist except because of its institutional purpose. By centering the writing program within this institutional purpose, rather than as a separate unit that must ward off attacks, I am suggesting that the reality of WPA work is a constant engagement with the institution.

I begin where Charlton leaves off, examining how the work of WPAs is a highly situated act of balancing programmatic integrity within the institutions that define, constrain, and enable these programs. I illuminate some of the inputs and outputs of programmatic processes, which allows me to situate WPA actions and decisions within institutional constraints to highlight the connection between unit and system, and provide examples of the way WPAs work within the boundaries of their systems. By taking this approach, I am showing the way writing programs— even in their pedagogical choices and disciplinary work—are part of the institution, and exploring how their directors navigate inputs from the institution and the discipline in order to fulfil their educational purpose.

Institutional and Disciplinary Tensions

Writing Program Administrators operate within dual classifications, participating in the intellectual work of the field while conducting the supposedly less intellectual bureaucratic work

of administering programs within an increasingly corporatized system of higher education. This active relationship presents an identity and an occupational site that is caught between two units in tension: the discipline of writing and the institution of higher education, as Fox and Malenczyk, and Charlton, et al suggest.

Despite the way this process is cast in the conflict narratives that permeate WPA scholarship, tension by definition refers only to the force exerted from two opposing directions. This definition does not automatically signify unmediated binaries or a condition of negative stress and impending ruin, as terms like "untenable" and "discord" in the WPA literature would suggest. In the sciences, tension is sometimes emphasized as a force of potentiality. For example, in physics, the term can indicate the elongation of the object under tension—on the potential size and ability of the object that is brought to fruition only by the force of tension ("Tension (Physics)"). In chemistry, tension is seen as the generation of potential energy in atoms, which can then be implemented through kinetic energy or action ("Potential Energy"). Thus, tension is the chemical formation or transference of energy which then makes action possible. These ways of conceiving of tension illuminate it as a source of potentiality and as the embodiment of or the precursor to strong actions.

In this dissertation I argue that Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) inhabit identities that are under tension, due to the variety of demands and the epistemological differences of the domains of their discipline and their institution. Taking both the definitions from the natural sciences and those of WPA scholarship, I cast tension as simultaneously positive and negative; it generates actions, provides accountability, and maintains a state of creativity and engagement. It also presents an ongoing condition of constraint in which the requirements of the institution can sometimes conflict with the best practices of the discipline.

This notion of tension between the academic and the managerial natures of Writing Program Administration is an important consideration when studying what constitutes the work of a WPA and how the work gets accomplished. The institution and the discipline are integral components of the work of the writing program, and thus are worthy of study, not only as individual factors influencing the work of a WPA, but as the impetus for a vital negotiation process that characterizes WPA work.

Research Question

This research is designed to answer the following question: How do writing program administrators meet the expectations of their higher education institutions while balancing disciplinary integrity with programmatic demands from the university?

a.   What do WPAs see as the primary goal for their writing programs?

b.   How do WPAs define integrity within their writing programs?

c.   What role do WPAs see their writing programs playing for departments, majors, and the universities?

The formation of this question accomplishes several specific things: it focuses my data collection and analysis on strategies and actions—on *how* WPAs accomplish this, it places the institutional purpose of the writing program as the primary goal of these actions, and it presupposes that disciplinary integrity and programmatic demands will need to be balanced.

In my review of the literature, I noted the array of practical guides that comprise a large quantity of WPA scholarship (Charlton, et al. refer to them as "advice scholarship"). This collection of resources demonstrates the value of practical, applicable knowledge that can be applied in institutional contexts. Despite the preponderance of conflict narratives that position the institution as the WPA's adversary, Downs reminds WPAs that the fulfilment of the FYC Charter is the primary objective of the WPA (10). That is, WPAs must—and do, as the advice scholarship indicates—place emphasis on their institutional purpose of teaching writing courses to first year college students. Rita Malenczyk and Tom Fox outline the primary theoretical differences between the general institutional values of language and writing, and the way WPAs, as ambassadors of composition and rhetoric, view language and writing. While some literature positions these differences as points of conflict, I use the term 'balance' to suggest ongoing action that is not necessarily positive or negative.

Methods

In this research, I use a case study methodology in order to generate a transferable set of practices that are built from rich, individual details. In this project I use what Gary Thomas refers to as "parallel" or "multiple snapshot" case studies in which I compile six individual cases, begin with a descriptive approach of exploring local knowledge, and conduct a cross comparison of these individual cases in order to use them instrumentally (90-96). This research is created from

six individual case studies of Writing Program Administrators at both state and private universities in the United States. The purpose of these case studies is to describe the practices several Writing Program Administrators use to balance disciplinary integrity with university demands in their writing programs. Throughout the document, I refer to this dual goal as *programmatic integrity*. In order to examine this integrity as a process, I will employ several methods from ethnographic case study, including semi-structured and contextual interviews, surveys, and document collection.

I operate under the assumption that we need to situate the work of WPAs within their university and disciplinary contexts. Such an approach allows me to examine the energy of tension, placing WPAs within living systems and characterizing their work as active engagement with those systems. By looking at first year writing programs as connected to thehigher education institution, this work offers a lens that is transferrable to institutions beyond those examined.

The program types described in this study do not encompass all institutions, and furthermore, the contextual approach I advocate would invalidate the direct transference of one set of practices to another institution. However, I can demonstrate the contextual nature of these processes and offer recommendations for application, rather than a series of decontextualized practices.

Rather than attempting to locate causality within a tightly controlled set of variables, this project is designed as a way to map out features that exist within the research sites and among participants in order to determine what contextually-bound practices WPAs employ to solve their own real and perceived problems. Rather than asking whether or why WPAs negotiate with program stakeholders, my research design is built on the following assumptions:

1. That WPAs must answer to and comply with upper level administrators and the requirements of accrediting bodies
2. That WPAs respond or comply in rhetorically situated ways, balancing the good of their programs with requirements and expectations from their stakeholders
3. That such processes are highly contextualized and based on WPA values and identities

The Role of Context in Case Study Research

The design of this research project encompasses what might appear to be divergent research traditions from rhetoric and composition. That is, as a researcher and as a future

practitioner, I constantly balance a desire to conduct research that is practical and applicable, such as that associated with action research or usability studies, with a desire to explore a highly contextualized case study with a complexity only possible when exploring unique details and avoiding generalizability. Thomas Newkirk writes that researchers who use case study as a method frequently fail to implement the full purity of this method, because of the simultaneous drives to provide individual results and generalizable results ("Narrative Roots of Case Study"). That is, scholars seek validity (and often claim reliability) across populations while also maintaining a highly contextualized and localized example as evidence of their claims. In this project I embrace this "methodological pluralism," to borrow Gesa Kirsch's term ("Methodological Pluralism"). I carefully and thoughtfully apply aspects of both of these approaches, fully acknowledging the way methods are manipulated for my own agenda and the way my methods reflect epistemological assumptions—assumptions that are occasionally in conflict with one another. I selected these methods in order to generate a framework for application, which allows me to take the results of highly contextualized instances of action and suggests ways of applying those lessons across contexts and situations.

Neil Smelser and John Reed claim that the positivistic models of social science do not yield usable results anyway, specifically because they are founded on notions of empirical truth that fail to acknowledge the social construction of knowledge the humanities generally values (*Usable Social Science*). Instead, these researchers argue that research that is useful and applicable and solves real-world problems, such of those contemporary WPAs face, must account for the research subjects' "motivations and intentions," the results and widespread consequences of their actions, and their understanding of "the larger social and moral meaning of the action" (1). In order to accomplish valuable change through research, whether through integrity, advocacy, instrumentality or identity, to borrow Doug Hesse's models for writing program research, researchers must account for what Smelser and Reed refer to as the "contingency of things" and explore what Hesse terms the "situations in which decisions are formed, made, and executed" (Smelser and Reed, 2; Hesse, "Writing Program Research," 143). In order to examine such contingency and participant perspective, I have selected the case study methodology. Within this methodology, my data collection methods allow me to gather a variety of contextual data that I can use to establish the situations that inform my participants' actions.

Throughout the following discussion of methods, I frequently make reference to the perspectives and perceptions of my research participants in order to signal the importance of these contextual contingencies on the meaning I make as a researcher. While Thomas Newkirk clearly shows the lack of generalizable truth-making in case study research, descriptive methodologies like case study offer a way of attempting to demonstrate individual situations and to examine participant situations from their perspective and from my own.

WPAs act within their own understandings of and beliefs about their situations. Thus, when making suggestions for applying these participants' strategies across contexts, it is important that I signal not only how those contexts relate to those actions, but how their actions suit the goals of the WPA, which are derived from individual epistemologies, goals for the writing program, and visions for the relationship between the program and its institutional stakeholders. That is, I must signal what the participating WPAs perceive as their own contexts in this study. For my research, then, learning the perspectives of my participants is vital to drawing any kind of conclusions about the relationship between context and action.

The Bias of Narratives in Case Study Research

In addition to my emphasis on my participants' understanding of their contexts, I also attempt to focus on their responses as the relating of particular narratives. Thomas Newkirk claims that case studies rely on the interpretation of researchers through narrative frames ("Narrative Roots of Case Study"). That is, the researcher is looking for narrative and "aesthetic patterns" and assigning a "moral weight" to the actions of those being described as a means of arriving at a conclusion (Newkirk 135). While those who ascribe to more positivistic methods might see this as a methodological flaw, Newkirk suggests that it is first an inescapable feature of research, and second, an opportunity to examine our own cultural narratives as researchers. By providing a full acknowledgement of the goals and desired outcomes of the research project, scholars like myself can ethically engage in these narratives, Newkirk claims, drawing on conventions and tropes to emphasize important aspects of our research to our readers. As I conducted the case studies for this project, I undertook frequent self-evaluations of the narrativising of my data, as Newkirk suggests. In addition, I selected interview methods that allowed me to provide my participants with the opportunity to participate in the formation of these narratives themselves.

By borrowing my interview method from participatory design, I was able to give each participant opportunities and questions for self-describing their situations and co-constructing the descriptions of their programs and their work. Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher suggest that semi and unstructured interviews call on the social and performative aspects of storytelling, drawing narratives out of their participants. They describe their own experiences with this research method as "asking participants to tell us stories, trusting what seemed, at times, like lengthy narrative digressions and paying much closer attention to the performative aspects of their interview responses" ("Exceeding the Bounds of the Interview" 39). This dialogic process allowed the participants of Selfe and Hawisher's study to share in the process of interpretation and narrative-making, leading the researchers to not only rich illustrations of their participants' experiences, but to an understanding of what those experiences meant to the participants. My goal in applying dialogic or participatory ethics to interviewing is to learn not only what features of the situation lead a WPA to select a particular action, but what they understand the situation to be and to signal epistemologically, what leads them to select their actions as rhetorically appropriate responses to the situation.

Interviews

In this research, I use interviews as a way to gain individual perspectives, to note the ideological language my participants use to describe their perspectives, and to allow them to guide me to themes, issues, and contextual features of their work that they deem important. For example, each participant lingered on one or several descriptions of their university situation as a way of justifying or explaining their own actions. Such descriptions provide me with rich data for describing their own stance and position within their situation, as well as the conditions for their actions and those conditions and the decisions they make.

Design Limitations

My interview protocol is informed by the principles of contextual inquiry. Contextual inquiry is a method for gathering data while the participant is in the context of the action or process, and therefore positions the researcher to attempt to understand work from the participant's perspective. Holtzblatz and Beyer claim that "the everyday things people do become habitual and unconscious," meaning that participants will often fail to report on aspects of their lives that have become habituated (11). Contextual inquiry is the primary data collection

method for contextual design, with the end goal of creating products or systems to facilitate user experience and productivity. While I set out to chart existing actions, not create products or workflows, contextual interviews offered me a robust method for gathering contextualized information, understanding the points of view of my participants, and engaging with the actions, perspectives, and intentions of my research participants.

The nature of WPA work is not conducive to the entire method of contextual inquiry because the bulk of the work WPAs conduct is often silent, still, and confidential. While I anticipated observing conversation techniques, meeting frequencies, and written strategies for negotiating tension, these contextual interviews did not yield anything of the sort due to privacy issues and the nature of a WPA's day-to-day work. The majority of meetings and formal interactions of a WPA were unavailable to me due to the sensitive nature of these relationships and the lack of consent among university stakeholders not associated with the program. This lack of consent among university stakeholders—college deans, faculty members from other colleges, and so on—is important in understanding WPA perspectives, because these stakeholders did not themselves deny consent. Rather, the WPAs being interviewed deemed these figures inaccessible and drew their own limits around my research. This limitation is important to the role of politics in WPA work, because my participants chose not only to deny me access to stakeholders whose relationships are crucial to programmatic success, but they also elected to view their own accounts as more important to WPA research than those of their stakeholders.

The second limitation I encountered was that the bulk of the work a WPA does in her or his office takes place in silent stillness, through the reading, sorting, and responding to email—which correspondences were also deemed sensitive or off limits by the participants. This issue, coupled with the WPA participant's desires to voice their own narratives rather than providing access to institutional work suggests that they place more value on their own verbal accounts than on their actions. These limitations reveal information about the kinds of research WPAs deem valuable, about the importance of external relationships and the need to protect them, and about the desire for WPA autonomy in defining the writing program. All themes I will explore in this dissertation.

Structuring

Due to the limitations of location and time, as well as my lack of access to daily tasks, I conducted semi-structured interviews. While two of these took place in the offices of the

participants, several more were conducted face-to-face at the annual Conference on College

Composition and Communication (CCCC), and via video and audio calls with the WPA

participants.

Semi-structuring an interview allows for the comparison of responses from multiple

participants while simultaneously allowing participants to describe their own experiences,

impressions, and perceptions. According Robert Stake, open-ended questions that broadly ask

the interview subject to describe his or her experiences yield information on the participant's

own interpretation of an event or phenomena (95). This is also a helpful technique for learning

about a particular concept or for gaining specific information that is out of the researcher's reach.

The goal of this project is to learn about the strategies WPAs use for navigating

competing stakeholders or domains. Because WPA scholars have defined tension with a broad

list of binaries, and because each context offers potentially unique constraints, I allowed the

participants of my study define the nature of their constraints and their perception of the tension

they are acting upon themselves. During each semi-structured interview, I followed a list of

themes that I wanted the participants to discuss. I supplied each participant with this list prior to

the interview. As conversations progressed naturally, I would ask follow up questions or related

questions in an order appropriate to the conversation, rather than following the list numerically.

Data Recording

All interviews were recorded via audio or audio-video, and through note taking. Note

taking is important to my analysis of these interviews because the tangents of my participants

offered insight into their own perceptions of what constraints and possibilities they experienced,

and because it allowed a tangible way for my participants to help shape the narratives of their

work. By discussing my notes during the interviews, my participants had the opportunity to share

in the construction of the narratives they were relating to me. This voluntary interaction revealed

to me the desire of these WPAs for the autonomy to describe the value and nature of their work,

and it also revealed a heightened awareness among a subset of my participants of the political

nature of their work and the reality of disagreement between their views on education and those

of their stakeholders. This heightened awareness was revealed in two specific ways:

1. Through requests that information remain "off the record" or not be included in
   publication

2. Through requests to change, rewrite, and "make it sound better"

3. Through direct acknowledgement of WPA work as mediating difference

This process of co-construction is important because it gives my participants a voice, it attempts to mitigate researcher bias, and it reveals the constraints that these WPAs feel are significant.

Interview Protocol

The conversations in my semi-structured interviews were directed to three specific questions: How does the participant define disciplinary integrity? How does the participant define university demands? And how does the participant navigate the balance of disciplinary integrity and university demands? The following questions were provided to guide conversation as I sought my participant's perspectives on each of these three questions:

1. How does the participant define disciplinary integrity?
    a. What is the purpose of their program?
    b. What pedagogical or theoretical foundations do they use?
    c. What are their program's outcomes?
    d. What are their visions or desires for the program?

2. How does the participant define university demands?
    a. How does their program function within with the university's general education program?
    b. What do upper level administrators say is the purpose of the writing program?
    c. How does the program function within accreditation requirements?
    d. What is the university getting from the writing program and how?

3. How does the participant navigate the balance of disciplinary integrity and university demands?
    a. How do they describe their daily actions to meet those demands?
    b. What is their educational background?
    c. What are their stances towards composition scholarship?
    d. What is the nature of their interactions with upper level administrators?
    e. What actions do they identify as moves of disciplinary integrity?
    f. What actions do they identify as moves of university service?
    g. What is the nature of those actions?

> h. Do they feel the balance is difficult?
>
> i. What part of that balance do they believe is important?

Participants were provided with an electronic document containing these questions prior to our semi-structured interview meetings. In my effort to use the protocol as a guideline for themes, I prompted the WPAs to describe their experiences, encouraging them to respond with narratives in order to learn about their individual perspectives regarding the actions and the conditions that prompted their actions. These respondent narratives provided usable information about each participant's perception of the context, rather than just collected information on the material realities of that context.

Document Collection

I collected publicly accessible documents from the webpages of each institution. Some of these documents were themselves webpages, while others were downloadable files catalogued on the various pages of each university's website. I searched for these documents with the goal of learning about the general mission and values of each institution, the demands various stakeholders place on the writing program, and the stated purpose and work of the writing program.

Each institutional context will differ and therefore will manifest its work in a range of similar, though inexact documents. For this reason, I set out to learn about the basic pieces of information from similar sources. The documents I collected include university accreditation documents, such as reaffirmation reports and institutional assessments; general education documents, including informational webpages, publicly accessible meeting minutes, committee reports, approved course lists, learning outcomes statements and competency outlines; philosophy and rationale statements for general education, departments governing first year writing, and first year writing programs; and mission statements, university website landing pages, and about us pages for institutions, programs, and curricula.

I collected these documents before and after interviews, and before and during data analysis. I collected basic documents prior to conducting interviews in order to learn more about the institutional context of each university, which guided my questions with the participants. After the participants shared their responses with me I revisited the university websites to locate additional sources of information on the topics and institutional structures those WPAs

discussed. During data analysis, I often located references to institutional features, pressures, or requirements, which prompted me to reexamine the contextual documents available to me. When a new document type arose from this process for one participant, I would then go and search for a similar document or source of information for the other participants, as well.

In addition to the institutional documents I collected from each research site, I located documents from the field of composition and rhetoric. These national documents allowed me to triangulate WPA responses about disciplinary integrity, and to situate those responses in the work that is happening in writing studies, composition and rhetoric, and WPA organizations. I used the WPA Outcomes Statement for First Year Composition (3.0), and the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing from the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Because of the fluid and changing nature of web documents, I downloaded or copied all documents at the time of retrieval, in order to analyze them as static and consistently available resources throughout the research project.

Surveys

In order to triangulate the responses from writing program administrators regarding the role of composition, rhetoric, and WPA scholarship in their work, I administered a survey instrument. This survey was sent on the WPA-L ListServ, which is a national email list for anyone interested in writing program administrator. The survey asked WPAs and writing faculty to identify the basic theoretical approaches in their program, taken from Gary Tate's *Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. This text is a pedagogical resource describing the basic theoretical stances in composition education first published in 2001, and revised in 2014. After respondents selected the primary focus of the writing program, the survey asked whether their program operates under a set of outcomes for student learning, and which common resources informed these outcomes. Resource choices were the WPA Outcomes Statement, the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, and various resolutions and statements from NCTE and CCCC, as well as a write-in response field. I used this survey to triangulate my definition of the discipline, by testing the use of the national documents I selected in writing programs across the country. In addition, this survey gave me the opportunity to situate the work of these WPAs in the basic theoretical approaches used by WPAs across the country.

Research Sites and Participants

For the purpose of this research, a First Year Writing program is defined as an autonomous or semi autonomous program that oversees the curriculum, staffing, and placement of students into a writing course or sequence of courses that incoming first year students are required to take. At many universities, these programs fall within the purview of English departments, humanities colleges, or rhetoric departments, while other programs maintain themselves as stand alone programs, departments, or academic service units. This research examines the individual perspectives and experiences from Writing Program Administrators at universities across the country. This research was granted exemption status from examination by the Institutional Review Board at my university (IRB) under protocol 15-1163.

Site Categories

I selected sites for these case studies based on first year composition program types at regionally accredited state institutions that have an introductory composition or writing requirement for undergraduate students. The markers of program type include public and private institutions, course affiliation to departments and programs, and administrative leadership affiliations to programs and departments. Based on research conducted by Brett Mayhan of the College Board's AP Program, the three most common composition course affiliations among tier 1 colleges and universities are English departments, university writing programs, and rhetoric and writing departments. Because this project is focused on the activities and practices of WPAs, participants were selected only from sites that have WPAs, rather than those whose programs are governed by English department chairs or other forms of administration. Because this research is a cross comparison of individual case studies, I sought a broad range of common program types, and explored the specifics of each writing program individually.

The program types included in this research are:
- public, English department
- public, rhetoric and writing department
- private, rhetoric department
- public, independent writing program
- public, undergraduate curriculum
- Public, independent writing in the discipline program

Because of the nature of my population and the process of selection, there are many additional models of writing programs that I did not include in this study. In addition, I treat the program types included in this study as individual, unique contexts, and do not claim them to be representative of other writing programs that take the same formation.

Selection

A Writing Program Administrator (WPA), often titled a writing program director, is an individual or team responsible for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a first year writing program. Participants in this study comprised a convenience sample of Writing Program Administrators based on professional connection. I approached WPAs whose work and programs fit the following criteria:

- Administers a first year writing program at an American college or university
- Administers a first year writing program that is governed by an English department or a rhetoric and composition (comp/rhet; rhetoric and writing) department, or which is self-governed as an independent university program
- The writing program administrator is not the department chair
- The WPA is not a graduate student
- The WPA is not a minor

I sought out participants with whom I have a professional connection in order to gain a rich set of data. I recruited participants with whom I believed I would have a sense of ease and comfort. I believe participants with professional connections to my research team are more likely to feel invested in contributing to the field's understanding of this process, and therefore are less likely to feel inconvenienced or judged by my questions. I contacted all possible participants via email with a written explanation of the study and a formal request for voluntary participation.

Anonymity

Institutional systems are complex and ideological, and WPAs must navigate the political work of stakeholder engagement and university service on a daily basis. Because of the delicate nature of these institutional relationships, I offered each of my WPA participants anonymity for their participation in the projects and in any written publications that comes out of the project. In order to prevent these participants from being recognized, I have left out detailed descriptions of many of the context-specific features of these programs and have included only small fragments

of the language used in their program or institutional documents. Several participants in this study were quite concerned for their anonymity, primarily because they felt their stakeholder relationships were delicate and hard-won, and these WPAs did not want their university stakeholders to learn of their participation.

Analysis

In this research I emphasize the inputs of each writing program in order to demonstrate the way they influence various aspects of the writing program—even aspects that directly relate to the WPA's pedagogical knowledge from the composition and rhetoric discipline. Writing programs have a variety of stakeholders and are answerable to the students, administrators, accreditation standards, and programmatic structures that they are governed by and serve. The first year writing charter that Doug Downs claims is the mission of a writing program—service to the institution—directs our scholarly attention to the importance of university stakeholders and the way a writing program works with and against various units, structures, and administrative levels within the institution. After demonstrating the impact of these institutional inputs on the writing program's formation, I explore the way they impact the input from the discipline of composition and rhetoric. Within these two discussions, I explore the way both the institutional and the disciplinary inputs are negotiated through the work of the Writing Program Administrator.

In chapter 2, I described Peggy O'Niell's call for WPAs to contextualize their program's curriculum work within the educational standards and goals of their institutions. O'Niell illustrates a hierarchical relationship in which each unit is nested in its superordinate unit. In contrast to this nested system that O'Neill uses, Esterberg and Wooding suggest that simple hierarchies of higher education units are complicated by the fact that faculty serve as leaders in their disciplines but as skilled labor in their institutions. Esterberg and Wooding describe the discipline as occupying a position outside of the institution. In addition, Robert Birnbaum also complicates this hierarchy with a description of professional and administrative authority, which operates hierarchically in within the higher education institution, by laterally between higher education and the discipline

In this research, I use build on O'Niell, Esterberg and Wooding, and Birnbaum's work, by situating the integrity work of WPAs within both their university and disciplinary contexts..

Case Study as Analysis

In order to understand the details of each case study and to see the interconnections that would not be visible by coding alone, I created a series of individual case descriptions. Robert Stake and Pat Beazley both discuss the importance of case descriptions as a process of analysis, rather than as a product of it. Pat Beazley suggests that the act of creating case studies can allow the researcher to focus on the substance of a particular case, which may become obscured when a researcher only aggregates information across cases (189). Gathering basic information and detailed data, I created a profile of each writing program and used these profiles to better understand each writing program as part of its institutional system, and to locate addition themes that were noticeable only when I examined the details of each case. As a first step, preparing case profiles allowed me to examine all of the gathered elements of each program's system, and to observe many of the interconnections that could prove relevant when analyzing interview responses. After this analysis through profiles, I made use of first and second level coding, as well as emergent themes, to examine my data.

Coding

I used a combination of codes and thematic analysis in my interview data. I used first-level or initial coding based on the categories posed in my research question in order to determine the constraints and possibilities my participants felt were important to their work negotiating the values of higher education and the institution. The three categories from the research question are Expectations of the Higher Education Institution, Programmatic Demands from the Institution, and Disciplinary Integrity. The distinction between demands on the program and expectations of the institution initially allowed me to parse out the distinct differences between institutional culture and values, and direct requirements or requests on the writing program—institutional boundaries that affect the writing program in very different ways because of directness of influence they assert on the program. However, as I delineated these categories, I found that the distinctions between these categories was the result of different institutional contexts, rather than a different set of demand types.

For some of the WPAs in my study, general education curricula posed a direct requirement, and for others it was part of the general focus, but did not have a direct set of limitations on what the program could teach. After reviewing the coded data several times, I

collapsed these categories and chose to look at the institutional constraints in whole, and engaged in a second round of coding.

After this second stage of coding in which I identified only factors from the institution or the discipline, I cross-compared my coded data with the documents I identified for each category. These comparisons allowed me to begin with the contextual factors my participants identified, and then to deepen my understanding of institutional values as expressed in institutional documents, curricular structures associated with general education, the university's articulation of its undergraduate general education curriculum.

After coding, I triangulated those codes with the documents I collected and the surveys I administered to situate my participants' responses in the work of their institutions and the work of the discipline. Following this coding and triangulation, I examined emergent themes as an alternative to another level of coding. These themes allowed me to explore and name the relationships I saw across codes, providing me with a "rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data," as Braun and Clarke urge researchers to seek (Beazley).

The findings of my research illustrate the way WPAs identify and enact connections between the values, relationships, and requirements of their institutions, and disciplinarily enriched programmatic features like curriculum, program outcomes, and course content. Because I studied a small population in-depth, the goal of my study is to map out the constraints and possibilities that affect WPA work, and then to describe the strategies my WPA participants use to navigate the tension of those constraints and possibilities.

In chapter four I will explore the role of these institutional features on the budget, curricula, programmatic reputation, course structure, course content, program outcomes, and program performance of various writing programs.

CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION

"So the state legislature pressures the university president to make changes not necessarily in line with good practice; the president pressures the provost; the provost the dean; and so on down the line to the WPA—who typically holds a view of language, and writing, very different from the views of the people pressuring him or her." (Fox and Malenczyk 314).

The decisions that WPAs make in the implementation of their writing programs are not and cannot be made in isolation from the rest of the university or the discipline. There are effects and implications from any decision a WPA makes, as a variety of stakeholders are influenced by changes to the writing program. In addition, there are a number of constraints affecting such features of the program. For example, changing the number of required pages a student must write in each First Year Writing course is often a move that must align with university's regional accreditation standards. And finally, there is the purpose of the First Year Writing course within its university, or the "First Year Composition Charter," as Doug Downs terms it. Downs relies on the work of Robert Connors, Sharon Crowley, Susan Miller, and David Russell to suggest that first year writing exists for three primary reasons. He defines these as: the democratization of higher education, the equivalence of literacy with morality, and the vocational role of higher education ("What is First-Year Composition?" 51). According to Downs, each FYW program has a responsibility to fulfil this charter even when they disagree with the institution's expectations.

As literature on WPA work has grown to encompass the pragmatic aspects of managing a university program, several notable WPA scholars have begun to illustrate this tension between the university and the discipline. Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk suggest that "WPAs are often caught in untenable positions between their own program's beliefs and values surrounding language and learning and the institutional politics of the university," (316). Colin Charlton, Jonikka Charlton, Tarez Samra, Kathleen Ryan, and Amy Stolley suggest that this positioning, which Fox and Malenczyk refer to as "untenable," demonstrates WPA work as "a becoming," a process in which "we negotiate the rhetorical tensions between what we want for our programs and the environment in which our programs exist (12). As an act of negotiation, WPA work is a constant mediation, even a positive one at times, of the discipline with the institution.

The need for this mediation is real, because the institution comes to bear on a writing program in direct and indirect ways: through the social and educational values it promotes,

through the university's stated mission, through general education curricular structures and the values of the various curriculum committees and governance, through accreditation requirements, and through official or unofficial demands expressed by various university stakeholders. These institutional factors affect a writing program on multiple levels, including the makeup of the program's labor force, the budget of the writing program, the reputation of the program among institutional stakeholders, the stated program outcomes, and even the content of the courses the program administers.

Defining Demands on the Writing Program

My research question posits two particular areas of possibility and constraint that create a state of tension as writing programs strive to fulfill their dual purpose. These areas of tension are the discipline—broadly defined as composition and rhetoric, writing studies, and writing program administration scholarship—and the demands of the institution in which the writing program operates. The demands I discuss in this study represent the institutional influences these six writing program administrators describe. This range of influences does not represent a discrete set of the demands placed on every writing program, because each institution comprises a unique context. That is, each writing program has its own institutional stakeholders, operates in an institution with its own set of values, and is part of an existing general education curricular structure. As figure 3 below illustrates, each writing program is altered by the stakeholders and values of its institution, as well as by the institution's requirements on the FYW program as a component of general education.
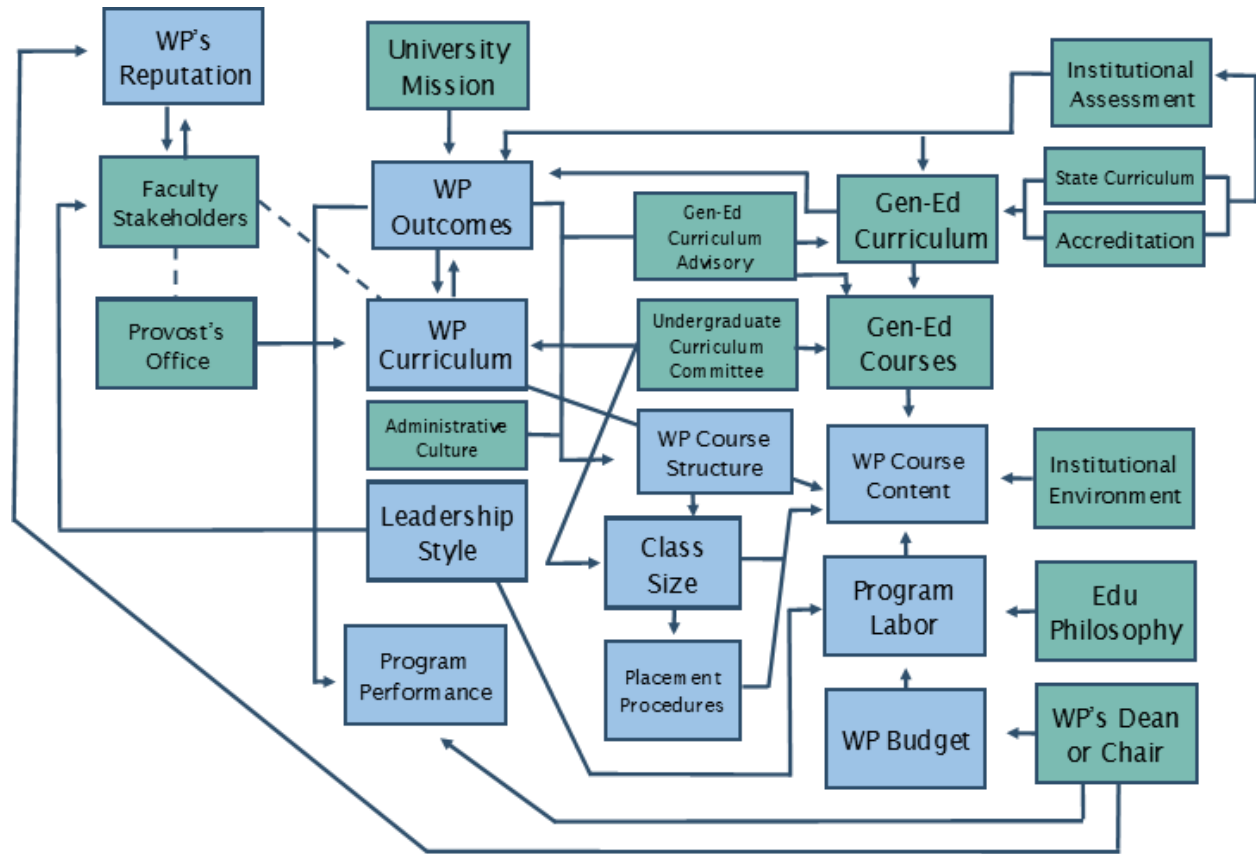
Fig. 3. The FYW program with institutional inputs.

This figure represents many of the salient areas of institutional influence derived from my analysis, which I describe below with three broad categories: institutional values, institutional relationships, and general education requirements. The arrows pointing to various aspects of the FYW program represent these institutional factors as inputs, demonstrating their influential role on the work and formation of the writing program. The various institutional units and aspects of the writing program depicted in this figure represent relevant areas of concern for my six WPA participants. While the institutional situations of writing programs are undoubtedly more complex than this single figure accounts for, the units and relationships depicted in this figure represent those my participants highlighted during their interviews, and which my data analysis revealed as salient to the work of these participants. Because such units and relationships may vary from institution to institution, I discuss these findings in terms of institutional values, institutional relationships, and general education requirements, which can be generalized and applied heuristically to other writing programs.

In Chapter 1, I claimed that First Year Writing courses are part of complex institutional constellations of accreditation standards, general education curricula, and university values. And because of these features, a writing program administrator's work is essentially an enactment of a relationship between this institutional system and an academic discipline. This work has been characterized by WPA scholars Linda Adler-Kassner, Keith Rhodes, and Chris Anson as an act of establishing disciplinary integrity within such constellations, yet each context offers a divergent set of material realities that affect this process. In this chapter I will explore the role of institutional demands on these six participating writing programs, and I will also illustrate the way these institutional demands affect the discipline-based decisions these WPAs make.

The institutional demands my WPA participants describe are institutional values, institutional relationships, and general education curriculum. These demands affect an array of programmatic elements, such as program budgets, curricular decisions, programmatic reputation, the structure and content of courses, the outcomes of the program. In the sections below, I will describe each of these three institutional inputs, and explore the effects these inputs have on the writing programs in my study.

Institutional Values

Each university maintains stated and unstated values about education broadly, about its student population, and about its role in society. Some of these educational and social values are communicated directly and publicly through a university's mission statement, vision statement, and value statement. Joseph Janangelo refers to the institutional mission as "a legacy of scholarship and pedagogy that contemporary stakeholders (e.g. faculty and administrators) can use to steward their departments, programs, and initiatives forwards" (xi). Writing for the collection Janangelo introduces, Rita Malenczyk and Lauren Rosenberg claim that it is the responsibility of writing program administrators to "develop programs that align with institutional mission and vision," where possible and ethical (151). In the present study, my WPA participants described a connection between their universities' missions and values, and the types of labor they use in their writing programs, the outcomes they create for their programs, and in even the content of the courses they teach in their writing programs.

Labor Force

In figure 3 above, the writing program's labor force is affected by a variety of factors relating to the writing program and the institution. The values of a university institution can impact the writing program through its educational philosophy. Figure 4 below focuses on this aspect of the larger figure, highlighting the importance my WPA participants ascribe to this relationship.
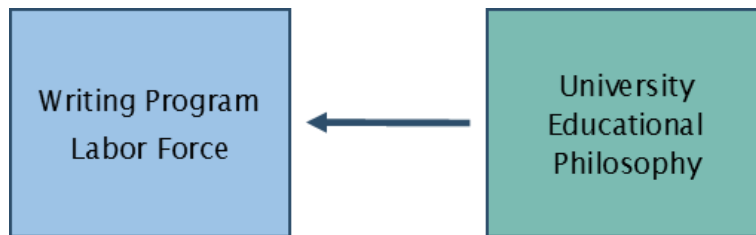

Fig. 4. Institutional Values as Input of the Writing Program's Labor Force.

In a field where writing programs are increasingly dependent on contingent faculty and graduate teaching assistants to cover the majority of teaching positions, Writing Program Three employs very few graduate teaching assistants. WPA3 describes this anomaly as a strength of her writing program, and mentions offhand that the few GTAs teaching in the program would occasionally think that they could teach anything they wanted in these classes prior to the creation of a program handbook. While WPA3 emphasizes the consistency of educational content and standards across courses, her pride over the reduced number of graduate teaching assistants is mirrored in the university's own values about faculty and students.

The University's "About Us" page states that "first and foremost, the university emphasizes teaching and learning" ("About Us" University 3). The school boasts small class sizes, with a total student-faculty ratio of 16:1. The majority of degree programs at University3 are undergraduate, though the university offers a limited number of Master's and Doctoral programs. Less than three percent of University3's courses are taught by graduate assistants ("About Us" University 3). The university places a high value on the relationships its primarily doctoral faculty build with their students, and describes that value in its discussion of teaching faculty.

The labor force of Writing Program Three is likely a complex issue not only of institutional value, but of graduate programming offered by the university, availability of

assistantship lines, and the existence of an English department of faculty available to take on these new University1 courses. The institutional value of small class sizes and its emphasis on the educational relationships between faculty and students give WPA3 a rationale and way to justify her program's labor force. WPA3's own proud articulation of the program's teaching faculty demonstrates the way the program remains inline with the university's values while it has it has become a central component of the undergraduate curriculum.

Program Outcomes

The outcomes of a writing program are often found in a formal document outlining the broad educational goals of the writing program. The program outcomes provide a formalized pedagogical grounding to the work of a writing program, dictating the kinds of writing experiences and opportunities students will undertake in their coursework (Harrington, Rhodes, Fischer, and Malenczyk). Because a writing program's curriculum is part of the general education curriculum, its outcomes are subject to influence from university values, as well. As figure 5 below illustrates, the relationship between the writing program's outcomes and the university's mission statement is also important to these Writing Program Administrators.
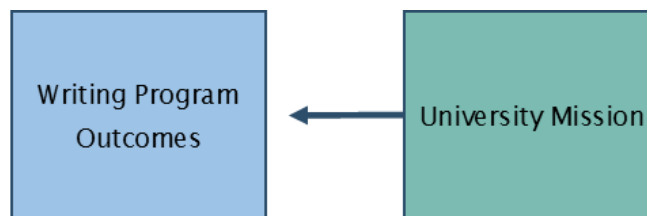

Fig. 5. University Mission as Input of Writing Program Outcomes.

As formal documents representing a program's goals, outcomes statements are easily compared to university mission and value statements. While an institution may differ in practice from its stated mission, and a writing program may differ in practice from its stated outcomes, these documents offer a formally approved glimpse into the values that govern their work.

WPA1, for example, describes his program's goals broadly as "to teach the students how to argue effectively [and] ethically, [and] how to write effectively" (Participant 1). As he describes his program's emphasis on argumentation as ethical, rhetorical, and social, he begins drawing correlations to the university's religious values. While WPA6 is careful to explain that he would not teach argument as less ethical at other institutions, he does claim that the university's religious values make it easier to emphasize the ethics of persuasion and

argumentation. He also suggests that his students are familiar enough with many of the concepts associated with Aristotelian virtues due to their experiences in required theology and philosophy courses.

WPA1 explains that much of the work of the program aligned with the institution's value simply by virtue of being part of that value system. The program outcomes were formalized as a description of what the program was already doing, not to bring to program into alignment. Because they were created in this order, the stated outcomes for the program purposefully incorporate the language of the university's missions statement, including an emphasis on ethical argumentation and civic responsibility through discourse, however they were created to reflect the program's ongoing focus.

The institutional mission offers WPAs a place not only to align a program with the knowledge and expectations of its students, but it also offers possibilities for a writing program through the concepts the language emphasizes. Writing Program six, for example, operates within an institution that places value on creativity and innovation. The language of the university's mission statement shows a clear emphasis on keeping the university on the cutting edge, always willing to experiment and think outside the box. These values give the writing program room to move away from teaching decontextualized skills and having students memorize conventions—the current traditional approach that the field of rhetoric and composition has long since abandoned.

WPA6 explains that he uses a genre studies approach to emphasize the situatedness of writing as a highly contingent act in which genres shape and are reshaped by the situation to which the writing responds. WPA6 explains that the programs' outcomes statement emphasizes "different ways of knowing and doing within academia and beyond," as the document defines writing as "radically situated and connected" (Participant 6). The university culture of innovation, and the language of creativity and barrier breaking that is embodied in his university's mission, gives WPA6 room to create a set of outcomes that situate writing in a way that he acknowledges could be radical and surprising to those who are not familiar with genre studies or its foundations. The university's mission affects program outcomes at a broad level; sometimes they are directly reflected in the document's language, and sometimes the outcomes are made possible by the culture of the institution. These institutional values also affect course content, through the program's outcomes and more directly.

Course Content

In addition to the impact of institutional values through the university's mission and the educational philosophy it espouses, institutional values can also manifest in the curriculum through the other courses students must take. Figure 6 below illustrates the relationship between the course content of the FYW program and the general education courses students take concurrently or prior to enrollment in FYW courses.
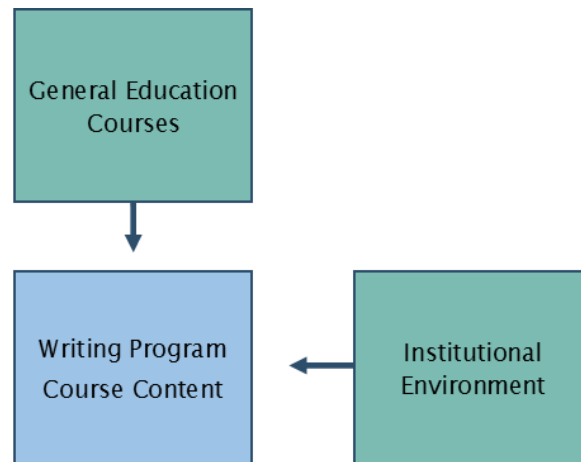
Fig. 6. Institutional Inputs of the Writing Program's Course Content.

WPA1 tells me that even the religious iconography placed in the university classrooms influences the way he teaches rhetoric and writing to his first year students. WPA1 is able to make connections between the religious teachings mirrored in this iconography and the complexities of Aristotelian virtues and rhetorical theory. WPA1 is able to draw on his students' prior knowledge and familiarity with religious principles to understand the work of their rhetorically-based writing class, and he uses this artwork as a touchpoint when drawing these connections for students. WPA1 is not required to teach ethics and civic responsibility in his program, in fact, he does not even share the religious beliefs he university espouses. Yet by virtue of being part of the system, Writing Program 1 reflects many of the values of the institution. With his emphasis on Aristotelian virtues, WPA1 is able to help his students see connections between the religious education they receive at this private research university, and the ethical and social aspects of argumentation they learn in their writing courses. WPA1 finds that he has more freedom to emphasize the moral, ethical, and practical aspects of rhetoric then he did at his previous institutions, because his students are familiar with the biblical foundations

of some of the texts they study rhetorically, and because they can bring biblical principles and religio-philosophic teachings into classroom discussions about Aristotelian virtues and the benefits and dangers of persuasion.

In contrast to WPA1's action of coopting this institutional value for his course content, some programs design their course content specifically for their institution. The courses in Writing Program Three, for example, are designed to meet the needs of students across university disciplines. The courses have transitioned from teaching the documentation style of the Modern Language Association (MLA) to that of the American Psychological Association (APA), because the majority of courses in the university require their students to use APA style. "We can't think of them as just our classes . . . in English," WPA3 explains to me as she describes this change from MLA to APA styles in the writing classes. In fact, WPA3 suggests that this integration of program coursework into the university's general education curriculum was part of an active decision on her part to keep the writing program from becoming isolated from the university community. "These are the skills that are central to the student's ability to succeed throughout the university," she claims. These classroom-level changes express a relationship between the writing program and the institution's values—a relationship that is also manifest in the complexities of the writing program and general education's curricular structures.

Curricular Structures

While the large figure on page 9 depicts a variety of inputs into the writing program's curriculum, the role of university administrative culture and of the values expressed in state organization documents can have bearing on the curricular structures of which the writing program's internal curriculum is a part. Figure 7 shows the basic relationship between these units.
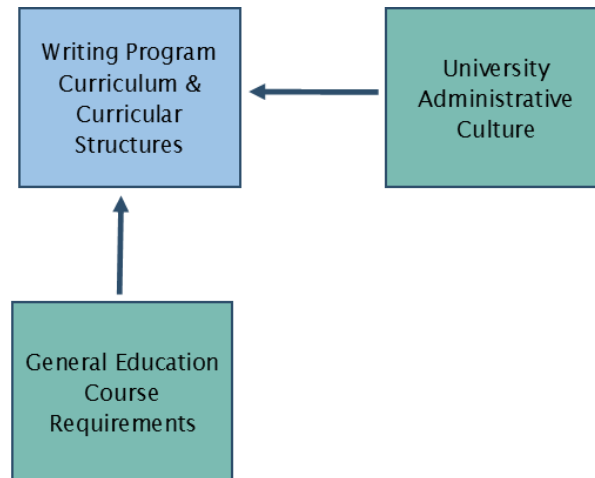
Fig. 7. Institutional Inputs of the Writing Program's Curriculum and Curricular Structures.

The curricular structures of a writing program are not defined by the program alone, and are components of both general education requirements and university's values. For example, when the curriculum advisory radically redesigned Writing Program three, they used a set of non-required competencies from a state organization concerned with higher education as a basis for the program's new formation. WPA3 explains that when the curriculum committee reviewed those competencies, they made a decision to collapse the writing program in order to avoid redundancy and consolidate many of the values stated in this organization's list of competences. This example demonstrates not only the importance of university values on a writing program, but also the way university values are articulated through and located in the documents and statements that it borrows from other organizations.

Similar to the boundary-breaking innovation that allowed Writing Program Six to incorporate genre studies as a critical foundation of the curriculum, University four has what WPA4 describes as a vibrant administrative culture in which innovation is welcomed. She describes a willingness to allow academic units and departments to try new things; " It is a young institution," WPA4 explains to me, "it doesn't have a lot of 'what we tried that a hundred years ago and it didn't work so we're not going to try it again,'" (Participant 4). Instead she suggests that the culture provides administrators with opportunities to build on ideas, to say "'that's a really interesting idea how would you do that?'" This administrative culture enables the

writing program to experiment with its curriculum, including WPA4's work with the provost's office to build a spiral curriculum around the writing program.

While these institutional missions have bearing on the way WPAs express, justify, or give meaning to their work, they also provide a heuristic for understanding their work, and in some cases create a feedback loop of disciplinary knowledge and institutional values. For example, WPA1 explains that he uses his students' prior knowledge of religion to help them understand rhetoric. But as he explains his notions of Aristotle and the kinds of rhetorical work with which he asks his students to engage, he borrows the language from the institution's statements of religious belief. This WPA uses rhetoric to talk about and articulate his understanding of the religious principles he knows but doesn't share, but he also uses religious language to talk about composition and rhetoric.

Writing program administrators operate not only under the values of their field, but under the values of the university, whether they share these values or not. It is important to note that the institutional mission may not be learned directly from, or even mirrored directly in, the university's mission statement. Malenczyk and Rosenberg suggest that the written statement is only a small component of a university's mission and values ("When Fantasy Themes Collide"). However, these WPAs operate within the discursive systems of their universities, and are surrounded by expressions of their universities' missions and values. These values can be expressed in the courses students take—such as University One's theology and philosophy requirements—in the work of its departments and disciplines—as University Two's emphasis on innovation—and even in the physical environment—such as the religious iconography posed in University One's classrooms. These values impact the writing program directly and indirectly, simply because of the writing program is part of the university's system.

Institutional Relationships

Writing Program Administrators never make decisions about the curriculum or course content of a First Year Writing program based solely on discipline-based best practices and research. Instead, their decisions are influenced by the stakeholders of a writing program, directly or indirectly, such as through funding, by enforcing course caps and placement procedures, and even through the trust and value a writing program cultivates among its stakeholders. Therefore, the nature and integrity of a writing program is highly dependent on the institutional relationships that a WPA cultivates on its behalf.

It is important to note that the specific relationships important to a writing program may vary from institution to institution. Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk claim that "all WPAs are deeply embedded in their own rich, complex environments with their own complex power relationships, often replicable nowhere else" ("What Are Institutional Politics?" 314). In their work on institutional politics, Fox and Malenczyk argue that there are standard administrative issues that all WPAs should learn about—such as general education, budgeting models, and institutional hierarchies—as well as the "particular quirks" of a given institution (314). They claim, however, that the values and beliefs about writing education, and the goals and alliances of writing program stakeholders are equally as important. Some of these quirks involve knowing "who is most likely to be discomfited by having their views of writing challenged or complicated [and] what is at stake for other administrators involved" in the work of first year composition, Fox and Malenczyk suggest (322). These institutional relationships are crucial to the work of the writing program, because they can pose tangible and intangible benefits and dangers to the writing program and its disciplinarily founded integrity.

In these six case studies, I found that institutional relationships had an impact on the budgets, curricula, and reputations of their writing programs. The WPAs I interviewed identified these points as relevant, sometimes by expressing areas of problem, sometimes by commenting on the lack of problems, which were equally as remarkable in their responses, as I will discuss below. In addition to the importance of cultivating these relationships, my analysis reveals that the way WPAs characterize themselves in relation to these parties has an impact on their working relationship, as I will also demonstrate below.

Budgets

Writing programs that are housed within English departments often answer to department chairs, while programs independently housed in liberal arts colleges will likely answer to the college's dean, as a department chair would. This means that for most independent writing programs, the primary budgetary relationship occurs between the Writing Program Administrator and the college dean. This relationship is represented in figure 8 below.
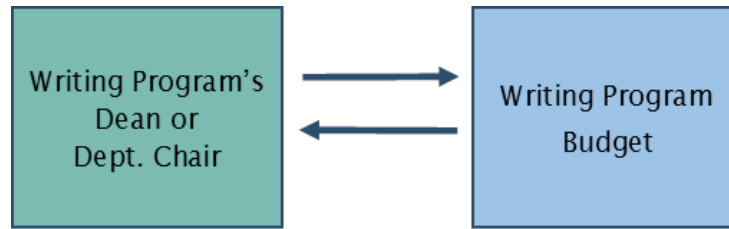
Fig. 8. The Writing Program's Simple Budget Relationship.

While writing programs may maintain a budget from multiple sources, including grants, foundations, and various institutional relationships, the WPAs in this study expressed the power of the relationship to their direct administrator in terms of the impact this individual has on the writing program's budget. These relationships can be positive or negative in nature. Program administrator and composition scholar Irwin Weiser describes the standard budgeting models at institutions as Incremental, Responsibility Centered, Enrollment-Based, Initiative Based, and Zero-Based, meaning that a writing program's budget could be maintained by the needs, spending practices, proposals and rationale of the program, by the initiatives in upper administration, or even by fluctuations in enrollment and labor. Regardless of what model a given institution uses, Weiser claims that the majority of program budgets come from blended models and are supplemented by endowments, foundation resources, university or program revenue, and grants, each with their own restrictions and fungibility limits (259-260). This means that regardless of the budgeting habits of a writing program, the program's relationships with those who control the budget is important. Program budgets are related to standard hierarchies as well as what Weisner terms "dotted line ambiguities," which often descend from the provost, to the dean, to the department head, to the writing program (255, 257). Those writing programs that operate outside of the boundaries of a department, like many of those in this study, receive their funding from the college dean or provost, rather than through a department's budget.

One participating WPA who directs an independent writing program describes the positive relationship he has with his college dean, and the impact of that relationship on his program's budget. He explains that with the appointment of this current dean, "funding has been much easier in the past few years and we've won a lot of funding battles" (Participant 2). This WPA cites a direct connection between undergraduate curriculum and his program's purpose in fulfilling that curriculum as the reason his dean continues to award the funding for which his program fights.

As WPA2's combative terminology reveals, however, the budget is an important domain in which alliances are held or broken in the university. WPA2 explains to me that "if we have fights and things that we worry about, it tends to be funding issues from the dean or did in the past" (Participant 2). Not only does WPA2 reveal that his program maintains a healthy budget because the dean values the work that his program does, but he also reveals an underlying concern that his program's funding could become limited again, at the whim of his college's administration.

WPA6 also notes the importance of this relationship when he explains how he persuaded his dean to provide him with funding to improve programmatic assessment. WPA6 receives this assessment budget as the result of working with dean's office. For WPA6, his relationship with the dean makes this kind of work possible, as the institution's assessment could have easily been the end of the process.

There are three things worth noting from the responses of these WPAs. First, that the relationship to a direct supervisor or administrator is crucial for funding a writing program. Second, that some WPAs see even this direct line of funding as potentially unreliable and won in competition with other units and departments. Third, that this relationship is fostered through an assertion of value on the part of the writing program. When these WPAs articulated their own value to their stakeholders and administrators, they were able to leverage the language and values of the institution, demonstrating their awareness of their own positionality.

Curriculum

In addition to the impact on financing a writing program, the relationships fostered by a WPA and a program at large can have a substantial bearing on the curriculum of the writing program as well. While composition journals are brimming not only with scholarship on pedagogy and instructional practices, but with advice and curricular best practices for the writing program, the curriculum of the program is not isolated from its institutional context. For example, the Council of Writing Program Administrators provides a set of outcomes for writing programs, and publishes a position statement on post-secondary writing that describes goals, outcomes, and best practices. However, relationships with a variety of stakeholders, ranging from college deans to undergraduate curriculum advisories can constrain or enable the curriculum of the writing program. In figure 9 below, I demonstrate several relationships these WPAs describe as affecting their program curricula.
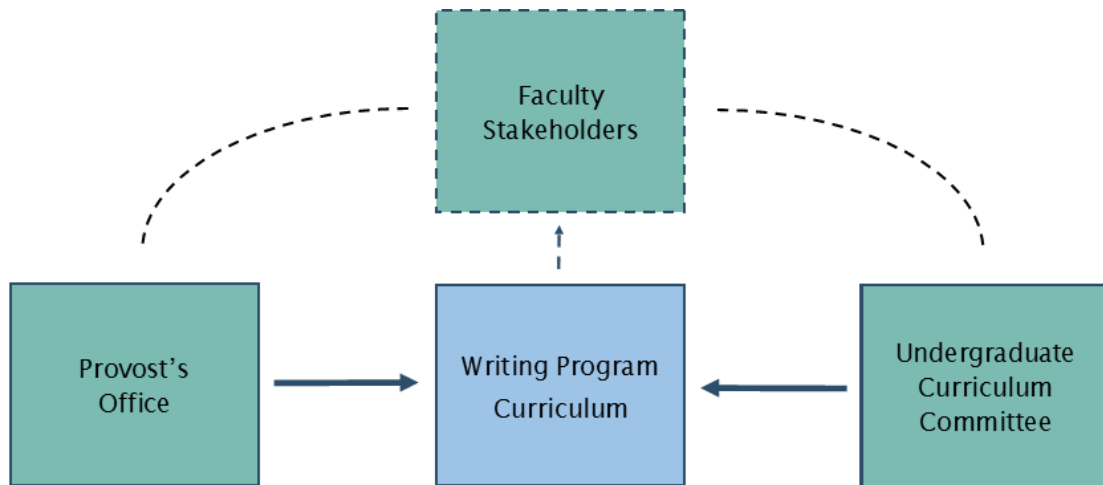
Fig. 9. The Institutional Inputs of the Writing Program Curriculum.

Curriculum committees, faculty senates, and curriculum advisories operate at an institutional level and oversee the curricular work of the departments and units that help fulfil undergraduate education requirements. Lauren Fitzgerald writes that general education is especially important to First Year Writing program administrators because general education affects first year writing requirements through their ideology, their reliance on the communications movement, and their ongoing suspicion and questioning of the writing requirement and its efficacy in teaching transferable and lasting skills (94). While Fitzgerald claims that general education curriculum reform is a process that WPAs should seize and capitalize on, her emphasis on WPA knowledge regarding general education suggests to me that the relationships a WPA fosters within the realm of their institution's general education program will allow them to take the attentive and knowledgeable stance Fitzgerald calls for, keeping writing programs ready to capitalize on major curricular changes in the university.

The WPA participants in my study demonstrate some tangible influences these stakeholders pose to the writing program's curriculum during a revision or large-scale curricular change. While University3 was redesigning their undergraduate curriculum and folding the compulsory writing requirement into its humanities curriculum, WPA3 worked as only one member of a multidisciplinary committee, to not only design the writing requirement, but to propose and seek approval for enrollment and placement procedures, course section caps, learning outcomes, and assessment plans for monitoring the efficacy of the courses. This process

required WPA3 and her fellow committee members to interface with the General Education Curriculum Advisory. WPA3 describes multiple meetings in which her committee had to justify, explain, and respond to questions from this advisory regarding the new curriculum. In addition to answering to the curriculum advisory, WPA3 explains that the committee responsible for this curriculum design worked closely with the faculty senate to create a series of goals for the curriculum, which would align with the outcomes the curriculum advisory set for the entire general education curriculum. Once these goals were set and the curriculum was approved, WPA3 and her committee then had to design a set of objectives for each assignment within the curriculum, aligning those objectives with the curricular goals and educational outcomes of undergraduate general education.

WPA3 sees her writing program's relationship with the university's undergraduate education curriculum as a positive one. In fact, she reiterates for me the importance of her program's contribution to the university, and continually references the educational experiences of her students beyond the writing and communication requirement. WPA3 suggests that this integration into the university's general education curriculum was part of an active decision on her part to integrate the writing program into the institution more effectively "These are the skills that are central to the student's ability to succeed throughout the university," she claims (Participant 3). The emphasis WPA3 places on the values shared by undergraduate general education stakeholders becomes manifest in the very content of the writing and communication courses, which have transitioned from teaching the documentation style of the Modern Language Association (MLA) to that of the American Psychological Association (APA), for example. WPA3 tells me that the majority of courses in the university require students to use APA style. She goes on to claim that "we can't think of them as just our classes . . . in English," but instead that writing requirements need to be reconceptualized as components of a larger education scheme within a given university.

The nature of this relationship between Writing Program Three and the general education stakeholders plays a crucial role in what the writing program can accomplish. On a tangible level, these relationships control which types of students take the courses, how many are allowed in a given course, and the function of those courses within the undergraduate curriculum at large. This relationship then has implications on the course content, as WPA3 acts on the relationship and incorporates the values of the advisory and senate into the content of the writing course.

WPA3's goal for this relationship seems to be collaboration for a common purpose—she acts on what she believes is best for her program's students as students of the institution in general, and does not seek out control over composition and writing.

WPA4 echoes the need to develop collaborative university relationships, as she articulates her curricular work with her university's undergraduate curriculum committee and with the provost's office. WPA4 describes the current collaboration projects between the writing program and the undergraduate curriculum committee, and between the writing program and the provost's office, to develop a new spiral curriculum for undergraduate education. The premise of a spiral curriculum is that students will encounter the same concepts or terms on multiple occasions throughout their education, and that the information or skills associated with those concepts are made deeper and more complex upon each encounter (Johnston). This collaborative curricular work is designed to place the writing program as a foundation for helping students develop transferable skills through viewing writing as situated and purposeful communication. Other courses and majors would then take up the same concepts begun in the writing courses, offering more complex applications. This work allows the writing program to transition from university adversary to university asset, avoiding what WPA4 sees as a dangerous release of the writing program's power by only combating or only serving the values of the institution. The stakeholders placing demands within this collaborative framework include the undergraduate curriculum committee and the provost's office.

In addition to dealing with such present conflicts, several WPAs remark on these relationships as containing the potential for conflict, rather than describing their current bearing on the writing program, as the dotted lines in figure 9 represent. WPA2 suggests that without proper management, "any of those 3 groups can try to control your curriculum and that's when people have to really-really buckle down and fight" (Participant 2). Again, he reiterates that "we've never experienced that pressure." In fact, faculty from across the university seem glad that the writing program is doing its job, as WPA2 describes from his perspective. When I queried him about pressures to teach writing differently or more effectively, WPA2 replied that there are "not a lot of faculty from other programs coming and complaining about students not receiving appropriate writing instruction" (Participant 2). WPA2 went on to explain that "those faculty members have supported what the writing program does in five years; they have never pushed a particular agenda when you have talked about curriculum, they have been much more

responsive in terms of promoting and . . . really endorsing what we do, and the value of it"
(Participant 2).

The fact that WPA2 notes this absence of complaints demonstrates his knowledge that
stakeholders often can and do complain, underscoring the importance of building strong
stakeholder relationships. The fact that this WPA claims he doesn't have this problem, yet feels
the need to explain it, demonstrates his ongoing concern over the fragility of a writing program,
its reliance on the goodwill of others, and the need to demonstrate the program's value. Much
like the generalized fear over disappearing budgets that I discussed above, several of the
participating WPAs also reference a belief that their curriculum could be compromised by the
power of the college dean, who makes decisions based on the desires of the provost. Tom Fox
and Rita Malenczyk point to fundamental differences between WPAs and their administrators
regarding their beliefs about writing—differences that can threaten the integrity of the writing
program. For example they suggest that falling prey to institutional values reinforces "a[n]
understanding of writing as skills-based, preparatory, formal, and transferrable" and thus allows
the university to "covertly [keep] in place acontextual standards of language," which are at odds
with composition scholarship (320). Not only do such differences at varying levels of authority
lead to tensions or disagreements, but they can reduce the amount of control a writing program
administrator actually has over his or her program's pedagogical foundations.

Programmatic Reputation

The reputation of a writing program is an important consideration for the WPAs in my
study, and proved to be the primary reason many of them asked me to obscure their identities.
This reputation includes the way the program describes and conceptualizes its work in relation to
the work of the rest of the university, whether the university stakeholders trust that the writing
program is educating students in the best ways possible, and how the faculty members of the
writing program interact with the program's institutional stakeholders. In addition to the tangible
results of these stakeholder relationships on writing program curricula, many of the WPAs in my
study were concerned with their reputation among the university community and in its potential
for tangible effects later. This relationship is depicted in figure 10 below.
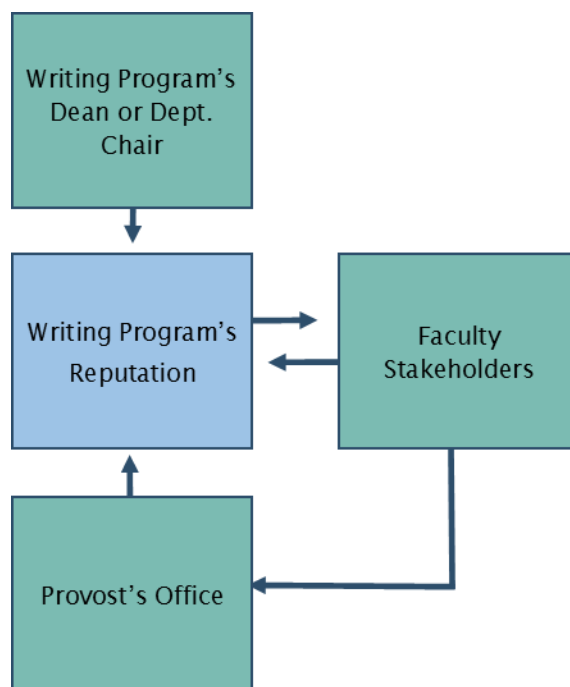
Fig. 10. Stakeholder Relationships and the Writing Program's Reputation.

Institutional relationships can have bearing on course caps, budgets, and curricular decisions, as I have discussed above. But the WPAs in my study emphasized the importance of these relationships, even when they couldn't point to a tangible impact.

For example, WPA4 explains that the program's relationship with the university community in general is crucial, and that the bad blood from the English department divide left a core writing faculty in need of professionalization and the ability to interface with the university community in positive and productive ways. "One of the first things that I was asked to do is to professionalize the lectures which is both an insult and a necessity as it turns out," WPA4 tells me. She describes "the culture that has been created . . . of 'us against them,'" as her imperative (Participant 4). WPA4 explains that within the English department, the lecturer faculty never had opportunities to participate within the university in any meaningful way prior to the formation of the independent writing program. They were kept physically separate from tenure track faculty, were considered contingent labor despite their full time contracts, and were often looked down upon as conducting intellectually inferior work. WPA4 suggests, in her narrative of progress, the these faculty were so downtrodden and unlearned in the politics of institutional life that "they put a moat around the program" (Participant 4). She goes on to explain that various stakeholders

were told that "if you don't know what we do in the writing program that's your problem," a statement she believes demonstrates the lack of knowledge or respect between the writing program faculty and their institutional stakeholders (Participant 4). By offering professional opportunities, investing in the faculty, and demonstrating programmatic expertise in the university, WPA4 worked to alter the faculty's relationship with their university stakeholders, demonstrating that the opinions of various faculty and programs throughout the university are just as important to her program as the undergraduate curriculum committee and the provost's office is.

WPA4 suggests that as a result of this improved relationship, the writing program now serves a key rather than perfunctory role in the university community. For example, she claims that the provost's office now values the small class sizes of Writing Program Four, citing first year writing as "the only high touch course that students have"—an acknowledgement of value the program never received when it is reputation was one of resistence and subterfuge. In addition, various stakeholders have come to WPA4 and other writing faculty seeking insight into the work of the program: "you aren't teaching periods and commas, [anymore]," these faculty claim, so they want to know "what's going on there," and how the writing program is serving them (Participant 4). WPA4's cultivation of the program's reputation in conjunction with a cultivation of the program's relationships with stakeholders demonstrate the way the needs of stakeholders in this institution are not manifest in requests for specific points of teaching, but instead appear in a desire for faith in and value fostered by the writing program.

This idea of faith and reputation manifests in multiple ways. WPA5, for example, found that his participation in institutional assessment and his implementation of a custom internal assessment affected his program's reputation among university stakeholders. WPA5 has participated in several institutional assessments of student writing, which he believes were not designed or administered in a way that would add value to the program. The failure of these assessment plans—which failed primarily due to the lack of rating abilities among faculty not trained in reviewing student writing—led WPA5 to develop his own programmatic assessment in partnership with a colleague from computer science. During a town hall meeting shortly after the poorly conducted institutional assessment had been completed, faculty from across the university were complaining that they were receiving juniors and seniors into their classes who "can't put together a sentence" (Participant 5). In the midst of these complaints, a faculty member queried

WPA5 on what his program has done with the results of that assessment, in order to improve undergraduate writing education. WPA5 explained to this faculty member that the results of that assessment provided the Writing Program with some general information for developing a more targeted in-house assessment of student writing. This in house assessment uses a computational model created with his colleague to target student revision processes in an attempt to understand the development of writers and their texts. WPA5 suggests that his assessment plan received a lot of positive feedback with the faculty at this townhall meeting. He also mentions that the English department chair was so excited about his assessment plan that she supplied the program with coders for the project. As WPA5's description of the town hall meeting suggests, these relationships affect the reputation of the writing program among its university stakeholders.

There are three lessons to take from these examples of programmatic reputation. First, that WPAs should and do consider the impact of these relationships on their budgets, their curricula, and their program's reputation. Second, as my analysis demonstrates, these relationships are actively pursued by WPAs in a variety of ways. And third, it is important for WPAs to examine the kinds of relationships they want, the stances they take towards the values embodied in those relationships, and the means with which they cultivate them for the good of the students and the program. I will explore these lessons further in chapter six.

General Education Requirements

Compulsory writing education is a part of a university's general education curriculum, and is often subject to policies, requirements, outcomes, and values of the general education curriculum, which is defined by a number of parties at various levels in the university. Lauren Fitzgerald writes that "best practices and current research in rhetoric and composition . . . can help a writing program align with the WPA's values and lead to helpful reforms" in education curricula (94). However, Fitzgerald argues that WPAs cannot bring these practices into alignment with general education outcomes or curricular goals if they do not understand the ideological, educational, and political values that inform general education and its reform (Fitzgerald 94). Instead, Fitzgerald cautions WPAs to pay close attention to undergraduate curriculum, to understand the effects of accreditation on a writing program, to recognize the influence of policies and recommendations from outside organizations concerned with higher education, and to listen for the assumptions that undergird curricular decisions within the university (101, 93).

The requirements of general education place very firm boundaries around the work of a writing program. General education affects course structure, course content, program outcomes, and definitions of program performance.

Course Structure

The relationship building that WPA3 is undertaking in her work to form the writing program as an integral component of general education represents the nature of the work and highlights many of the groups responsible for the structure of writing courses within a program, as Figure 11 illustrates.
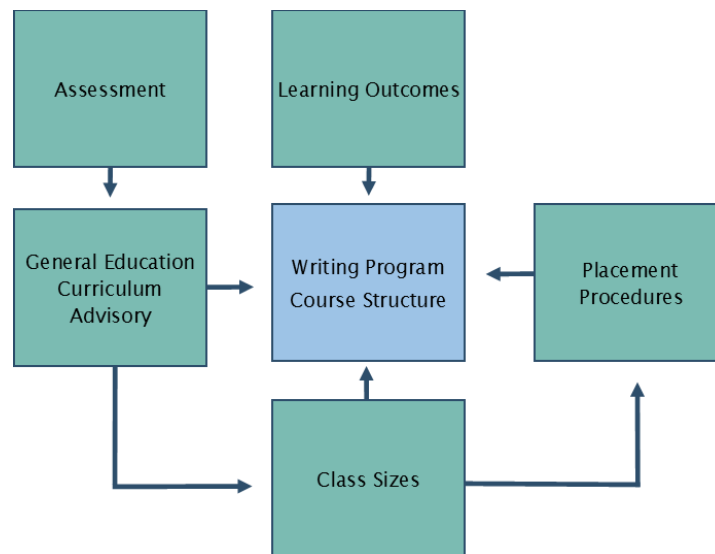

Fig. 11. The Institutional Inputs of Writing Program Course Structure.

For example, the General Education Curriculum Advisory at Univesrity3 reviewed the proposal that the writing program committee submitted, and made decisions about enrollment and placement procedures, course section caps, learning outcomes, and assessment plans for monitoring the efficacy of the courses within the writing requirement, based on the goals of the general education curriculum. With these broad level aspects of the program managed for them, the committee then had to negotiate the work of the courses within this structure.

WPA3 explains that the committee responsible for this curriculum design worked closely with the faculty senate to create a series of goals for the curriculum, which would align with the goals the curriculum advisory set for the entire general education curriculum. Then, within those approved goals, the committee had to design a set of objectives for each assignment within the

curriculum, aligning those objectives with the curricular goals and educational outcomes of undergraduate general education. These curricular goals, such as audience awareness, analysis and synthesis abilities, and strategies for belief formation, are broken down into assignment objectives like using tone or style appropriate for a specific audience, evaluating the assumptions inherent in arguments, and acknowledging counterarguments and the concerns of others through writing ("Faculty Senate Report," "Program Handbook"). These course-specific goals, and the assignments through which they are pursued, were inspired by institutional recommendations, and approved internally, though they also incorporate writing practices and outcomes from the field of composition, as I will explain in the following discussion of disciplinary integrity.

Course Content

In addition to the broad structures of a course, the decisions made at the level of undergraduate curriculum have bearing on what happens in each writing classroom, as figure 12 indicates.
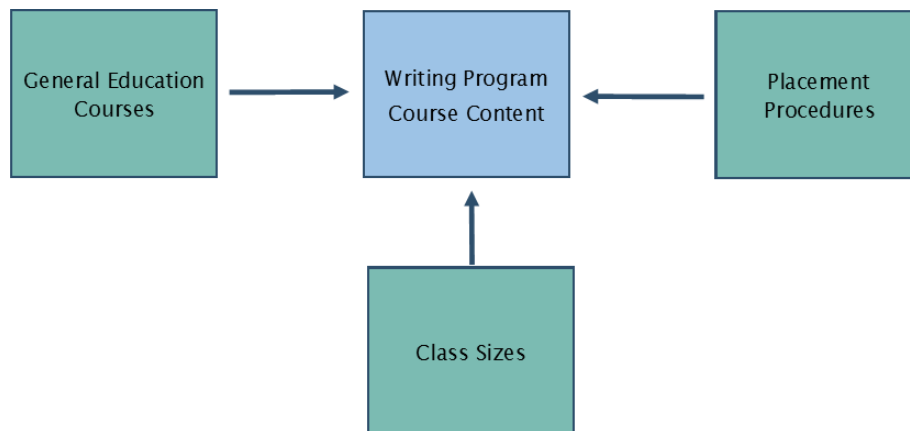
Fig. 12. General Education Courses as Input of Writing Program Course Content.

The kinds of teaching practices possible within a course often relate to the size of the classroom, the space the class meets in, and the capabilities of the students themselves. For example, without control over the size of the composition courses or the placement of students within those courses, the class sessions in Writing Program Three are affected by general education requirements.

In addition to the kinds of teaching methods possible in a classroom, general education curriculum affects the body of knowledge First Year Writing students share. For example,

WPA1 tells me that his students are required to take philosophy and theology courses in their first year, often concurrent with their required writing courses. WPA1 teaches at a religious institution, and is able to capitalize on his students' knowledge of ethics and religion when he is teaching Aristotelian virtues. By taking advantage of this prior knowledge, WPA1 is able to help his students see connections between the religious education they receive at this private research university, and the ethical and social aspects of argumentation they learn in their writing courses. WPA1 finds that he has more freedom to emphasize the moral, ethical, and practical aspects of rhetoric because of this prior knowledge.

Program Outcomes

A First Year Writing program can have a set of goals or outcomes, and even a mission or clearly stated purpose, published in a public document such as program's website or the faculty intranet. According to the National Census of Writing conducted in 2013, 94% (n=435) of four year institutions have a set of explicit goals for their writing program ("Four Year Institution Survey"). These goals are often manifest in a list of program outcomes, which Kathleen Blake Yancey describes as a list of what students are expected "to know, to understand, and to do at the conclusion of a course, a program [or] a major" (21). Yancey claims that program outcomes often become a framework for the writing curriculum, and are usually created in comparison or response to the national Outcomes Statement published by the Council for Writing Program Administrators (22). The general education program of a given institution, however, influences the outcomes or stated purpose of a writing program, as figure 13 illustrates.
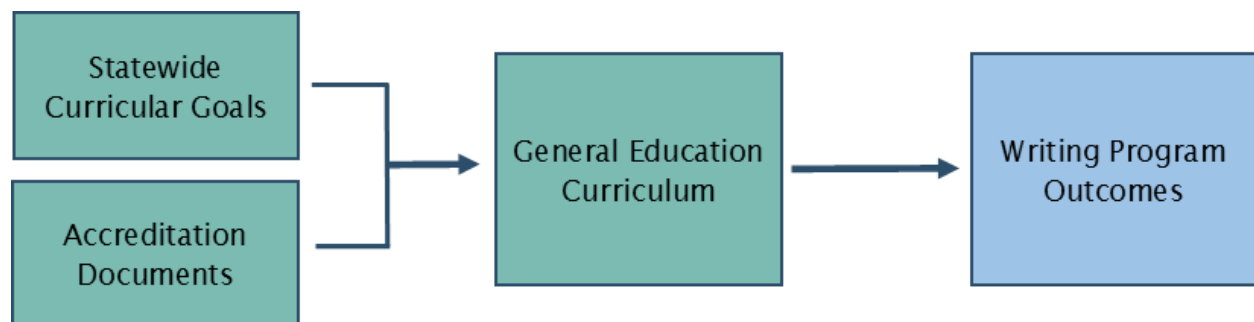

Fig. 13. General Education and the Writing Program's Outcomes.

As I discussed above, compulsory writing education is a part of a university's general education curriculum, and therefore is often subject to policies, requirements, outcomes, and values of that

institutional curriculum. Much like the way Writing Program One grafted the language of the university's mission onto their program outcomes, Writing Programs Three and Four borrow language directly from their general education curriculum for their outcomes statements.

In addition to applying the language of general education to program outcomes statements, some writing programs also reference the values or language that influences the general education curriculum, such as accreditation documents, statewide curricular goals, and institutional assessment documents from external organizations. For example, Writing Program Five publishes an "About Us" page on their website, describing the program's philosophy, curricular focus, and goals. This webpage mirrors the language and values found in the institution's accreditation reaffirmation report, which is an assessment-based report an institution develops to demonstrate its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting body. University Five is also part of a statewide system that provides its own curriculum. While the provost's office manages the university's compliance with state curriculum guidelines, the writing program's published purpose and outcomes statement incorporates much of the language of the state curriculum requirements.

Writing Program Three's work creating a course inspired by their state's general education values, Writing Program Four directly and indirectly fulfills the general education requirements of Fundamental Inquiry Skills and Communication Skills that are required by the university's undergraduate education curriculum. University4 made use of the ETS Proficiency Assessment in 2014, which is a "voluntary accountability system" created by the Educational Testing Service for evaluating student education among three distinct criteria: critical thinking, written communication, and quantitative literacy ("ETS Proficiency Assessment"). The outcomes in Writing Program Four include rhetorical knowledge, critical reading, composition as a process, and critical reflection ("Student Learning Outcomes"). These broad categories allow the writing program to target these keys areas of institutional assessment, as evidenced in the details of the Proficiency Assessment. The categories assessed are analytic, synthetic, and causation reasoning, knowledge of social and rhetorical writing situations, knowledge of language conventions, knowledge of writing as a process, and even the evaluation, interpretation, inference and reasoning foundations that are applied in quantitative literacy ("ETS Proficiency Assessment"). The writing program targets these through its outcomes, and emphasizes transferability, adapting to the spiral curriculum designed for the university.

Program Performance

Assessment as a measure of program performance is both an internal evaluation within a writing program and a measure through which writing programs can define, justify, or argue for their success to institutional stakeholders. Christopher Burnham, for example, argues for "assessment as rhetorical activity," an approach that he claims "will enable WPAs to make good arguments justifying our value as teachers of writing and as WPAs" (313). He cites assessment as a form of reflection on a program's values and efficacy, and as a form of mediation WPAs can conduct with varying perspectives on education across the university (Burnham). In the writing programs I studied, General Education requirements had great bearing on programmatic assessment, and I found that in several programs these assessments were initiated institutionally, rather than internally, as part of a larger curricular and institutional assessment process, often associated with regional accreditation, as figure 14 illustrates.
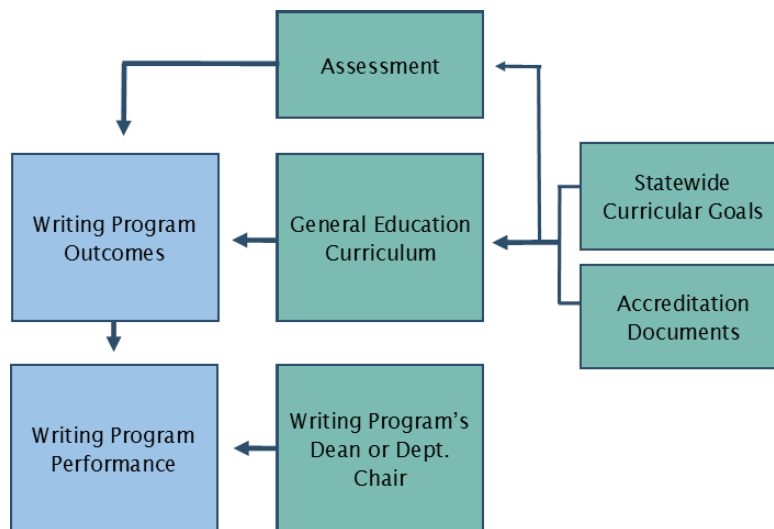
Fig. 14. Institutional Inputs of Writing Program Performance.

The general education requirement at University2 lists Core Literacies as a component of the general education curriculum. The first core literacies the university directly lists in their general education outline are English composition and writing intensive courses. However, WPA2 does not describe this requirement to me; instead, WPA2 connects it through the writing program's relationship with the dean, who is concerned with fulfilling this educational requirement. For example, when WPA2 describes the relationship he has with his college dean

and how it affects his programmatic budget, he describes the dean's focus on his program in the following way: "I mean she is certainly interested in the research and teaching arts majors, but she also sees another purpose of the college as contributing to the overall undergraduate education" (Participant 2). While WPA2 does not directly connect his work to general education in his conversation with me, he does show how his dean cares about this mission, and that his relationship and assertion of value to her affects the resources his program has at its disposal.

According to WPA6, the program's writing courses are designed to align with the university's general education curriculum as part of its Liberal Skills Requirement ("Liberal Arts Core"). While a WPA and a writing faculty committee created the program's outcomes, the institution initiates assessment of the program as part of their accreditation reaffirmation process. WPA6 suggests that this assessment plan is rigorous, which he values, but that it is ideologically defined outside of the program, and therefore imposes on the writing program through its form and its cycle. The ideological impositions of the reaffirmation assessment have lasting affects on his writing program through the way it is framed, the methods that are imposed by the assessment documents, as well as by the nature of the justification required in the report. WPA6 suggests that the writing program must "negotiate within" the university's Central creat[ion] process and documents for reporting" (Participant 6). WPA6 claims that "the report forms themselves are consequential," and dictate "what are you looking at, how are you measuring it, what are the results and what will you do to prove [them]" (Participant 6). He was concerned with the emphasis on quantitative assessment, which he believes cannot account for the realities of writing growth. For example, the outcomes created by WPA6 and his English-elected committee, state that "The development of writers is varied, recursive and individualized, not subject to regular and distinct stages" ("General Principles"). In order to account for this varied process, WPA6 worked with the Dean's office to negotiate funding to conduct a self-led assessment program, which WPA6 describes fills the "qualitative elements that I think are much more important" (Participant 6).

The role of the institution affects many aspects of the writing program, and an exploration of these effects illustrates the writing program as simultaneously bureaucratic and disciplinary. The responses of the WPAs not only illuminate the individual contexts of their institutions, they also highlight the need for WPAs to consider these institutional contexts more

deeply. In chapter five, I will explore the role of the discipline of composition and rhetoric as an input to in these institutional programs, and demonstrate the way these WPAs use their knowledge of the discipline to make decisions about the institutional nature of their programs. Following my discussion of the disciplinary nature of a writing program, I will examine the strategies for actions that these Writing Program Administrators take in their work within these institutional and disciplinary boundaries.

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF THE DISCIPLINE

"Our future is a future of engagement in the ongoing work of a field at whose core is a fuller understanding of how students acquire the ability to write and how we can best support that acquisition through principled, well-run writing programs." (Anson, "Intelligent Design" 32).

The "untenable position" that Tom Fox and Rita Malenczyk describe Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) as inhabiting—a position where they are supposedly caught between their own beliefs and values and their institution's values—is mediated by WPAs in a variety of ways. As WPA scholarship demonstrates, Writing Program Administrators enact a complex form of agency, in which they respond to their university as members of its leadership, and in which they exercise disciplinary expertise as professionals in their fields. While the institution has great bearing on all levels of the writing program, its governance structures also provide WPAs with a relative level of autonomy in which they may apply their expertise to the direction their writing programs.

As I described in my review of the literature, there is a substantial body of WPA scholarship that positions program directors as change agents and as heroes, because they maintain their professional status and implement their disciplinary knowledge within and against the pressures of the institution. This emphasis on provoking change and acting heroically positions WPAs against their institutions, ratifying the notion of tension as a negative force. The reality of acting on what Charlton et al. describe as "what we want for our programs," is often not a dramatic negotiation, but rather is a process in which WPAs work diligently to maintain a vision, remain current on scholarship and best practices, and work tirelessly to assess and form their programs in a way that best serves their mission. In this chapter I explore the way WPAs act on their values and apply their disciplinary knowledge to their institutionally situated writing programs. I describe the core values and best practices from the field of composition and rhetoric, then I show how program outcomes, program curriculum, program labor, and WPA leadership styles are specific arenas where WPAs enact their disciplinary expertise in response to the constraints of the institution.

Defining the Role of the Discipline in the Writing Program

Chris Anson's claim that WPAs need to use empirical research to support their program's practices is supported by a plethora of studies regarding the teaching of writing ("Intelligent

Design"). Empirical research in writing education boomed during the cognitivist turn towards process writing, in the 1970s and 1980s (Harris 73-74). Since then, the field has undergone several theoretical shifts, and its guiding organizations now support a robust set of empirically-backed best practices. In a recent advice piece in the Chronicle of Higher Education, scholar and WPA Doug Hesse describes some of the core values of the discipline of composition and rhetoric, relating the teaching of writing to the teaching of complex piano music: a process that involves advice, feedback, practice, and carefully increased complexity.

As a field, Hesse claims, composition and rhetoric values student processes of practice, analysis, and performance, including decoding, mapping, evaluating, analyzing, critically engaging, and generating ("We Know what Works in Teaching Composition"). Courses that are designed to adopt best practices, he suggests, will progressively sequence tasks and willoffer strategies, advice, encouragement, and critique. Instruction in these courses address form, convention, creativity, grammar, style, process, logic, accuracy, context, and audience, using readings as maps and mentors. Furthermore, Hesse claims, the faculty teaching these courses act as coaches to students, focusing on their writing needs, and helping them develop transferable skills that will outlast the classroom (Hesse, "We Know what Works in Teaching Composition").

These practices Hesse outlines are reflected in the "Framework for Success for Post-Secondary Writing," a discipline-wide guiding document jointly created by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project. The Framework outlines *habits of mind* that align with the experiences and knowledge students need to practice and apply in order to develop flexible, 21st century communication skills. These habits of mind are *curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility,* and *metacognition,* and are outlined in the document as being achieved through "writing, reading, and critical analysis experiences" like those Hesse describes above (Council for Writing Program Administrators, et al. "Framework for Success). In addition, the Council of Writing Program Administrators publishes the WPA Outcomes Statement, which provides common learning outcomes recommended for all first year writing courses. The values Hesse declares in his advice piece reflect the values in these organizing documents, and exemplify the key values of the field of composition and rhetoric. As Hesse's piece in the Chronicle demonstrates, however, these values are at times at odds with stakeholder expectations, and must be carefully integrated into programs that serve an institutional purpose.

WPAs apply their discipline-derived pedagogical and theoretical values within institutional programs, which are subject to the forces of the institutional context. While the institution constrains many aspects of the writing curriculum and program formation as I discussed in chapter 4, WPAs still inhabit professional positions within their programs, and work to apply their professional knowledge to the work their programs accomplish. In this chapter, I explore the way this disciplinary expertise is enacted through program outcomes statements, curriculum design, standardization measures, labor practices, and WPA leadership styles, as an act of negotiating the discipline with the constraints of the institution.

Outcomes

First Year Writing programs typically adopt or create a set of program outcomes, as I discussed in chapter 4. These outcomes allow a writing program to express broad educational goals—rather than specific tasks students need to accomplish—and they aid in curriculum work and programmatic assessment by articulating the purpose of the writing program (Yancey, 21). As these WPAs adapted their disciplinary knowledge and values to their institutions, several of them described a set of program outcomes that reflected their own program's ranking of disciplinary values and their own institution's goals and missions, working in relation to one another. In chapter 4, I described the institutional goals and values present in program outcomes, and explained how these outcomes demonstrate an adaptation of the field of composition and rhetoric to the context of the institution, through their incorporation of the "WPA Outcomes Statement for First Year Composition." Figure 15 below illustrates these institutional inputs of the writing program's outcomes, and positions the Outcomes Statement from the Council of Writing Program Administrators as an input, as well.
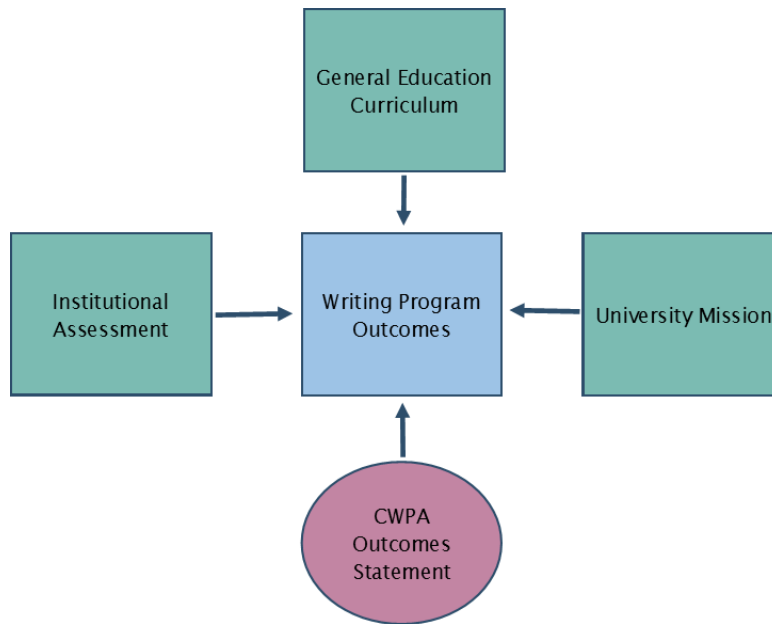
Fig. 15. Institutional and Disciplinary Inputs of a Writing Program's Outcomes.

The Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) has published a set of recommended outcomes for First Year Writing programs in a document titled "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition." According to Patricia Ericsson, this national guiding document "greatly affects the outcomes selected by a writing program," and its recommended outcomes are commonly adopted by writing programs across the country (105). In the introduction to the Outcomes Statement, the authors claim that the document "articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory," which "represent . . . the priorities for First Year Composition" ("WPA Outcomes Statement"). These outcomes are: Rhetorical knowhyledge; Critical reading, thinking, and composing; Processes; and Knowledge of conventions ("Outcomes"). While some writing programs adopt these nationally recommended outcomes wholesale—retaining the organization, order, and direct language from the statement—many writing programs adapt them to the emphases and values of their specific programs and institutions. This adaptation demonstrates not only the flexibility of the outcomes, but the need for WPAs to articulate the way those generalized outcomes can apply to their specific contexts.

Writing Programs one and three, for example, restructure these outcomes by selecting just one recommended outcome that is of the highest value to the program, using it as an umbrella term, or guiding principle, for the remainder of the outcomes. The outcomes for

Writing Program one are subordinated under the outcome of *Rhetorical Argumentation,* which combines the CWPA recommended outcome of Rhetorical Knowledge with the primary form of writing the program values: argumentation. The outcomes statement for Writing Program one then describe *Rhetorical Argumentation* as *ethical*, *practical*, and *rhetorical*. The WPA Outcomes are not eliminated from this program's outcomes statement, but rather are redistributed within these argumentation categories of *ethical, practical, and rhetorical.* In addition, these categories encompass the value the writing program places on integrity, ethics, civic discourse, and social responsibility ("Learning Outcomes"). This restructuring of outcomes demonstrates two things: it shows how these national recommendations are articulated rhetorically by WPAs, and it shows the way the institution's values affect that rhetorical articulation.

In a similar act of restructuring, Writing Program Three describes *Grammar*, *Rhetoric*, and *Logic* as their program's outcomes ("Outcomes"). These outcomes are based on the liberal arts *Trivium,* which articulates grammar, rhetoric, and logic as modes of critical thinking. This adaptation of the outcomes aligns with the institution's liberal arts focus, while redistributing— rather than eliminating—many of the WPA recommended outcomes. For example, the recommended outcome of Knowledge of Conventions easily falls within the bounds of *Logic*, the recommended outcome of Rhetorical Knowledge is already included in *Rhetoric*, and each of these are components of the recommended Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing. WPA3 does not create these program outcomes based entirely on institutional values, but instead uses those institutional values to rearticulate the outcomes CWPA recommends.

Some writing programs also adopt most or all of the WPA Outcomes Statement as it is, and add additional outcomes based on their individual program values. Writing Program Two, for example, has adopted *Rhetorical Knowledge, Processes,* and *Knowledge of Conventions* directly from the WPA Outcomes Statement, and has added *Research* and *Metacognition* as additional outcomes for their first year courses. The university's own stated missions and goals describe research and analysis skills as keys to career preparation ("About Us"), and WPA2 explains that the writing program is "sort of part and parcel of the mission of the university" (Participant 2). This expansion of the program outcomes is not an essential move, as the definitions of metacognition and research can be easily covered in the other outcome categories, which the authors of the WPA Outcomes Statement left purposefully broad (Harrington et al.).

This move to add to these outcomes is rhetorical, rather, and represents an overt move to make the tenets of the writing program reflect the values of the institution and its educational mission. As I demonstrated in chapter 4, even the theoretically-based outcomes of a writing program—the location of theory and pedagogy directly expressed for practice—are influenced by the institution and its constraints.

While the WPA Outcomes Statement was formed prescriptively rather than descriptively—as a compilation of values for which writing programs *should strive* to embody rather than as a description of what writing programs *already do*—many writing programs create their outcomes descriptively, adapting the content and language of the statement to what their programs already embody as institutional units. Not all writing programs even create an outcomes statement, though most at least create a statement of purpose, a mission statement, or a program description to describe the way the program conceives of writing and approaches writing education. When a writing program does create an outcomes statement, however, that statement not only provides guiding principles on which curriculum should be designed and assessed, it articulates for the program and its stakeholders how the disciplinary expertise of the program is being mobilized for service to the institution.

Curriculum

The institution can have a marked effect on the curriculum of a writing program, through general education requirements, through institutional values, and through the institutional relationships that affect its formation, as I discussed in chapter 4. Because a First Year Writing program is part of a larger curricular structure, however, the impact of general education can vary in granularity. General education curricula and accrediting bodies rarely specify the details of how a writing program must fulfil its larger curricular purpose. As a result, many WPAs base their curricular decisions primarily on research and best practices from the discipline of composition and rhetoric. In addition, the autonomy of a WPA as program director also means that administrators are counting on the WPA to apply professional expertise to the writing program without requiring excessive guidance or assistance. Within this space that WPAs have to incorporate best practices and disciplinary values, such as those Hesse outlines above, the discipline of composition and rhetoric affects the program's curriculum through a WPA's decisions regarding course sequencing, scaffolding within the curriculum, and curriculum assessment. Figure 16 below illustrates these various inputs into the program's curriculum.
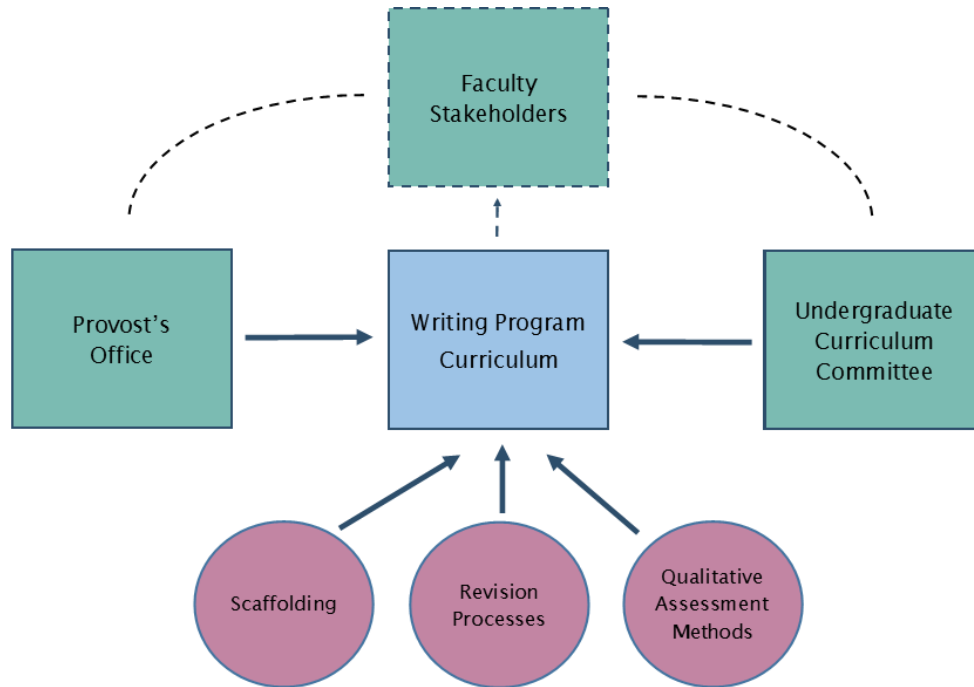
Fig. 16. Institutional and Disciplinary Inputs of the Writing Program's Curriculum.

WPA4 maintains a lot of autonomy over the curriculum in her program, and revises the curriculum internally, in order to better its performance as measured against disciplinary knowledge. The general education requirements for Writing Program 4 call for "Fundamental skills of inquiry," and general communications skills ("General Education Program Advising Worksheet"). This broad description of student learning needs means that the WPA has relative autonomy to use her professional knowledge to create a curriculum that best prepares students in these inquiry and communications skills. The curriculum revision that marked the departure of Writing Program 4 from the department of English was initiated within the writing program, based on knowledge of more current best practices and approaches to teaching communication and inquiry. Writing Program 4 is now undergoing a much smaller revision to its curriculum, which is an internal decision based on how well the courses in the program are preparing students in the way the program itself claims and the general education curriculum requires.

A recent assessment of the curriculum in Writing Program Four revealed that students were either doing very well in the curriculum or very poorly—there was a gap in the middle, as WPA4 describes it. The results of this assessment have led the program to revise the structure of the courses, but not the outcomes or philosophies of the program itself. Changes like this do not

affect the broad purpose of the program, and therefore have little impact on the institutional

service of the program as a component of the general education curriculum. Instead, such

changes allow the program to fine tune its approach, working on implementing best practices

within this specific university setting.

Writing Program Five has also revised its curriculum internally, in an attempt to better

meet student needs. In his Chronicle piece on the best practices in composition instruction, Doug

Hesse pinpoints scaffolding and sequencing as key markers of the profession's approach. WPA5

explains to me that his program's current formulation was reorganized in order to better scaffold

concepts for students, and to address stakeholder concerns. WPA5 says the courses are now built

on a "tight conceptual link" that scaffolds student learning. The first course provides the students

with foundational skills of close reading and careful text-based writing, and then transitions them

to the second, rhetorically-based, course where they produce arguments that require critical

reading, writing, and rhetorical analysis. This notion of scaffolding student learning extends to

the institutional mission of the program itself, which WPA5 describes as preparation for

academic writing, including common conventions, expectations, and standards of academic

writing. The program's website advertises it as the largest body of courses that undergraduate

students are required to take, positioning it as a crucial foundation to the work of the other

disciplines (First-Year English).

It is important to recognize the significance of these internal changes within a writing

curriculum. In light of literature that describes the practical work of institutional labor, and

literature that positions writing program directors as revolutionaries for the cause of the

discipline, the reality is that writing program administration is an ongoing process of meeting the

purpose of the writing program with expertise gained from the discipline. Writing Program 5

does not look particularly revolutionary in its application of the discipline, in terms of its

alignment to or opposition from the institution. In fact, WPA5 explains that his program initially

"sounds very vanilla," in terms of its pedagogical focus and course structure (Participant 5). Yet

this ongoing curricular work suggests that the work of the WPA is always an ongoing

negotiation of purpose: a negotiation that is neither dramatic, nor particularly marked in any way.

Curricular assessment is another key area of WPA work that bridges between the

disciplinary expertise of the WPA and the institutional purpose of the writing program.

Assessment is a measure of programmatic success, and therefore is the concern of the larger

general education curricula, and of the writing program. Assessments initiated or negotiated by the writing program offer the WPA with a way to act on the best practices of their field and make a case for their expertise in writing curriculum to those who misunderstand, misrepresent, or fail to fully value their work.

WPA5, for example was frustrated with institutional level assessments of his program that focused only on final products of student writing. In addition, these assessment processes were at times completely crippled by the lack of faculty evaluators familiar with the program or with assessing writing. In response, WPA5 created a robust, in-house assessment program that focuses on students' revision processes, which is a value inherent in the program outcomes. WPA5 partnered with a professor from the department of computer science to create a program for analyzing the linguistic nature of changes students in the program make between the drafts of each of their papers. "We get curious about what happens between the first and final drafts," he tells me. WPA5 does claim, however, that the institutional assessment that fails to provide meaningful results "can point in a kind of general direction that we can follow up on," as I described in my discussion of institutional relationships in chapter 4 (Participant 5). He and his computer science colleague excitedly describe the way this assessment project "feels more actionable and concrete than some of the stuff that this institutional assessment was giving us" (Participant 5). This new assessment protocol, which is still being refined and reworked, allows WPA5 to better understand the nature of student revision, to better prepare faculty for teaching writing processes, and to aid as an invaluable contribution to the study and teaching of writing. This assessment plan feeds information about student learning back into the discipline, while giving this WPA the opportunity to assert expertise in his institutional context.

WPA6 experienced a similar assessment tension, when his university conducted an accreditation-mandated quantitative assessment of his program's success. WPA6 was able to use his disciplinary knowledge of qualitative research and student writing habits to lobby his administrators to provide funding for a more comprehensive assessment program that would include qualitative data. The qualitative assessment allows WPA6 to measure the work his program values, using a method that also aligns with the values of the discipline.

This act of negotiating—or adding onto—institutional-driven program assessment allows the WPA to assert his or her expertise. Because the results of an assessment affect the kind of changes a WPA must implement within the program's curriculum, changing the nature of the

assessment can offer the WPA a level of control over the program's curriculum. Thus by asserting control over these assessments, these WPAs are working to maintain control over their program curricula, as well. Controlling the program's curriculum means that the WPA can ensure the perpetuation of the discipline's values and best practices within the program—a move that can also be accomplished through the processes of standardizing how the curriculum is taught, as I discuss below.

Standardization

Many First Year Writing programs offer dozens of sections of the same course or sequence of courses. This means that the writing program must assure an equal writing education to potentially hundreds of students, though it is administered by a variety of faculty members, using a variety of classroom practices, and in courses with a variety of differences in design. In order to ensure that the values of the discipline are being upheld in each of these courses, many WPAs institute standardization measures across their programs, as figure 17 below illustrates.
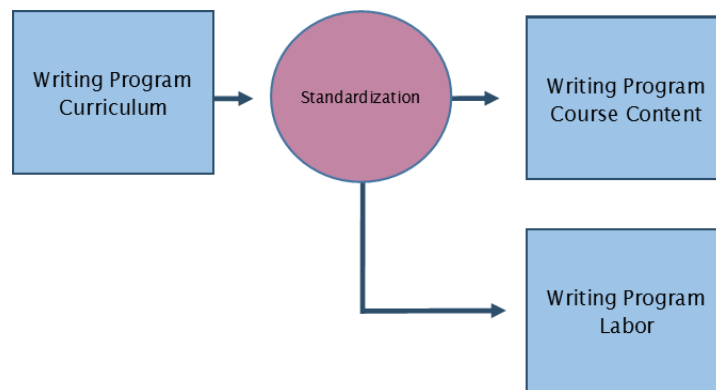
Fig. 17. Standardization in the Writing Program.

Standardization in writing programs can be seen in textbook selection, syllabus templates, and GTA training courses. Some writing programs take a firm approach to textbook selection, and assign a book for all faculty and GTAs to use. In fact, Writing Program Three created a custom handbook that covers skills-based issues, provides an overview of the assignments taught in the program, and includes a step-by-step guide for students who are writing the assignments. This handbook is accompanied by a standard syllabus that all faculty use in the program's courses. Standardization can also take on a collaborative quality where textbook selection and syllabi

formation is a shared process undertaken within boundaries. For example, Writing Program 1 provides a list of approved textbooks from which GTAs and faculty can select their course texts. As the GTAs in this program design their syllabi, WPA1 explains "we do encourage them to beg, borrow, and steal from other syllabi," in order to maintain consistency while honoring their autonomy and the flexibility of individual philosophies (Participant 1).

In the midst of instituting a certain level of standardization, WPA 1 also expresses a value for collaboration, a principle that is reflected in some of the best practices that Hesse suggests we teach our students. For examples, WPA1 relates his frustration upon hearing that some GTAs were circumventing the textbook approval system, though he ultimately approves of the books they chose. He describes his sadness that these GTAs had discovered excellent resources for their courses, and then failed to share those resources with the rest of the program. While these WPAs ensure the fulfillment of their programs' purposes to each student, they do so by requiring resources that reflect the field's practices and by modeling collaboration within a set of boundaries. This act of standardization is a mode of managing the faculty and GTAs who comprise the program's labor force, while ensuring that their expertise is applied to the student education experience.

Labor

In addition to adaptations of program outcomes and measures for standardization, WPAs negotiate the values of the discipline with the material constraints of their institutions by arranging changes in the labor force they employ for teaching in the program. Figure 18 below illustrates some of these inputs of a writing program's labor force.
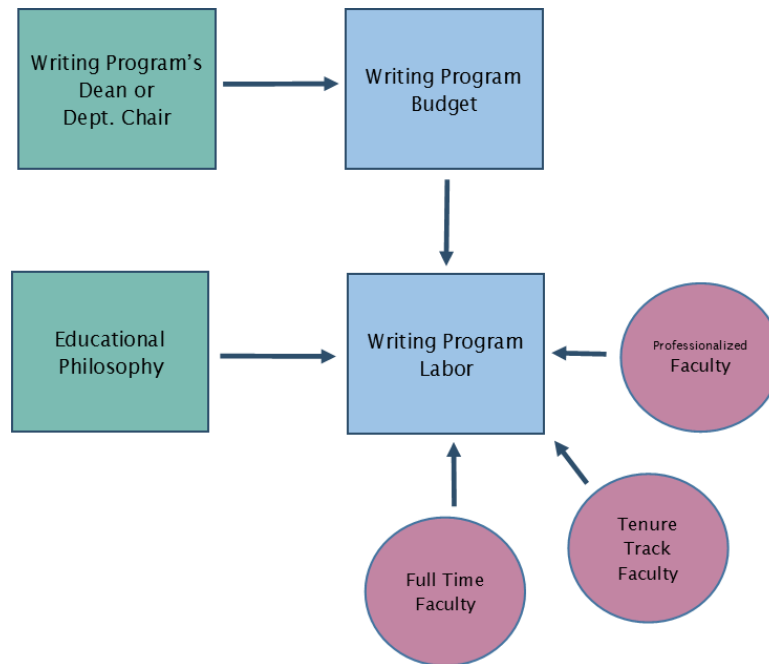
Fig. 18. Institutional and Disciplinary Inputs of a Writing Program's Labor Force.

Writing programs do not maintain full autonomy over their labor force. For example, the use of graduate teaching assistants can be traced not only to the presence of graduate programs or to a belief in the preparation of future teachers, but to the fiscal implications of hiring a low-wage labor force or of sharing the funding of the labor force with a graduate school. And a writing program or department that does not have tenure track faculty who specialize in composition or writing studies may not have tenure track faculty to teach—or who value teaching—composition. These aspects of the department, program, or institution have bearing on the way the writing program staffs its classes, which affects the avenues through which the discipline infuses classroom practices or faculty decisions about curriculum.

Despite some of these constraints, Writing Program Administrators can assert their values by making decisions about labor that are within their purview, by advocating for decisions that are outside of their authority, and by working to professionalize whatever labor force they employ.

Labor practices can affect a writing program through faculty contribution, by infusing the program with disciplinary scholarship, by releasing faculty to spend time enriching the program, and by creating fair and equitable conditions for contingent faculty, whose investment in the program has lasting impacts on the quality of education the program offers.

Writing Program Two is an independent writing program and has not achieved departmental status. Despite its position, however, the program has recently been awarded lines for tenure track faculty appointments, which will bring new hires into the program where these positions have previously belonged to the English department. This means that tenure track faculty who have been trained in areas of composition and rhetoric pertinent to the program, and who will maintain composition-related research agendas, can be hired to enrich the writing program. WPA2 excitedly explains that he "worked magic," to achieve this, by convincing his dean to fund these lines. This victory is part of WPA2's belief that an investment in scholarly research and service within the program will have lasting benefits on the integrity of the program and the courses it administers. This negotiation of tenure lines was part of an ongoing mission for WPA2 to build a positive reputation for the writing program throughout the university. WPA2 believes that this relationship building has paid off, as the program celebrates many of the benefits and autonomy associated with departmental status.

While the program's reputation is crucial to the autonomy and power of the writing program, WPA4 demonstrates the way that the role of disciplinary research and professionalized faculty extends beyond simply creating a value for tenure track positions. Writing Program Four is also an independent writing program, but with only two tenure track appointments, both of which belong to the neighboring English department rather than to the program. The lecturer faculty in the writing program, however, participate in research and pedagogy showcases outside of the department, spend time developing curriculum within the department, and serve on a variety of program committees. WPA4 explains that prior to the program's divide from the English department, the lecturer faculty never had opportunities to participate within the university in any meaningful way, were unlearned in the politics of institutional life, and felt so downtrodden that "they put a moat around the program. . ." and refused to interact with program stakeholders (Participant 4). According to WPA4, professionalizing the lecturer faculty has improved morale, infused the program with scholarship and research into the teaching of writing, and has allowed the faculty to spend time developing the program through curriculum course releases granted through a competitive proposal process.

WPA4 claims that this work to professionalize the lecturer faculty has breathed fresh life into the writing program, as the classroom practices and course designs of this faculty force are becoming increasingly more complex and are kept up-to-date with research from the field. The

curriculum is being enriched by new work from the discipline as faculty with course releases for curriculum development engage with research and critical reflection, design pilots, and assess new ways of teaching students. In addition, the faculty showcases outside of the program allow WPA4 to demonstrate to the faculty and to the university that the work of the composition and rhetoric discipline is highly valued by the writing program.

WPAs can sometimes use their positions to make changes in the makeup and work of their programs' labor forces, in order to enhance the role of the discipline within the institutional writing program. Such changes are active decisions on the part of the WPA, and relate to their values regarding the distribution of disciplinary knowledge in the program, and to their own beliefs about program leadership.

Leadership Styles

WPAs are often trained within their discipline, and lack formal knowledge about business management, institutional theory, or leadership. Charlton, Charlton, Graban, Ryan and Stolley argue that WPAs often learn leadership on the job, as they work to navigate constraints and implement their values. The composition and rhetoric discipline offers a range of values about writing as a social act of communication and about the processes that lead to quality written products. The values found in the discipline affect not only the way writing education is maintained through customized outcomes, curricular revisions, and a professionalized labor force, they can also influence the leadership style of the WPA who directs the program. While WPAs undoubtedly apply these values to their curricular work within a writing program, they also use these values to manage the bureaucratic work of their institutional roles. Figure 19 below illustrates some of the inputs and outputs of the leadership styles of these WPAs, as several key values from the discipline of composition and rhetoric affect how these WPAs interact with their students, their faculty, and their university stakeholders.
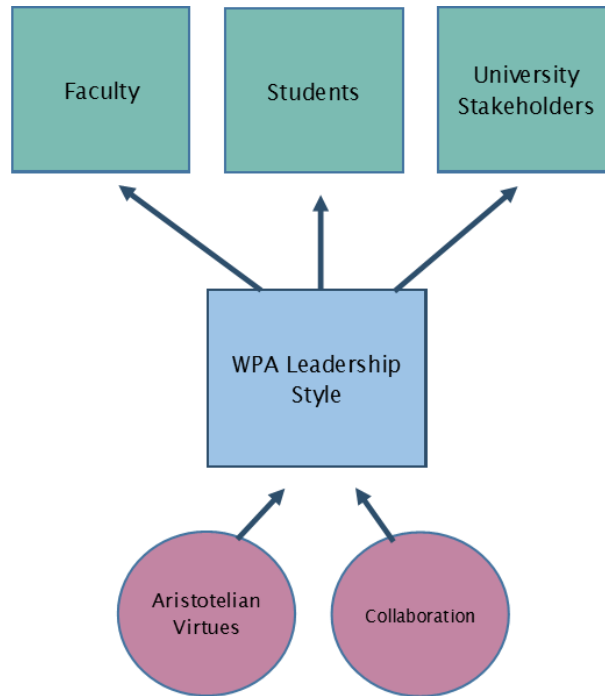
Fig. 19. Institutional and Disciplinary Inputs of the WPA's Leadership.

In a discussion of institutional values, WPA1 explains that his university's religious teaching "infuses not only our curriculum," where Aristotelian virtues are mapped onto an articulation of writing and argumentation, but they also infuse "how we work with students and how we work with others" (Participant 1). As I demonstrated in chapter 4 and in my discussion of program outcomes above, WPA1 has merged his school's religious values with his knowledge of Aristotelian rhetoric, and he speaks of them as one-in-the-same. These virtues are *phronesis*, which is practical wisdom, *arete*, which refers to moral virtue, and *eunoia*, which is goodwill.

WPA1 provides several scenarios in which he or one of his first year writing faculty have had to address concerns with a FYW student, describing how they rely on these virtues of wisdom, morality, and goodwill to guide their actions. WPA1 describes issues of academic difficulty, students with depression and mental health struggles, and even students' personal traumas that becomes manifest in their classroom behaviors and study habits. Noticing such issues in the students taking classes in the writing program is crucial to WPA1, who suggests that "when you've got twelve students or fifteen students [in] a class . . . you can [notice problems] pretty easily" (Participant 1). He goes on to say that "I really encourage that our teachers in our program at the slightest sign of any concern or doubt obviously reach out to the student . . . [and]

at the same time reach out to the advisor and signal to the student and the advisor and anyone else involved in that student's well being, we care about the student, we want to help the student" (Participant 1). This care of each student's wellbeing is possible through WPA1's own connectivity on campus: in our conversation he rattles off the names of advisors, deans, rectors, and student health services consultants whom he calls regularly to discuss student situations. "I'm thinking of a wagon wheel right now," WPA1 tells me; "I'm the axle or whatever in some ways" (Participant 1).

For WPA1, the discipline of rhetoric influenced his understanding of his institution's religious values. What he created was a contextualized and locally employed understanding of the discipline, which then governed many of the decisions he made about his program's tertiary goals and his own professional actions.

In her book *The Activist WPA,* Linda Adler-Kassner suggests that WPAs can create strong programs by making rhetorical and politically-strategic decisions about the aspects of their programs and their leadership to which they have access. The WPAs in my study acted on their disciplinary expertise by formulating outcomes, revising curricula, implementing various measure of standardization, and by enacting their expertise through a discipline-informed leadership style. The actions they undertook allowed them to exert their considerable expertise within various institutional constraints. In chapter 6, I will explore the way this negotiation of the discipline and the institution is undertaken by WPAs strategically, with goals and values governing the actions they undertake to create strong, defensible writing programs.

CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATING TENSION

"There are clearly WPAs and writing instructors who are interested in telling stories about writing instruction and writers that represent our values and ideals . . . but to engage in this process of story construction or story changing we must also constantly find what Darsie Bowden called this "chi" (Bowden 2007), this balance between ideals and strategies." (Adler-Kassner, *The Activist WPA* 9).

As I demonstrated in chapters 4 and 5, a writing program's structure, curriculum, and practices are influenced by the specific institutional context and a range of disciplinary values. The writing program, when viewed systematically like this, is a site of creative, potential energy, where a WPA's decisions are part of a driven, often kairotic, negotiation of this tension. Each of these WPAs maintain rhetorical aims or strategies for negotiating their work, as they seek out, stumble on, or create actions that further their aims.

As I demonstrated in chapter 4, a first year writing program is influenced on several levels by institutional values, institutional relationships, and general education requirements. These institutional forces are sometimes indirect, such as the values and mission of the university, and are sometimes direct, such as the requirements of general education on the writing program's curriculum. The strategies with which these forces are navigated reveal the WPA's aims in participating with the university in these areas. In this chapter, I offer a series of strategies for negotiating the dual constraints of the institution and the discipline, which I established in the two previous chapters. In addition, I explore what the mobilization of these strategies means for the writing program's orientation towards the university.

These Writing Program Administrators frequently employ six different strategies for directing their programs within the tension of the institution and their disciplinary knowledge. These strategies are Requesting, Enriching, Learning, Showcasing, Collaborating, and Aligning. In each of these strategies, the WPAs are enacting a relationship between the institution and the discipline, as their actions help them achieve a series of aims that are related to their disciplinary and institutional purpose. The strategies that WPAs select to maintain programmatic integrity within this situation of tension represent the nature of their relationships with their institutions, and what roles they see for themselves and their programs as a central component of both discipline and institution.

Strategies

Despite the military connotations to the term strategy—which might suggest grand, calculated plans to defeat the enemy—these administration strategies are not always calculated political maneuvers, and they are not always done in opposition to institutional or disciplinary forces. In fact, the WPAs in this study describe their actions always in response to a governing situation, not as master plans transcending the institution or the situated writing program. The marginalization of composition in English departments and STEMS fields, the bureaucratic complication of higher education's business model, and the tension between the roles of academic and administrator mean that WPAs frequently face situations that affect their funding, their curriculum, their labor force, and even their purpose.

As I demonstrated in chapter 4, institutional values, institutional relationships, and general education requirements can affect everything from the content of a program's courses to the design of its assessment programs. In addition to these institutional factors, the outcomes, curriculum, standardization measures, and leadership styles within the WPA's own program are influenced by the values of the composition and rhetoric discipline, as I established in chapter 5. As WPAs manage this tension, the positive growth and accountability of tension is evident in their strategic actions to build integrity within their programs. Each of these strategies marks an orientation towards the institution and the discipline, as the WPA works to establish a program that is situated in both.

Linda Adler-Kassner suggests that strategies are a WPA's "long-term visions that . . . are closely linked to principles and values" (400). These strategies are not merely actions—which Adler-Kassner terms "tactics"—but they are value-driven action plans, whether the WPA knows in advance that they want to take such actions or not. Adler-Kassner suggests that WPAs always act on values, whether they have reflected on and articulated those values to themselves or not. She advocates for the thoughtful formation of these values as the principles that define a WPA's strategies. This means that although these WPAs were acting in response to situations, they were acting on already established principles and values. By examining the strategies of Requesting, Enriching, Learning, Showcasing, Collaborating, and Aligning in the work of these six WPAs, I demonstrate the way their values and principles are the formation of a relationship between their disciplinary expertise and their institutional service. In figure 20 below, I outline these six strategies and the tactics that the WPAs in my study used to apply these strategies.

Strategy	Tactics
Requesting	Demonstrating Value
	Relationship Building
Enriching	Professionalizing faculty
	Curriculum Revision
Learning	Research
	Benchmarking
	Program Assessment
Showcasing	Encouraging
	Funding
	Forwarding
Collaboration	Curriculum Design
	Consultant Work
Aligning	Re-articulating outcomes
	Modifying course content

Fig. 20. The Strategies and Tactics of Writing Program Administrators.

Requesting

Requesting is perhaps the most commonly known adminstrative strategy within the marginalized field of composition and rhetoric. Sometimes referred to in literature as "begging," "fighting," "hard-won battles," or undertaking "aggressive maneuvers," dealing with administrators who control budgets and who operate outside of the values of the writing program can pose frustrations for WPAs who desire resources for the work they see as valuable (see McClure and Weiser). In his work on mapping writing program budget models, Chris Anson writes that "defending an existing budget or arguing for increases in funding can easily lead a WPA beyond reserve and into emotional response" ("Figuring It All Out" 248). Much of this vexation is due to the roles and concomitant allegiances of the WPA and his or her dean or administrator. While a dean or administrator must make careful decisions regarding the college's budget and its distribution across many vital programs and departments, writing programs maintain their own set of disciplinarily-derived values that require monetary resources to fulfil.

WPAs asking for resources from their administrators is a primary way of testing the value stakeholders place on the writing program and its use of resources.

For example, WPA6, frustrated with the way the quantitative assessment of his writing program boxed in its worth, potential, and future structure, had to find the funding to complete a qualitative assessment program that would acknowledge and measure the values he believed were important in his program. WPA2 lobbied his administration for the tenure lines that were recently assigned to his program. WPA6 was able to move his part time faculty to full time contracts. These changes were possible because these WPAs were able to convince their administrators that such changes were a worthwhile use of funding. Thus, Requesting is not only a standard, basic action, it is a rhetorical strategy closely tied to the program's ability to demonstrate its value.

As a relatively simple strategy, Requesting is one that also enables other strategies. For example, WPA2 fights to have tenure lines given to the writing program in order to enrich the program with scholarship. This Enrichment strategy, which I discuss below, is possible because the WPA first makes the request for funding.

Enriching

The act of Enriching a writing program is an inwardly focused move to improve the program internally. That is, Enriching a writing program is an effort to bring its curriculum, its labor practices, and its treatment of students into alignment with its ethical values regarding citizenship, writing, and education. The calls of Linda Adler-Kassner, Keith Rhodes, Chris Anson, and Matthew Heard for strong foundations in writing programs suggest that the values of the field should be actively pursued in a variety of programmatic formations. In fact, scholarship on writing programs—relating to classroom practices, labor conditions, and course sequences— is more readily available than scholarship on the writing program as part of the institution.

All of the WPAs in my study participate in Enrichment as one of several concurrent strategies for positively navigating the tension of institutional and disciplinary inputs and outputs. This act of Enriching ranges from professionalizing faculty to revising curriculum within the writing program. The actions associated with Enrichment are not institutionally-driven, though they are affected by institutional structures. In addition, these acts are designed to

bring research into the writing program in order to keep it up to date and to feed back into the discipline.

One such tactic for Enriching the writing program is to professionalize its faculty. The professionalization of faculty Enriches a writing program by infusing it with active, ongoing scholarship, freeing faculty to work on curriculum development and professional development, creating consistency within the way courses are administered, and improving the labor conditions of those who work in the programs.

WPA6, for example, has worked to transition the part time faculty in his program to full time positions. The Conference on College Composition and Communication's current recommendation is that writing programs should move away from the common practice of staffing classes with part-time faculty ("Statement on Working Conditions of Non-Tenure Track Faculty"). The labor conditions of adjunct faculty and the lack of programmatic consistency due to high turnover can lead to writing programs that are out of alignment with the field's values and its best practices. "I think that if you have a more conceptually challenging curriculum," WPA6 explains, "it is important to have people who are even more invested and there more" (Participant 6). This is the argument that he made to his administrators, and the primary reason he took his already unionized and benefitted part time faculty and offered them full time contracts.

In a similar desire to act on the discipline's values, WPA4 conceptualizes professionalization as a key part of improving faculty morale, of revising the writing curriculum, and of assuring the continuation of research into best practices and innovative teaching methods. WPA4 was charged by the provost to "provide stability to the curriculum, in its delivery to students," a mission she carried out by professionalizing the faculty (Participant 4). WPA4 undertook to offer professional development funding, provided grant-based course releases for curriculum-related research, and assigned committee service to this non-tenure track faculty. While these actions invest in the faculty, they do so in a way that improves their professional knowledge and ongoing development, bringing research into the program and keeping the faculty active in conferences and other professional activities.

In another tactic for Enriching, WPA2 convinces his administrators to award the writing program with tenure lines for hiring professorial faculty into the independent writing program. This means that tenure track faculty who have been trained in areas of composition and rhetoric

pertinent to the program, and who will maintain composition-related research agendas, can be hired to Enrich the writing program. This victory, as he casts it, is part of WPA2's belief that an investment in scholarly research and service within the program will have lasting benefits on the integrity of the program and the courses it administers.

Developing the curriculum of the writing program is another tactic of Enrichment, which WPAs can use to balance the needs of their stakeholders with the values of the field of composition and rhetoric. When WPA5 chose to return to a curriculum that dedicated more classroom attention to conventions and grammar, he did so not only in response to complaints from his institutional stakeholders, but after careful benchmarking, research, and revision of the course sequence. WPA5 did not simply provide his faculty with a mandate to increase instruction on the mechanics of writing conventions; rather, he revised the order of classes students take and increased the critical reading component of their preparatory course, in order to make the increased grammar instruction meaningful and contextualized. Though an increased focus on grammar and sentence structure does not completely align with the discipline's best practices, WPA5 used an increase in critical thinking and reading—the result of the revised sequence—to make sure those skills were being implemented in the most ethical, effective, and research-supported way possible. As a result, he believes that students leave his program understanding the conventions of writing in a "self-conscious and self-reflective way" (Participant 5).

This strategy of Enriching is primarily an internal maneuver, which these WPAs used to bring the program in closer alignment with the discipline and its recommendations. As a performance of an institutional relationship, this strategy is used by WPAs to exert their expertise and manage the programs they have been granted as part of the department or college's leadership structure. These WPAs act on their values regarding disciplinarity, while forming programs that they believe better serve their universities and stakeholders. These WPAs do not implement these strategies without reason, and they do not mobilize them in isolation. The strategy of Enriching is sometimes it is paired with Requesting, such as WPA2's persuasion of his dean to grant the program its own tenure lines. In addition, it is sometimes paired with Learning, as these WPAs conducted research and benchmarking before making large-scale changes.

Learning

Learning is a strategy that places emphasis on the disciplinary purpose of teaching writing. The discipline was formed in response to the institutionalization of writing courses, and WPAs who seek out research opportunities are both furthering the field and enhancing the efficacy of their institutional work. Several WPAs in my study engaged in this strategy in order to understand their students' education better.

While the curriculum in Writing Program Five already uses process pedagogy and requires students to work through the revision of multiple drafts—best practices from the field of composition and rhetoric—WPA5 launched a large corpus-based research project into student revision practices. When viewing all sections of student writing and all assignments collectively as part of the program's assessment process, WPA5 was faced with approximately twenty thousand drafts of student writing. He explains that he wanted to know whether the practices his program implemented were actually effective (Participant 5). The corpus-based assessment project he and his computer science colleague have launched investigates "how much revision is going on, what kinds of revision is happening, where is it happening in [a] particular paper . . . [and what] students [are] actually doing" when they draft (Participant 5). This tactic allows WPA5 to better the work of his program, not by searching out best practices, but by conducting research in order to better formulate those best practices.

In a similar move to improve writing education, WPA3 turned to Learning as a strategy when considering the now large-scale revision of the writing program. The radical changes WPA3 and her university's faculty and curriculum committees implemented started with the question 'what are we actually teaching and how could we do it better?' WPA3 and a multidisciplinary committee spent time learning about the competencies required by their state council, and considering what curricular structures would best teach them. By investigating these requirements and researching communications and rhetoric, WPA3 and her committee turned to the liberal arts *Trivium* as a cornerstone for teaching students in a nontraditional-looking program.

By using the strategy of Learning, these WPAs demonstrate a desire to learn what students actually need, to question how their educational programs fit into the general education curriculum, and, in some cases, to seek out collaborative relationships with other members of

their institutions. This strategy allows them to use their status as disciplinary experts to further refine the way their programs operate within their institutions.

Showcasing

WPAs who Showcase their writing programs spend energy and resources asserting the expertise of the writing program and its faculty, as well as demonstrating the value of the writing program through the work of its faculty and students. As a strategy, Showcasing builds relationships between the writing program and its institutional and local communities. These relationships are tightly linked to writing program expertise, and can result in the highly visible and valued work of the writing program within its stakeholder communities. As WPA4 demonstrates, those relationships can lead to expanded opportunities for the writing program faculty to apply their work outside of the program and demonstrate their value to the university and local community. This Showcasing work is a multi-layered process that requires a commitment of emotions, time, institutional connections, and program resources. And while showcasing is designed to bring attention to faculty members or the program as a whole, the WPA takes a crucial role by being ready and willing to discuss the work of the program, offering encouragement to program faculty, noticing the work faculty do and bringing it to the attention of others, and offering funding to promising endeavors.

Being ready and willing to discuss the work of the writing program means that a WPA can showcase the expertise of the program in an unplanned situation. WPA5's corpus research on revision is a research project designed to help him learn more about student writers and about the efficacy of writing instruction in his program. After the failure of the institutionally designed assessment of the writing program, WPA5 was faced with angry and frustrated stakeholders who wanted to know if the writing program had any plans to improve its curriculum. Caught during an institution-wide town hall meeting, WPA5 had to be ready to discuss, share, and expound on his internal assessment program. By demonstrating the critical and scholarly work of this research, and outlining a plan for integrating results into curricular improvements, WPA5 was able to engage faculty in a meaningful conversation about student writing, teaching writing, and the value of the program's learning outcomes. This strategy was not part of a careful preparation, but instead was simply a WPA responding to an emergent situation, speaking knowledgeably, and demonstrating confidence and expertise.

In addition to this always-ready state of authority, Showcasing can be a combination of planned and unplanned tactics, as part of a commitment to continually demonstrating the value of the writing program. WPA4 describes Showcasing as a deliberate strategy to champion the expertise of writing faculty in larger institutional and national arenas. "It's taking people's talents . . . and just saying you know you can do this," she explains. In WPA4's program, two faculty members applied for grants to use the university's newly built high technology classrooms. After receiving the grants and developing a digitally-based writing course for the new classrooms, one of these faculty members is now leading workshops to any faculty interested in teaching in these classroom spaces. WPA4 believes there is value in work that make the writing program "very public," and encourages faculty to branch out and work across the institution. In addition to urging action from her faculty, WPA4 makes comments like "isn't it cool?" and "it's because people here are so incredibly talented," demonstrating her emotional investment in encouraging and celebrating the faculty members who take their expertise beyond the writing program.

In addition to the tactic of encouraging faculty to take on new roles in the university, WPA4's use of Showcasing also highlights the role of noticing and forwarding the work they already accomplish. One faculty member in Writing Program 4, who is also an artist, worked independently of the institution or the program to create a three-dimensional exploration of literary texts for a library in the state's capital. When WPA4 heard about this, she immediately went to work drawing attention to it, by calling the university news to have them cover the installment, and then forwarding it to the dean of the university's library to ask if they would showcase her installment when the state library was done with it. After her WPA forged that relationship between this faculty member and the library, this same faculty member is now part of a team who is redesigning library space to create a digital studio for students.

In addition to the tactics of encouraging and forwarding, WPA4 also funds the outreach of her program's faculty. Another faculty member in program 4, who had been piloting a new version of her course, found an opportunity to participate in a national curriculum development workshop with a high profile scholar. This faculty member discounted the experience because it was only partially funded. WPA4's response was "If they don't pay, we'll find a way;" urging this faculty member to participate. After the workshop, this faculty member now works with the same national study center to help other faculty develop their curriculum in her area.

As WPA4's strong dedication to this strategy demonstrates, Showcasing requires an ongoing commitment to making the work of the writing program public. Being ready to tackle various situations, from stakeholder queries to encouraging faculty to apply their work in other university arenas, WPAs who rely on Showcasing use publicity to demonstrate the value of the writing program, the nature of work that takes place in the writing program, and the expertise of those affiliated with the writing program.

WPA4 is also careful to explain that as an administrator, she is not responsible for the talents of her program faculty. "That talent didn't come overnight as a result of being here," she explains of the newfound autonomy the writing program achieved when it split from the English department; "They were doing all this work very quietly over in English through very few venues" (Participant 4). Instead, WPA4 sees the recognition and Showcasing of this work as a crucial part of her work in the First Year Writing program. The end result of this strategy for WPAs 2 and 4 is a new or renewed sense of value among writing program stakeholders, which is manifest through ongoing opportunities and partnerships. "That's Writing," WPA4 says proudly and emphatically; "That's your local writing program, thank you" (Participant 4).

Collaborating

As a strategy for negotiating tension, Collaboration is an act of partnership in which representatives from the writing program and from other stakeholder locations in the institution work together towards an educational curricula that best serves students as members of the institution. Collaboration allows the WPA to showcase his or her expertise, and it allows that expertise to make a broader difference to students in the university. In addition to demonstrating value—much like the Showcasing strategy—Collaboration also allows for that expertise to be developed by outside perspectives.

For Writing Program 3, the unusual situation of the writing program merging into the undergraduate curriculum means that the WPA worked in a highly collaborative setting to redesign the program to better meet the institution's mission and make better use of institutional resources. WPA3 explains that the committee who developed Undergrad 1 worked primarily from a set of competencies they took from their state's Council for Higher Education, as a common document with state-wide educational values and best practices ("Proficiencies"). The course-specific goals created for the newly formulated program, and the assignments that enable

them, were inspired by internal and external recommendations, and approved internally, though they also incorporate writing practices and outcomes from the field of composition.

The range of stakeholders providing approval is due to the fact that the writing program is created to meet general education requirements, and because authority over the program and its work has been shared by placing it under the purview of general education. All writing programs are designed to meet general education requirements, as my examination of institutional constraints demonstrates. However, the unique role of Writing Program Three as Undergrad 1 means that all those involved in general education became highly involved in writing education as well, contributing multiple perspectives and sets of knowledge to the curriculum.

In contrast to making the writing program's curriculum a part of a collaboratively governed curricular structure, Collaboration can also be applied through the tactic of exerting WPA expertise on curricula external to the writing program. WPA4 describes a collaboration project between the writing program and the undergraduate curriculum committee, and between the writing program and the provost's office, to develop a new spiral curriculum for undergraduate education. The premise of a spiral curriculum is that students will encounter the same concepts or terms on multiple occasions throughout their education, and that the information or skills associated with those concepts are made deeper and more complex upon each encounter (Johnston). This collaborative curricular work is designed to place the writing program as a foundation for the writing and communications work of other courses. This Collaboration allows WPA4 to assert her expertise and position her program in powerful ways.

The act of collaboration with university stakeholders highlights the expertise of writing programs and their administrators, as knowledge about literacy education is contributed to broader curricular conversations. This strategy is more than merely contributing, however. When Collaborating, WPA4 is acting on the belief that being present, participating, and enacting expertise will allow her to shape the general education requirements, which have bearing on her program. This means that certain acts of collaboration are not only acts of responding to institutional constraints, but of shaping or changing those constraints, while asserting expertise within the institution.

Aligning

The strategy of Aligning the writing program to the values of the institution can play out in several ways. Alignment is a very deliberate process in which major components of the writing program's purpose or function demonstrate a shared set of values with the institution.

The outcomes of Writing Program One, for example, which have been organized into a model of Aristotelian argumentation, were created to reflect the social and civic values of the school's religious doctrine. WPA1, who has no religious beliefs himself, now mandates that all writing faculty teach a rhetorical approach to ethics and responsibility. As I discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the way the institution's values and the discipline are applied to these program outcomes reveals the way WPA1 uses the discipline as a lens for understanding the values of the institution, and in turn uses his institutional context to understand and apply the work of the discipline. As a strategy for interacting with institutional constraints, WPA1 uses Alignment to negotiate what these values mean for his writing program. The outcomes that result from this Alignment process demonstrate the way WPA1 is able to blend the two together into a meaningful, situated, set of values for his writing program.

In addition to the tactic of revising program outcomes, Alignment can take place in curriculum and classroom content as well. As part of its preparatory mission, all the courses in Writing Program 3 transitioned the documentation style they taught to students. It is common for First Year Writing course to cover proper documentation of sources. While citations styles may vary, the Modern Language Association style guide (MLA style), is associated with the English Disciplines. WPA3 explains that "it seemed kind of selfish for us to teach MLA given that it wasn't really as relevant to the university as a whole," and instead they began requiring faculty to teach the American Psychological Association (APA) style, which is commonly used in disciplines across the university. Here, WPA3 uses Alignment as a way to take a component of course content and alter it in order to serve the program's institutional mission. It is important to note that when these WPAs chose Alignment as a strategy, they did so believing in the importance of many of the institution's values—and by seeing the writing program through an institutional lens.

Conclusion

This collection of strategies suggests that the mission of a writing program is a complex integration of teaching students, teaching students within an institution, working within

institutional missions and requirements, building a managerially and theoretically sound program with appropriate inputs and outputs, and enacting expertise in both subject matter and teaching method. This melange of business administration, institutional theory, political engagement, educational theory, and disciplinary knowledge is part of the balancing act of the WPA, who must constantly fulfil dual roles.

The values being enacted through these strategies suggest various levels of service to the institution and to the discipline. While a WPA may select any given tactic, the strategy behind it is an action towards their institutional and disciplinary relationships. By looking at the various ways WPAs navigate their programs as institutional and disciplinary, we can see the FYC Charter being fulfilled carefully, through attention to both discipline and institution. Despite the lack of treatment of the positive, daily processes for navigating such tension in current WPA literature, the WPAs in my study demonstrate that institutional service is a nuanced concept, and that service and disciplinary integrity are not mutually exclusive.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

"I imagine the WPA subject position as a densely tangled knot, a node of entwined filaments, whose relationships pose a multitude of dangers and opportunities." (Phelps, "The WPA's Dual Identity" 265).

Writing Program Administrators continually act within a situation where their discipline is being mobilized by their institutional work. This condition of tension—the values, allegiances, and material structures of the institution in relationship with the values, allegiances, and material structures of the discipline—is mediated daily by the work that WPAs accomplish. Furthermore, the very purpose of the FYW program is institutional, and the institution is often the lens through which WPAs filter their disciplinary-knowledge when making decisions about the writing program.

The goal of this dissertation is to create a set of descriptive strategies that WPAs use for crossing the boundaries of administration and scholarship. To accomplish this, I situated these writing programs within their institutional systems and gathered the stories of WPAs who work within these systems in order to see how Writing Program Administration is a place where the institution and the discipline come together. What I have found is that each institution offers a series of constraints and possibilities, and that each institution is the filter through which disciplinary knowledge is mobilized, developed, and fed back into the discipline. I have also found that there are several strategies that WPAs apply to their work in order to manage this relationship in principled ways. In this chapter, I will state the conclusions I have reached from this research, describe the implications of applying these strategies to other writing programs, and outline several areas for future research.

Conclusions

Writing Program Administrators enact their own values in complex and creative ways, working within the institutional system. While there is a body of research that shows WPAs are indeed working with their institutions, it primarily offers highly contextualized narratives, rather than actionable strategies that other WPAs can adopt. In fact, McGee and Handa suggest that "there are no generalizations" to be made across writing programs, and instead they claim that we can only explore what they term "petite narrative specific to each locale" (11). The six Writing Program Administrators in my study, however, have demonstrated that they rely on

specific, actionable strategies, which are applicable across these six institutional contexts, that their institutional work is their intellectual work, and that the reconciliation of the two is a process of complexity. This dissertation accomplishes two things: it makes explicit an implicit belief in the duality of WPA work—such as that found in work by Linda Adler-Kassner, Keith Rhodes, Doug Hesse, Chris Anson, Jonikka Charlton and Shirley K. Rose, and countless others, and it offers a set of existing strategies that WPAs apply in practical situations.

Scholarship that casts WPA work as political implicitly addresses the tension of the institution and the discipline inherent in writing programs and writing program administration. Anson, Adler-Kassner, Rhodes, Heard, and Charleton all speak to the issues that arise when their writing programs are critiqued, undervalued, or called into question. In their various responses, these WPAs offer ways to apply the theoretical knowledge and practices from the field of composition and rhetoric to the often-bureaucratic situations in which their programs are critiqued. Within these responses, which range from suggesting that WPAs create a brand for the values of their work and set out to market it to engaging in a relationship of shared understanding and compromise, these writers are acknowledging the duality of the WPA role and offering a means for managing that duality. These WPA scholars acknowledge the tension between managerial matters like budgets and bottom lines and the labor and teaching practices that align with the discipline, *implicitly*, and offer principles for responding to situations wherein these tensions arise.

My research moves beyond an implicit acknowledgement or a simple set of principles for response, and instead makes explicit some of the many ways these two are in tension. By exploring the areas of overlap between institutional demands and disciplinary expertise, I have offered a view of what this tension looks like for many WPAs.

The 2008 collection *The Promises and Perils of Writing Program Administration* is an exploration of how WPAs balance these demands, formulated as a series of narratives and cautionary tales in which seasoned and new WPAs outline their triumphs and failures (Enos and Borrowman). This collection brings together a sense of resignation, however, as these WPAs collectively acknowledge the fractured nature of their subject positions and of the writing program as serving dual agendas and operating within dual value systems. My research builds upon these narratives, offering a set of strategies that WPAs use to better their programs within this seemingly doomed field, moving beyond narrative and emotional response, and attempting

to offer a series of transferrable strategies that other WPAs can apply. Rather than describing each complex situation in context, I analyzed those contexts and extracted a set of principled actions to share with the WPAs who are operating in different contexts.

I have located the specific strategies of Requesting, Enriching, Learning, Showcasing, Collaborating, and Aligning as value-based forms of action that WPAs take to navigate this tension in positive ways. These WPAs implement their strategies in combination and in response to the demands of their contexts, offering a glimpse into the practical reality of using tension to achieve positive results.

Doug Downs writes that despite any negative implications of this tension, the "public charter for FYC remains," and that "we don't get to wish it away" ("What is First-Year Composition?" 58). Downs also suggests that as experts and educators, First Year Writing faculty and directors teach student writers in powerful ways, and thus are continually fulfilling that charter, even in the face of stakeholders who do not understand or share the field's values regarding writing education. Linda Adler-Kassner supports this notion, claiming that even the small, daily actions of WPAs—the seemingly mundane decisions about placing students or observing faculty—are part of a continuum of principles and strategies. That is, when WPAs act, they are acting on their beliefs, and when WPAs hold beliefs, their beliefs must urge them to act.

Implications

This research is primarily descriptive, demonstrating the types of institutional constraints these 6 WPAs experience, offering a glimpse into the way these constraints are connected to or disconnected from their disciplinary expertise, and providing a list of strategies these WPAs use to integrate their expertise with their institutional purpose. Other writing program directors may find these constraints familiar, and can use this list of strategies to handle those constraints they find in their own institutional contexts. WPA scholar Patricia Poblete claims that often WPAs only "perceive the system because we make ourselves the origin point" (65). She suggests that this is not true systematic thinking, and further claims that WPAs cannot obtain perspective on their surroundings because they "need and want the agency to define things around them[selves]" (64). This ongoing concern for agency is rooted in a history of marginalization, problematic definitions of service, and the clash of academic and bureaucratic values.

In the field of composition and rhetoric, the term or notion of service has often been reduced to a means of giving up the ability to self-determine and self-represent. Agency is a

major theme in WPA scholarship (See, for example Enos and Borrowman, Strickland and Gunner, and McGee and Handa), because Writing Program administrators often feel that their disciplinary knowledge is undervalued and fear what Chris Anson refers to as "outsiders deciding curriculum for WPAs" (248). Because of this, the term service can have a lessening effect on professionalization, on the legitimacy of scholarship, and on the recognition of expertise in composition and writing studies. Composition's ongoing fear of being forced to relinquish expertise makes compositionists and WPAs shy away from viewing this work through the lens of university service.

Despite this caution regarding institutional service, my focus on strategies necessarily puts pressure on many of our field's definitions of service, because it presupposes the notion that WPAs *do* serve, and that application of these strategies is a *means* of service. Unlike claims that service in an act of ceding power and expertise, my approach of pairing service with disciplinary expertise means that WPAs can select strategies that allow them to negotiate the discipline and the institution, in order to serve the institution *through* their disciplinary expertise, not at the cost of it.

Louise Wetherbee Phelps believes that this negotiation is possible, though inconsistent and transitory. She calls administration and disciplinary expertise "basically incompatible rival systems and functions," that WPAs naively try to reconcile. However, she suggests that the merging of these two systems also offers the promise of "positive synergy," and can cast WPAs as powerful agents of change in their institutions ("The WPA's Identity: Why It's Hard to Have it Both Ways" 263). Because of the promise of this synergy, Phelps believes that WPAs should keep seeking this incompatible merging, remaining cautious to its yield: "a successful merger should probably be viewed as an unstable chaotic state likely to be transitory and unsustainable, not a permanent identity" (265). While some scholars have written about the morality (Bousquet), structural differences (Esterberg and Wooding), and value differences (Fox and Malenczyk) of administration and the discipline, this process is ripe with dynamic possibilities and potential pitfalls.

Underlying Assumptions

There are three assumptions that ground a my approach to this kind of WPA work: that the Writing Program is an institutional unit and must sustain itself as such, that the discipline is simply a field of study created out of and feeding back into this institutional unit, and that the

expertise and values of the writing program should be negotiated with those of the institution and its stakeholders. To explore WPA work in this way, I am drawing the focus back from the institutional actions found in practical how-to guides for directing writing programs, and placing it on the way these practical actions are a WPA's way of enacting and cultivating a particular relationship with the institution and the discipline.

In her introduction to *A Rhetoric for Writing Program Administrators,* Rita Malenczyk suggests that any practical advice regarding WPA work must "move beyond simplistic thinking and into the complicated realms" that she believes are part of "our current educational landscape" (7). This complexity Malenczyk writes of is one that can only be achieved by looking at the individual contexts within a larger system. In fact, Charlton, et al write that "advice narratives . . . reinforce the stereotype that we are unprepared . . . when they could focus collectively on how to rethink models of protection and power" (43). In order for these strategies to be meaningful to other WPAs, it is important to discuss what these strategies mean for the WPAs in my study—both as expressions of their own values, and as implications of their actions. As other WPAs seek to apply these strategies, they should do so cognizant of the relationship they are enacting by choosing where to place their focus.

As Linda Adler-Kassner suggests, WPAs act on their values when they select strategies for responding to situations. The strategies of Requesting, Showcasing, Collaborating, Learning, Enriching, and Aligning focus WPA efforts more closely on either the writing program, the institution, the discipline of composition and rhetoric, or the students who take their courses. For example, WPAs who chose the strategy of Learning place emphasis on the students who take these FYW courses, and on the disciplinary knowledge base that will continue to benefit from information about how students learn and practice writing. The WPAs who chose the strategy of Enriching their programs spent effort and resources taking care of their faculty and their students through professional development and minor curricular revisions. These actions demonstrate an increased focus on the writing program itself, as they are not dependent on other institutional resources or processes. In contrast to this inward focus, those WPAs who chose to collaborate with the institution altered both their programs and their institutions in an effort to reshape the greater educational process. It is also important to note that WPAs select multiple, sometimes concurrent, strategies, and therefore, are enacting multiple values at the same time.

What careful application of these strategies can offer is not a distancing or marginalizing of the WPA, not a mode of engagement that seeks to overpower stakeholders, and not a dissolution of WPA power, either. What purposeful application of principled strategies can offer is a clear acknowledgement that WPA work is not the center of education in the institution, and that connections and situations—even when different from the values of composition and rhetoric, are not necessarily negative. Patricia Poblete describes the common WPA stance as reactionary, writing that "WPA conversation reflects the constant need to defend against meddling, or, to spin more positively, to anticipate and prepare for future challenges" (25). Yet by examining writing programs in context, and centering the writing program in its institutional mission, we can view these interactions as positive, goal-oriented actions designed to make writing programs institutionally as well as disciplinarily strong.

Areas for Future Research

These strategies, their contexts, and the principles that govern them can offer a concrete and transparent resource, while offering a perspective that many how-to guides fail to achieve. There are three specific areas this study opens up for future research: more in-depth and nuanced knowledge of the relationship between writing programs and general education curricula, a continued exploration of what service means for a writing program, and a larger look at the systematization of principled action in order to develop sustainability.

Relationship between General Education and FYW

In my exploration of the constraints institutional contexts posed on each of these WPAs, I noted that general education requirements affect course structure, course content, program outcomes, and definitions of program performance. However, in my exploration of the role of the composition and rhetoric discipline, I found that WPAs have a lot of autonomy to decide how they will fulfil those requires, and I noted that such requirements are highly generalized.

The six WPAs in this study took a variety of stances toward general education requirements, and some worked directly with general education curriculum committees while others simply worked in response to the constraints these requirements posed. Lauren Fitzgerald believes that WPAs should take a stronger interest in their university's general education curricula because the relationships between the broad requirements of regional accreditation and their university's curriculum are based on assumptions, which WPAs have the expertise to

challenge. "It is important to be on guard for such unexamined assumptions," Fitzgerald writes, "in order to steer stakeholders in the right direction" (101). This call for greater involvement and contribution on the part of the WPAs represents an area in which future research can help us understand first the nature of the relationship between general education and the writing program, and second the ways WPAs can specifically intervene, as Fitzgerald suggests. The WPAs in my study participated by Collaborating with other stakeholders and committees, by Showcasing their work to concerned stakeholders, by Aligning their programs with institutional requirements and values, and by Requesting funding for additional or expanded program assessments. These actions beg more questions: Are there other strategies? Do WPAs act more explicitly than this? Where is there room for WPAs to interact more explicitly?

Definitions of Service

The strategies that I have described offer WPAs with a variety of ways to enact the service their programs offer in ways that can focus their attention both inwardly and outwardly. Though I have argued for an understanding of service that *affirms* the expertise of the writing program and the WPA, there is a preponderance of literature that claims service is antithetical to the work WPAs do, and which claims that the term service is overly reductive and damaging to the reputation of the writing program as a location of expertise. This framework of applying strategies within systems needs to be tested, both for the efficacy of these strategies, and for the way this notion of service underlies and shapes the work of these strategies in various institutions. WPA3, for example, explicitly stated that her program was not a service to the institution, primarily because that term holds connotations of a service that is lacking in agency or expertise. WPA3 has used the strategy of Collaboration, however, to redefine what it means for her program to serve. If WPAs are enacting a relationship between the institution and the discipline, then WPA scholarship needs to continue to parse out the nature of this relationship and how composition's history affects the role WPAs see for themselves and their programs in their institutions.

Sustainability

This research emphasizes the actions that enable a WPA to balance the tension of a writing program's many inputs and outputs. This work places the WPA at the locus for balancing, because it locates balance in ongoing action, which must be performed by the WPA.

Phelps defines this negotiation process as "unstable and transitory," primarily because there are too many factors and influences that are being affected by other parts of the system. Drawing attention to *action,* she suggests it is required for this complex, and potentially perilous, merging of incompatible systems, where WPAs must balance the dual modes of administrator and scholar. Phelps also draws attention to the WPA as actor, and claims that the transitory nature of this process is the WPA's constant act of evading a split or fractured identity. Both Phelps and Rose warn that there are dangers as well as possibilities in conflating the position with the person.

Shirley K. Rose writes that despite many narratives that serve to warn new and untenured WPAs about the professional dangers of administering such a historically marginalized program, WPA work is still a siren call for those who want to be a catalyst for change. Rose argues that despite the many challenges associated with directing a writing program, the thriving discipline of Writing Program Administration demonstrates tremendous possibility for those who take on both the identity and the work. In 1995, Christine Hult offered a cursory examination of writing program governance through the lens of common political systems, like monarchy, democracy, dictatorship, oligarchy, and constitutional government. Hult analyzed a range of possibilities and drawbacks to considering each governing system as a form of program organization. Hult used her examination to call for greater attention to the governance of writing programs, especially regarding long-term sustainability. She describes a scenario wherein the WPA takes a typical position balancing a large workload within the various tasks and pressures of program administration. She asks what happens in the "vacuum" that such a WPA leaves behind when he or she vacates the position. "How can any one person possibly fill the void?" she wonders (44).

Hult's article calls into question this multiplicitous WPA subject position, and the efficacy—or ethics—of writing the WPA into a metonymic relationship with the writing program. The "densely tangled knot," Louise Wetherbee Phelps refers to (265), and the "wagon wheel," WPA1 describes himself to be, are metaphors that place the WPA in the center or locus of the work of the writing program. How can the WPA leverage leadership models and management theory to make this process sustainable? How can they build this negotiation into the permanent structure of the program, rather than maintaining it only as principled action on the part of the WPA? These questions beg follow up questions. What implications does a writing program—or the discipline—face when decentering the WPA from WPA work? Would such a

decentering topple the dangerous hierarchy to which Bousquet objects, or would it only institute more of the values of an anti-egalitarian management theory?

This research shows WPAs ways to respond to situations, but it does not address ways to systematize, institute, or concretize responses in the permanent formation of the writing program itself. Louise Wetherbee Phelps refers to the negotiation process as "unstable," "volatile," and "dynamic" (265). What would happen if that process were to be still and permanent, with the goal of creating sustainability?

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