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Writing Program Administration at the Two- Year College: Ghosts in the Machine

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> "*Invisible* is a word that keeps coming up as I read about two-year college faculty."
>
> —Powers-Stubbs and Sommers (28)

Introduction: Making the Invisible Visible

In "Arguments with Which to Combat Elitism and Ignorance about Community Colleges," Doucette and Roueche contend that "[t]he potential of community colleges remains largely untapped, in no small part due to persistent elitism among leaders in the media, business, and government that is fueled by their relative ignorance about these institutions" (1). But with community colleges expanding their roles in higher education, teacher-scholars at two-year colleges publishing and presenting their scholarship more frequently, and the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) offering a more prominent voice in composition-rhetoric, some elitist and ignorant attitudes about two-year colleges might be weakening, at least in our profession. One aspect of the potential of two-year colleges that has been largely untapped, however, is our knowledge of WPA work at community colleges and technical colleges. Like Sommers' reflection about faculty members at these institutions, WPA structures at two-year colleges are largely invisible to the profession as a whole—many of us know little about them.

This void is a significant hindrance to our knowledge of writing program administration. To address this gap in our knowledge, the present study attempts to create an introductory picture of WPA work at two-year colleges by a) providing the voices of two-year college WPAs and b) identifying and acknowledging the types of writing program administration at

two-year colleges. Besides a handful of articles published during the past two decades, there has been little discussion about writing program administration at two-year colleges, institutions where over half all of all undergraduates take first-year writing classes ("Facts" 3). This lack of visibility represents a serious challenge because an understanding of this WPA work can inform and influence the WPA structures at both two-year *and* four-year institutions. Looking at the WPA work at two-year colleges can help us question and critique WPA structures at our own institutions, especially since some two-year college writing programs answer the call for a "post-masculinist" (Miller) or "decentered" WPA (Gunner) while also questioning the efficacy of those models.

Overall though, to examine writing program administration at two-year colleges is to grapple with diversity. At some two-year colleges, department chairs or even deans work as WPAs since the majority of "English" departments at two-year colleges are essentially writing programs, and often times budgetary constraints or institutional cultures hinder the establishment of separate WPAs. But a significant portion of WPA structures enacts a team approach that effectively decenters the WPA role. Two-year colleges have often created collaborative WPA structures out of necessity, thus answering the call for decentering the WPA, but those power structures offer a host of challenges. The paradox is that some two-year colleges have established "postmasculinist" models of WPA work (Miller) while yearning for a traditional WPA to hold it all together and exert power within institutions. So, while some might perceive writing programs at community colleges as chaotic or even existing under "tribal anarchy" (Dickson 142), the collaborative or ecosystem model at some two-year colleges provides flexibility, stability, and respect for differences in pedagogy.

The Machine

The sheer number of sections of first-year writing courses across the country coupled with the fact that approximately half of all of those sections of first-year writing are taken at two-year colleges is a daunting statistic. A first-year writing machine churns along and produces sections upon sections of composition courses, and two-year colleges are significant factors. The highly relevant question for those who work at two-year colleges is how do you create a strong *writing program* from diverse faculty who usually teach writing classes as most of their full loads each semester. With a staff comprised of full-time instructors with usually a four or five section slate of writing courses every semester along with part-time instructors, how do writing courses at a two-year college become *programmatic?* Do two-year

colleges need to have similar programs as four-year colleges? Who should be in charge? Or should responsibility be shared? These are questions that I contended with as an Assistant Chair (see Appendix A) and chair of the composition/curriculum committee at a two-year college at one time. And these are questions that, in part, drove this study.

There are obvious differences between many two-year colleges and four-year institutions that complicate writing program administration. Besides the notable exceptions of writing programs divorced from English departments or separate writing across the curriculum programs, people who teach writing courses at community colleges may not necessarily be housed in an "English" department. Rather, they could be part of a division or a grouping that includes various disciplines related to general education or literacies in academia. In some two-year colleges, it is not uncommon to see the majority of course offerings at the developmental or basic writing levels. As Victoria Holmstein relates about the nature of many community colleges across the nation, "developmental education is usually defined as an essential part of our mission to meet community needs" (432). Instructors at two-year colleges usually teach, according to Helon Raines' study, an average of 4.7 courses per term, with the bulk of those being writing courses ("Is There a Writing Program . . ." 157). In this sense, community college English departments "do not house writing programs as much as they are writing programs, so this has important implications for WPA work in such an institution" (Holmstein 429). In sum, for instructors at community colleges and technical colleges, "[c]omposition is what we do" (432).

Past Research

Past research provides some strong leads about the types of WPA structures at these institutions. Helon Raines has a significant voice on this subject because, of the four major articles written on this topic, she authored one and was the co-author of another. The most comprehensive study that relates to WPAs at two-year colleges is Raines,' in which she sent detailed surveys to 956 regular members of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and garnered 236 responses that cover 47 states with a good distribution among four regions of the country. As she begins her article, she provides her mindset at the beginning of the study: "[E]ven though I began with no hypothesis to prove, I did hope to find a pattern, to see some model of community-college writing programs emerge. None did. In fact, as I interpret the situation, two-year schools are, in many respects, as different from one another as they are alike" (152). She also adds, "[a] clear answer to the question 'Is there a writing program in this college'

remains teasingly elusive" (153). Most germane to this study, however, is the fact that 13% of the schools that responded had a designated "director of writing" and 7% with "a coordinator of writing directing a separate program" (154).

Following up on that large study, Raines co-authored "Two-Year Colleges *Explaining and Claiming Our Majority*" with Elizabeth A. Nist. Although they state that " . . . making generalizations about two-year college writing programs is problematic because each institution has a unique history, mission, philosophy, and administrative structure" (Nist and Raines 61), they do offer some useful generalizations that square with some of this study's findings detailed later. The first one is that in respect to course design and mandating textbooks, in larger departments a heavily scripted syllabus is uncommon because two-year colleges have veteran teachers and "academic freedom is valued highly by teachers who enjoy it and fought for it adamantly by those denied it" (63). In contrast to large graduate programs that often have graduate teaching assistants who may have little experience teaching composition, community colleges can have both full- and part-time instructors who have taught basic writing and first-year writing for multiple years, if not multiple decades.

Second, Nist and Raines sketch some collaborative forms of writing program administration:

> Often a few faculty who have time and interest, or faculty who serve under a rotation system, carry out the duties of the composition "director" after consultation with others at department meetings. Decisions on curriculum planning, class scheduling, and managing of department resources are generally made by committee or department consensus. Sometimes a department chair or coordinator of several disciplines assumes these responsibilities, and occasionally a faculty member may have released—time to coordinate the composition courses or the writing center. (65)

As Nist and Raines relate, the web of administration can get complex, but the focus on collaboration seems to have been created with a democratic aim in mind, or perhaps out of necessity. As Lynn Z. Bloom states well, being a writing program administrator is a "protean job, which inevitably encompasses a myriad of endeavors from the mundane to the magnificent" (xi). The nature of WPA work at two-year colleges, however, complicates Bloom's assertion because the administrative structures for these writing programs may not be just one person ("job") who is doing the mundane and magnificent. These WPA structures could likely be a collection of prac-

titioners and administrators. And these professionals, unfortunately, as Nist and Raines argue, are "unidentified and unacknowledged as WPAs or even as composition specialists" (64).

In a similar vein, Victoria Holmstein in "This Site Under Construction: Negotiating Space for WPA Work in the Community College" argues that in regard to administering writing programs, WPAs have different names, such as "department chairs, assessment coordinators, assistant deans, writing administrators, lead instructors, and more" (430). Reflecting on her own experience as a WPA, she provides her typical duties:

> I am building the English schedule; managing enrollment in English courses; recruiting, hiring, and mentoring adjunct faculty; coordinating assessment activities for English courses; coordinating English course articulation with local high schools; sitting on committees to represent English faculty as deemed necessary, chiefly hiring committees for new full-time faculty; and working as assistant to the division dean. (437)

To WPAs at four-year colleges and universities, these tasks probably look very familiar, so it makes sense that she argues that "[w]e in the community colleges are part of a broader WPA tradition in our discipline. We are also inventors of a new tendril of the larger web as we work to invent ourselves and our WPA roles in community colleges" (438). From this view, two-year college WPAs are in a similar situation to "small-school" WPAs were at one time. In particular, Thomas Amorose's claim that the "erasure" of small-school WPAs is "detrimental to small- and large-institution WPAs alike" (91) rings true for WPAs at two-year colleges.

This point by Amorose has been taken up recently by Jeffrey Klausman in "Mapping the Terrain: The Two-Year College Writing Program Administrator" where Klausman asserts that "the WPA at the two-year college (and perhaps small four-year colleges without a graduate program in English) is not only an essential function but is significantly different from the WPA position at universities and larger colleges" (238). Speaking from his experience as a designated WPA at a community college, he perceives composition programs at two-year colleges aligning themselves with the ideals of "liberation and service" (242) for students, while a WPA works with colleagues to improve instruction and "to establish common goals and then work to achieve them. As 'change agents' we must be colleagues, catalysts, and leaders simultaneously, a difficult balancing act" (244).

Just as Amorose argues for greater visibility of small-school WPAs, the study of WPA structures at two-year colleges is crucial to understanding the diversity of writing program administration, and our knowledge of

two-year college WPA work can help us critique and inform our own WPA structures.

Survey: Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College

In early part of the fall 2006 semester, I devised a survey and crafted an introductory letter about WPA work at two-year colleges that I then sent in mid-September to 107 departments of English, with packets divided evenly among the seven regions of the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA). By early December I had received only a dozen surveys. Faced with a return rate in the teens, I sent a follow-up email at the time and also added eight more schools to my list. After winter break and a month or so with a disappointing response rate, I posted a call on the WPA Listserv and garnered ten responses from professionals at community colleges across the country, some of which progressed into surveys being completed. In the end, I was able to gather 21 survey responses out of 125 total distributed for a 17% response rate. All of the respondents provided consent for using their data and comments, and the 21 surveys came from a diversity of colleges, with all seven TYCA regions represented.

This low response rate was irritating but understandable. As has been discussed by scholars at community colleges for quite a while (Andelora, "The Teacher/Scholar . . . ;" Sommers; Tinberg; and Ziolkowski, for example), some faculty members may not value research as much as faculty at four-year colleges, or they simply may not prioritize research-related activities, especially while teaching under a typical 5/5 load.[1] And as Speigelman and Day point out, a low response rate is not uncommon.[2] Besides those factors that might have affected the response rate for my survey, there was a question that I had to seriously consider before sending out the letters and surveys: If so many community colleges do not have WPAs, to whom do I send surveys?

Prior research did not provide much help in this regard. As Nist and Raines contend, "The absence of WPAs in two-year colleges reflects the overall absence of faculty titles," and "[s]ometimes a department chair or coordinator of several disciplines assumes these responsibilities, and occasionally a faculty member may have released-time to coordinate the composition courses or the writing center" (65). While I found that contention to be true, that point proves unhelpful when devising a research study about WPA work. Regardless, my letter to department chairs enlisted their help in my research, and I presented my preliminary research questions in a cover letter and provided the survey (Appendix B).

Survey Results: Ghosts in the Machine

Although this study is not as comprehensive as Raines' 1987 survey, it is certainly more focused on the role and scope of writing program administration, and the nature of the survey offers WPAs at two-year colleges voices. The ability to do a comprehensive and well-funded survey like Raines' was not a luxury I had at the time since I was doing this research in a compressed time frame and a limited budget. While 21 responses is not a strong sample size, the results provide a thought-provoking look at the different WPA structures and the challenges of WPA work at two-year colleges, structures and challenges that can inform writing program administration at four-year institutions.

To provide a context, here are data about the twenty-one respondents:

Enrollment Numbers:

Range: 3,500–30,000 Average: 13,333

Number of Full-Time Faculty:

Range: 2–98 Average: 21

Number of Part-Time Faculty:

Fall Range: 6–105	Fall Average: 38
Winter/Spring Range: 6–105	Winter/Spring Average: 35
Summer Range: 0–60	Summer Average: 13

Unlike Raines' study in the late 1980s, this survey relies more heavily on larger institutions since her research indicates that "from 66% to 86% of two-year colleges have FTE or headcount under 5,000" (153). Because of a much smaller sample and more results from larger institutions in this study, we see an average institution size of approximately 13,000, with the average number of full-time faculty in departments or divisions at 21. As can be expected, the range of part-time faculty was wide (6–105), which to some would indicate an over-reliance on adjunct faculty, a justifiable criticism at some two-year colleges. But one has to consider that at two-year colleges the number of full-time, tenure-track faculty teaching basic writing, first-year writing, and professional writing courses is quite strong in contrast to numbers of tenure-track faculty members teaching writing at four-year institutions. From a student's or a parent's or perhaps some compositionists' viewpoints, the part-time/adjunct situation is better at some two-year colleges because tenure-track faculty are more likely to teach writing courses

compared to many English departments at four-year colleges and universities that use mostly graduate teaching assistants and other parts of the contingent labor force to staff first-year writing courses. But such a contention radically simplifies the differences between two-year and four-year schools, a simplification that does not square with some of the comments by two-year college WPAs—the use of contingent faculty and the lack of tenure-track lines are serious issues that need to be addressed.

Especially at community and technical colleges where higher administrations have been enacting the business model for some time, the threat against tenure is even more acute because the duty of the tenure-track instructor is to teach—not also produce scholarship. So contingent labor is an easy way to cut costs. As one writing program coordinator at a community college put it in response to the survey, "We probably over rely on adjuncts who we have little control over, compared to graduate students at a university, for instance, or non-tenure track faculty who are hired for a couple of years." Or as another instructor states, "I think the main challenges inherent to any program at a 2-year are lack of adequate budgetary lines for full-time faculty, so that a great percentage of comp classes are taught by part-time faculty, many of whom are only marginally qualified. . . ."

In regard to administrative structures, the location writing instructors call home deeply affects whether a community college has a WPA or not. There is no predictable pattern of where "English" tends to be housed. Of the twenty-one responses, three two-year colleges grouped these disciplines as a department—composition, creative writing, ESL, and literature—which is a pretty traditional grouping. In some cases, there were variations on that grouping with other disciplines like journalism, philosophy, women's studies, reading, or folklore included. In some instances, however, writing courses were part of a larger communication division that included speech communication, drama, art, music, and mass communication. The results show a diversity of institutional organization contingent on the traditions and institutional memory of each college.

These diverse contexts present a distinct challenge when trying to pin down the state, lack of, or *ad hoc* nature of writing program administration. While the administrative structures are diverse, for the sake of codification, I offer five general groups of writing program administration:

- 33% English Dept. Chair, Dean, or "Team Leader" hires, evaluates, mentors FT and PT faculty, develops curricula, etc. (n=7)
- 9.5% Day Chair and Night Chair (n=2)
- 14% Designated WPA (n=3)
- 5% De Facto WPA (n=1)

- 38% have some type of Chair/Dean-Coordinator system and/or Teacher-Administrator/s collaborative effort (n=8)

What the surveys showcase at the outset is that, as in four-year college English departments or departments of language and literature, department chairs can wield a great deal of power, and some are burdened with responsibilities. They work as chairs *and* WPAs. Similar to other community colleges in my study, one chair remarks that the composition committee does a great deal of work about "issues pertaining to writing instruction," but "the department chair generally makes most of the decisions about administering the program." And while such chairs effectively administer the program, some also indicate that they need help in making the right decisions. One respondent adds, "At our particular institution, too much is the responsibility of the chair largely because it involves last-minute decisions. Many of the decisions that I have to make very quickly should be subject to further contemplation by a wider group of people."

In addition to chairs working as WPAs, sometimes deans and associate deans also work as WPAs. One Associate Dean describes his position in this way: "My position is 100% administrative; while I'm tenured and still teach, I am not a member of the collective bargaining group at the college and do not accumulate seniority in the department. I coordinate hiring; manage course offerings; evaluate faculty; represent the department at meetings internally and externally; lead process improvement efforts within and beyond the department; and teach composition." In addition to some deans and traditional chairs acting as *ad hoc* WPAs, one administrator whose official title is "team leader" (instead of chair) sums up how a lot of WPA work gets done at two-year colleges:

> I serve as the WPA—I hire adjuncts and provide training for them; coordinate assessment. I also lead discussions about what we are doing in our 2 semester comp sequence. But I must also say that we are a very collaborative department. We discuss writing and course expectations, etc. all the time in an informal way.

Adding in the fact that two very large community colleges from this study have both day and night chairs within their departments (43% of the structures dominated by chairs), the burden for chairs is heavy, and the percentage of chairs or deans acting as WPAs is substantial—a percentage that demands its own study.

In contrast though, my study found three officially designated WPAs or writing program coordinators along with one "lead faculty member" with

an appropriate amount of released-time (two courses) who works essentially as a WPA. With those four, 19% of the survey represents a designated WPA, which compares to Raines's findings of "13% of 201 responding indicated they have a director of writing, and only 7% have a coordinator of writing directing a separate program" (154). While it is difficult to compare our studies because of the stark differences in sample size, it is surprising that the approximate percentage of WPAs at two-year colleges appears to have remained fairly static over two decades. In comparing Raines's study conducted in 1987 and this one in 2006/2007, I expected some significant increase in that percentage—at least something that cohered with writing program administrators being more vocal in the profession and the rise of composition/rhetoric as its own discipline.

Counter to a WPA represented by one position (centered), however, many two-year colleges offer decentered WPA structures because collaboration is valued and necessary and/or because there is a lack of appropriate released-time or budget for WPA positions. In situations where diverse staffs of part- and full-time instructors teach multiple writing courses every semester, a single person directing writing programs at two-year colleges may not be effective. Instead, counter to two-year colleges that have the luxury of an officially designated WPA, collaboration might offer coherence, sanity, and respect for pedagogical difference. In some cases, collaboration through very influential composition committees and/or lead faculty members in charge of specific course offerings reflect that instructors are quite invested in the writing courses that they teach almost every semester—whether developmental, basic, ESL, composition, or professional writing. Jeff Andelora sums up this predicament well in one of his responses to a "WPAs@Two-Year Colleges" online discussion forum:

> In contrast [to four-year college English departments], two-year college English departments aren't built around literary studies, nor do they have writing programs—they are writing programs. We may teach a lit/hum class or two, but most of us teach mostly writing. So, the way WPAs are defined in four-year colleges (and I recognize this varies greatly) doesn't transfer readily to two-year colleges. We never needed to carve out a new space. (Andelora, "Hi Everyone")

Working collaboratively within the basic writing and first-year writing sequences is exactly what instructors have done at two-year colleges. As can be seen by the last grouping, 38% (n=8) of those responding to my survey indicated very strong collaborative structures in administering their writing courses. In a few cases, a chair or dean is involved, but there is a

diversity of teacher-administrators who observe classrooms, develop curricula, craft learning outcomes, direct assessment activities, lead professional development initiatives, and represent their department or division to the higher administration. At some institutions, they are named "lead faculty" or "coordinators of development writing" or "assistant chairs" or "course coordinators" or "composition coordinators." In one instance that does not factor into the 38% quotient, an institution had a chair, a designated writing program administrator, and course coordinators for all three of the main composition courses—the latter positions holding no released time. Some institutions offer released time for designated WPAs or *de facto* WPAs, but unfortunately many other program coordinators or lead faculty do not have appropriate released-time for their duties on top of their regular teaching loads. As one instructor relates, the serious challenge to offering a true writing *program* rather than atomistic sets of writing courses is "support from the administration that some kind of released time (or in my case overload time as I haven't been allowed to use it as released time) is needed." Many lead faculty or coordinators provide influential "macrolevel teaching" (Gebhardt 35), but they receive little if any compensation or reduction of workload in return.

Moreover, this study not only connects to but also offers a sobering critique of calls to "decenter" the WPA (Gunner), to have WPA work utilize "coordinators" (Olson and Moxley), or to create a "postmasculinist" WPA (Miller). In many respects, the use of multiple coordinators, *de facto* WPAs, and influential composition committees provides a positive and productive sharing of responsibility for writing programs as many have argued (Phelps, Gunner, Miller, and Olson and Moxley). In writing programs at community colleges, sharing responsibility and respecting instructor autonomy is key. In programs that, in Holmstein's words, attract full- and part-time faculty members who "tend to be more experienced than typical twenty-something graduate teaching assistants" and "tend to be more experienced than grad assistant teachers most freshmen will meet in the research universities" (433), the fact that only three surveys (14%) indicated that part-time faculty members have to follow a scripted syllabus for specific courses signifies that most campuses offer the majority of faculty members (86%; n=18) professorial autonomy in conducting their classes and crafting their assignments and syllabi as long as they correspond to the intellectual integrity of the courses that they are assigned to teach. One instructor's comment is emblematic of most of the responses received in that "[a]djuncts have nearly as much freedom in their courses as full-time faculty have. We do have model syllabi available for consultation."

In addition to honoring faculty experience and autonomy, the use of a systems-like approach to WPA work—a collection (an ecosystem) of positions, leaders, and collaborative events—corresponds to research about leadership since as Phelps relates, "leadership is understood today as an interdependent function of a dynamic system" (5). For example, one two-year college lacked a designated WPA, but the responsibility of separate courses was divided among various faculty members who acted as "lead faculty" or "coordinators." In other cases, composition committees did the bulk of the work in regard to providing model syllabi, observing instructors' classes, running assessment measures, and sponsoring professional development activities. And some assistant chairs worked as *de facto* WPAs while chairs, course coordinators, and other instructors worked together within the writing program. Positional authority can only take one so far. So this collaborative WPA work connects to Hildy Miller's idea of merging both feminist and masculinist tactics because "[l]eadership is therefore characterized as relational. Personal authority may appear as being receptive, willing to promote discussion, listen to divergent views, and look for common interests" (82) while "masculinist assumptions about power, leadership, and administrative structure permeate the academy, affecting feminist approaches at every turn. Merging the two requires a WPA to take a bi-epistemological stance" (87). This interplay is often evident in conversations in the hallways, in professional development workshops, and in formal evaluation reports after observing classrooms, to name a few. Such collaborative efforts among committees, assistant chairs, coordinators, and lead faculty members espouse this model in *praxis*.

The distinct difference between this postmasculinist approach at four-year and two-year colleges, however, is institutional history. The model that many four-year colleges are working from is a hierarchical one that was created when literature displaced rhetoric as the "valued" discipline as colleges mimicked Harvard's "English A" model (see Connors). Later in the twentieth century, colleges and universities created WPA positions to manage the "service course" of college composition and perhaps basic writing. So there was an established *center,* a position of authority. What many two-year colleges are grappling with, in contrast, is the lack of a center, a lack of institutional authority on writing matters. While the model that Gunner describes in "Decentering the WPA" is laudable and one that could be emulated at other campuses, the model progresses from a previous structure that had a WPA, a person who (one can assume) is given proper released time for his or her duties.

In the case of some two-year college writing programs, instructors are creating postmasculinist models out of necessity. These professionals have

created systems of collaboration—composition committees, course coordinators, mentoring programs, composition chairs, professional development workshops, lead faculty—to construct a community of teachers with minimal support from higher administration. Decentering the WPA is perhaps a democratic model for many four-year colleges, but in many two-year college programs those citizens do not have a right to vote, in a sense. They have created collaborative/democratic models that hold a great deal of responsibility but sometimes very little power.

So from the perspective of some instructors at two-year colleges, a *centered* WPA is necessary because they have never really had a center of power on writing matters. For example, Jeff Klausman argues that a WPA is needed at two-year colleges because there is a significant "difference between a writing 'program' and writing 'courses.' My contention is that we have the latter and a WPA is needed to create the former. The problem, of course is how" ("I appreciate . . ."). And as one respondent to my survey puts it, "From my perspective [Associate Dean], departments need a WPC or Writing Program Coordinator. Such support is essential for a successful ecology of writing. My question is whether this person should be tenured or administrative." In this vein, many of the respondents to my survey indicate that some manner of designated WPA is desired since such a person could provide a stronger direction for their writing courses (and a base of power institutionally) and create a program that is more in line with current best practices in composition-rhetoric, assessment, and professional development.

But respondents who expressed interest in a designated WPA wanted a colleague and fellow practitioner who can provide direction for a writing *program* while honoring, respecting, and productively critiquing diverse approaches to teaching writing. There is still a desire that all instructors should be able to provide input about the program since everyone teaches various writing courses, so some sharing of responsibilities could still enact a postmasculinist model. So at some institutions decentered WPA work might work well, but in other programs, colleagues desire a more traditional WPA power structure. Regardless, many writing programs at two-year colleges already exemplify methods of decentered writing program administration through these methods: workshops where instructors share ideas and materials; lack of heavily scripted courses; composition committees that have decision-making power on textbooks and curricula; shared responsibilities for all writing courses through course coordinators who get rewarded through this "service" activity in their promotion portfolios; various systems of both evaluative and non-evaluative classroom observation; and mentor groups such as teaching partners, teaching squares, and theory-

practice discussion groups. However, fighting for better working conditions and more support for instructors is paramount for developing communities of teacher-scholars and serving the greater good of students. The most important question is how to create a centered or a dynamic, decentered system of writing program administration (multiple positions) that has significant power within an institution and can also work effectively and productively with diverse instructors. So the WPA structure necessary at each two-year college depends on the writing program's population and location along with the niche desired for the WPA.

Implications for the Profession

Germane to two-year college writing programs, David Schwalm asserts that

> [t]here is no agreed-upon concept of 'writing program.' There is no reason why there must be agreement, and, again, no particular model is necessarily better than another, but you ought to know the scope of your program and responsibilities and be aware of opportunities to do more, or less, or differently. (11)

In this light, it will benefit teacher-scholars to delve into more detailed research about WPAs at two-year colleges since we all can learn from alternate models of WPA work. Moreover, a well-funded study underwritten by both the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) is an opportunity to consider. Research developing from such collaboration could present extensive, qualitative, and ethnographic studies of two-year college WPAs for the benefit of professionals at both two-year and four-year colleges—detailed studies with the goal of "rich description of people, places, and conversations" (Bogdan and Biklen 2). Collaborative research about two-year college WPA work could show us a more detailed picture of the diversity of writing program administration while also letting us see the effectiveness, weaknesses, and strengths of various WPA models. Even if TYCA and WPA do not choose to collaborate on this endeavor, co-authored, cross-institutional scholarship is sorely needed.

Because over half of the first-year writing courses that students take across the country are at two-year colleges, this figure begs our profession to undertake more detailed studies of writing program administration at two-year colleges. Creating partnerships between two-year and four-year college professionals as I and others argue (Nist and Raines; Tinberg) would result in more significant data and more detailed models of designated or unnamed WPAs—those ghosts in the machine of first-year writing sequences, some of whom are enacting a postmasculinist approach with-

out a center. Extensive scholarship about writing program administration at two-year colleges could help diverse institutions prosper while discovering the diversity of WPAs within the machine.

Notes

1. Tinberg in *Border Talk* and Helon Raines in "Reseeing the Past . . ." both discuss this challenge at length. Raines, in particular, avers that faculty at two-year colleges sometimes have a mindset that isolates themselves, so that they " . . . are often hostile to those among us who create the programs, who do research, and who speak out to the larger community" (104).

2. Kami Day's research survey about plagiarism is revealing since from 1000 surveys distributed, only 100 surveys were returned—a paltry 10% response rate (140).

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Appendix A

V. Assistant Chair/Adjunct Faculty

1. This person is chosen by the Department Chair from those applying. The Staff Activities Coordination Committee is required to review the applications and to advise the department chair about the appointment. Deadline for application is the first working day of March of the academic year preceding the one in which the position will be filled. The person appointed to the position will be announced no later than the last day of class the following May.

2. As an advisor to the Department Chair, this person has the following responsibilities:

    a. keeps accurate and up-to-date records of all departmental action pertaining to adjunct faculty, including addresses, phone numbers, memos, class schedules, and office and key assignments;

    b. helps select and maintain a supply of desk copies of textbooks for adjunct faculty use;

    c. conducts in-person interviews with each applicant;

    d. evaluates each applicant using a form acceptable to the Department and the Chair;

    e. maintains an up-to-date file of acceptable applicants;

    f. conducts orientation sessions for newcomers as well as regular staff development meetings for everyone;

    g. administers classrooms evaluations according to prescribed District and Departmental policy;

    h. maintains a rotating schedule of class visitations, writes impressions of the visit on an approved classroom visitation form, meets with the instructor to discuss the visit, and has the instructor sign the form;

    i. gives the student evaluation summaries and the classroom visitation form for each faculty member to the Department Chair for review;

j. assists the Department Chair with the scheduling of and communication with the adjunct staff;

k. makes office and key assignments;

l. is a liaison for the adjunct staff to the Department Chair, the College, and the District;

m. and provides informal as well as formal advice, organizes social functions, encourages professional growth and high standards of teaching, is an advocate for the special concerns of adjunct faculty, and does as much as possible to maintain a positive atmosphere among adjunct faculty.

3. Evaluation: The Assistant Chair/Adjunct Faculty will be evaluated by the Department Chair in a format developed by the Chair and the Department at the end of the first and third semesters of the Assistant's tenure.

4. The term is six consecutive regular semesters. Compensation is six hours released time per semester.

Appendix B: Survey

Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College

If you want to simply email your replies, please send them to ttaylor@stlcc.edu with the email subject line titled "TYC WPA." Here is the mailing address for the surveys: Tim N. Taylor; English Department; St. Louis Community College at Meramec; 11333 Big Bend Blvd.; St. Louis, MO 63122–5799.

1) What is name of your institution?
2) What is the approximate enrollment of your college?
3) What academic disciplines comprise your "English" department?
4) How many full-time faculty members are in your English department?
5) Approximately how many part-time (adjunct) faculty members does your English department typically employ

   during the fall term?
   during the spring term?
   during the summer term?
6) Please describe the administrative structure of your English Department. What are the responsibilities of the Chair? Does the

department have Assistant Chairs and what are their duties? How much "released-time" (reduction in courseload) is provided for these administrative duties?

7) If you have a single person who you consider a writing program administrator at your community college, what is that person's title? What is his/her responsibilities? Or is administrating the program a collaborative effort? Explain.
8) Who is responsible for hiring, observing, and evaluating part-time faculty members in your department? How is this observation and evaluation done?
9) Who is responsible for scheduling/coordinating classes for full-time faculty members?
10) Who is responsible for scheduling/coordinating classes for part-time faculty members?
11) Please provide the required college credit (transferable) composition courses that are part of your college's General Education curriculum. Also offer a short description of the course (such as general expository writing, argument/researched-based composition, literature-based comp, etc.)
12) Who makes decisions about textbooks for composition courses? Is it done by a committee, or does a single person make that decision? What is the process for making these decisions?
13) For part-time faculty members, are sample/model syllabi and assignments provided for the courses? Would you consider the courses they teach "heavily scripted" or do adjuncts have a degree of autonomy with how they teach their courses? If needed, explain how adjuncts are supported before and during they teach their courses?
14) Do full-time faculty members follow the same sample/model syllabi and assignments provided for adjuncts? Do they use the same default textbooks for composition courses?
15) How does your college place students into specific composition courses? Does your institution use an assessment method based on a writing sample of some sort, or are students placed by standardized test scores or other indirect testing mechanisms?
16) What type of program-wide assessment is being used for your institution's college composition courses?
17) What professional development activities are offered within your department to support the teaching of writing? Are there any initiatives devoted specifically for part-time faculty members?

18) Please provide any thoughts or observations you have about Writing Program Administration at the Two-Year College. Are there any distinct challenges writing programs have at two-year colleges? Do you have any suggestions on how to better support full-time faculty and part-time faculty members at community colleges?