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Abstract

Lightning in a Bottle: A History of the Syracuse Writing Program, 1986-1996, is directed by Louise Wetherbee Phelps and Collin Gifford Brooke. This historical study of the Syracuse Writing Program's administrative structures for contingent faculty focuses on professional development and evaluation systems for the Writing Program's part-time writing instructors. The study draws on archival methodology, using saved administrative documents from the Syracuse Writing Program and retrospective interviews of past members of the Syracuse University Writing Program. This history is influenced and contextualized through scholarship on contingent faculty labor, writing program administration, and the establishment of stand-alone writing programs. The goal of this history of the Syracuse Writing Program is to study the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation systems on writing teachers' development and the growth of a teaching culture marked by shared values about writing and pedagogy within a writing program. This history argues that ongoing reflective professional development and evaluation systems are necessary for all teachers of writing, both new and experienced practitioners.

**LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE:
A HISTORY OF THE SYRACUSE WRITING PROGRAM, 1986-1996**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of Philosophy in
Composition and Cultural Rhetoric in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

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Acknowledgments

I've learned through my study of the Syracuse Writing Program that the creation and administration of a writing program is never a solitary task. Individuals do impact the identities of writing programs, but the programs themselves are artifacts of collective, collaborative action.

I've also learned through my research process that writing a dissertation is never an individual endeavor. Although only my name is listed as author, a whole host of good people have shaped and influenced this work.

I first need to thank my co-director, Louise Wetherbee Phelps. Throughout my doctoral work, Louise has been most generous with her time, her feedback, and her insights on writing, leadership, and administration. This history could not have been written without her, as the majority of the documents I used in my research came from her personal archives. I feel as though the way I think about writing program administration has been directly affected by her writings, her ideas, and her actions as a teacher and an administrator.

I'd also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee. Collin Brooke graciously stepped in to serve as my co-director, and I benefited immensely from his depth of knowledge of all things composition and rhetoric and beyond. Collin instinctively knew which book to pull off his shelf, sending me on new paths that strengthened my analyses. Eileen Schell's extensive theoretical and practical knowledge of contingent faculty labor issues and writing program administration, as well as her own perspective as a member and current director of the Syracuse Writing Program, helped me contextualize my history of the Program and develop my claims. Becky Howard's practical advice and good humor were always helpful in keeping the dissertation process in perspective, and her nuanced critique of early drafts made this

history more complex, more multi-voiced, and more genuine. I am also grateful that Shirley K Rose kindly agreed to join my committee from afar. Finally, I must thank Larry Lewandowski, a family friend, for serving as my oral exam chair.

My journey at Syracuse University has been shared with my CCR cohort – Tanya Rodrigue, Tricia Serviss, Laurie Gries, and Zosha Stuckey. We had fun together from the day we all arrived on campus for visiting days, and I consider all of them to be lifelong friends. I also am grateful for my larger CCR family, especially Derek Mueller, Tamika Carey, T J Geiger, and Candace Epps-Robertson. I feel privileged to belong to such a motivated, diverse, and dedicated bunch of scholars and teachers.

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My parents, Garry and Louise Panning, encouraged me and my siblings – Maggie, James, and Katie – to pursue our education. Their belief in the power and value of education is

something I share, and I deeply appreciate the love and the support they've given me over the years.

I'm also grateful for the people who helped me, a mother of four little kids, do my work as a doctoral student. My father-in-law, John Davies, made countless four-mile trips down East Genesee Street to drop me off or pick me up from campus, and he made sure to ask me how my day went every time. He also spent many mornings and afternoons corralling kids while I was teaching or in class. My sisters, Maggie Pearce and Katie Panning, and my brothers- and sisters-in-law, Sarah Hasegawa, Bob Hasegawa, Beth Davies, and Owen Davies, also took on babysitting duties over the past six years.

My children – Stewart “Mac,” Gilbert, Adaline, and John Henry – have been a source of constant wonder and joy. Their daily triumphs and disappointments keep my academic work in perspective. I'm glad my doctoral work has been punctuated by hide-and-go-seek in the secret hiding place and Mike Mulligan's steam shovel.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my husband, John. These six years of ours have been filled with all of it – birth and death, injury and recovery. I admire his strength and resolve. I'm also deeply appreciative of his genuine interest in my work; he shares my passion for education, my interest in history, and my love of words. John has taken on above-and-beyond childcare responsibilities willingly, even driving the kids to Boston for a weekend by himself, allowing me the time I need to write. I tell him all the time that I don't do this work for me; I do it for us. I mean that, and I think he believes me. I can't think of anyone else I'd rather live this life with. Thank you.

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Lightning in a Bottle:

A History of the Syracuse Writing Program, 1986-1996

Chapter One: Introduction

Early in the morning on August 25, 2011, I was walking through the quad of Syracuse University, trying to find the Heroy Auditorium. It was a Thursday morning, and fall semester classes were beginning on Monday. New first-year students walked around with their families, carrying bags of textbooks and sweatshirts from the bookstore; upperclassmen in orange t-shirts helped the new students move in, hoisting laundry baskets on their shoulders; minivans packed to the gills with fans, blankets, and laptops were parked all askew in the roads surrounding campus.

The feeling of new-year excitement, the excitement that smells like sharpened pencils and propels back-to-school sales, spilled into the Heroy Auditorium, which I finally found on the first floor of the Geology Laboratory, tucked behind Hendricks Chapel up on the hill. It was the Syracuse University Writing Program's annual Fall Teaching Conference, and this year, the Writing Program was celebrating its 25th anniversary of being a stand-alone, independent writing program at Syracuse University.

Each year, at the Fall Teaching Conference, the members of the Writing Program – usually over a hundred faculty, staff, instructors, and graduate teaching assistants – gather together to reconnect with one another, learn the names of the new instructors, faculty, and

teaching assistants joining the Program that year, celebrate the publications and professional accomplishments of the Writing Program members, and listen to the current director spell out the Writing Program's initiatives for that academic year. The Fall Teaching Conference is a time-honored tradition; the Syracuse Writing Program held its first Fall Teaching Conference in August 1988. The panels and presentations presented at each Fall Teaching Conference emphasize the current thoughts and concerns of the Writing Program's administrators and teachers, ranging from describing the objectives of the new required writing courses at Syracuse, to explaining a new method for teacher evaluation, to applauding the launch of the Program's composition and cultural rhetoric PhD program and undergraduate major in writing and rhetoric.

This year, the tone in the auditorium was decidedly festive. The Writing Program staff printed nametags for each member labeled with the year that person joined the Writing Program: in scanning through the room, you could cluster together cohorts, those who joined in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and beyond. Eileen E. Schell, the current director of the Writing Program, herself wearing a 1996 nametag, stood in front of the room and delivered the keynote address, "The Writing Program 1986-2011: A Quarter Century." She named the program's administrative and curricular achievements over the past twenty-five years: an established, professional group of writing teachers, nationally-recognized research faculty, an innovative undergraduate required writing curriculum, a university-wide writing center, 67 declared undergraduate majors, 25 declared undergraduate minors, and a PhD program that has been graduating scholars and teachers in composition and rhetoric since 1997. She also identified the Writing Program's not-yet-realized objectives: a writing-across-the-curriculum program at the university, institutional designation as a department instead of a program, and full-time instructorships for its professional writing instructors.

Schell explained the program for this year's Fall Teaching Conference, which featured panels discussing the Writing Program's past and future initiatives. She warned those present not to steep too long in the memories of the first years of the Writing Program, which were marked by high levels of excitement and engagement in the newly independent writing program.

"Nostalgia is overrated," she reminded everyone: "We need to be suspicious of our tendency to see the past as better or worse than it was, the future as rosier or bleaker than it will be, and the present moment as the most progressive or enlightened" (Schell "The Writing Program").

Instead of crafting "master narratives" that follow the conventional "rise and fall narrative arcs" of writing programs, story lines hashed and re-hashed in the scholarship on independent writing programs, she called on the Writing Program to ask and keep in mind two questions: What does it mean to be a part of the Writing Program? What does a writing program look like from different locations and moments? (Schell "The Writing Program").

What was obvious that morning is that the Writing Program does look differently to different people who are standing in different places. The conversations and presentations in the auditorium that day were colored by what roles people played in the Program and where people stood in their professional careers, from veteran instructors who doled out anecdotes and advice to new faculty members calling for fresh curricular visions and research directions. What the Writing Program was and is to each person there was distinctly different, the problem and challenge of individual perspective, first articulated by Renaissance philosopher and painter Leon Battista Alberti and taken up by countless philosophers, rhetoricians, and historians since. Institutions like the Writing Program don't exist on objective planes: they are re-imagined and re-experienced, invented and re-invented, by each person who participates in them. Each person

at the Fall Teaching Conference, listening to the keynote address and the panels, had their own understanding of the Writing Program's successes, failures, and importance.

As I write, analyze, and reflect on the history of the Syracuse University Writing Program, I try to keep in mind the atmosphere of the Fall Teaching Conference – one distinguished by excitement, contradiction, energy, talk, and listening – because I believe the feelings in the air that morning lend an important dose of affect to what could be construed as a distanced historical account. The stories, understandings, and achievements discussed and explained in this study are partial in perspective, but I hope they begin to paint a multi-dimensional portrait of a dynamic and important independent writing program in the discipline.

* * *

Overview and Exigency

This research study describes the professional development and evaluation structures developed for the Syracuse University Writing Program's part-time writing instructors during the first ten years of the program, from 1986-1996. It constructs this history through many layers, relying on archived administrative documents (memos, annual reports, letters, and in-house publications) and retrospective interviews with twelve people who worked in the Writing Program at some point between 1986 and 1996.

The questions driving this study are questions that interest writing program administrators and historians of rhetoric and composition: How are teachers of writing best prepared and supported for the work they do? How do independent writing programs (those writing programs that operate as stand-alone academic units, separate from traditional English departments) manage and support their part-time, contingent faculty? How are professional

development and teacher evaluation structures experienced and understood by various members within a writing program? What are the long-term effects of professional development on both contingent faculty and the writing programs they are (or were) part of? How can those effects be measured and communicated within and outside writing programs?

This research study is focused on the structures in the Syracuse University Writing Program that were developed in order to support the preparation and growth of the program's non-tenure-track, part-time writing instructors. The Syracuse University Writing Program is by no means alone in its reliance on non-tenure-track instructors to teach the dozens of sections of required undergraduate writing courses the Program is obligated to offer at the university. The rise in the number of contingent faculty at U.S. colleges and universities has been well-documented by scholars in sociology, higher education, and composition and rhetoric, especially since the 1980s. Writing program administrators often have no other choice than to turn to large numbers of contingent faculty in order to staff sections of required writing courses, since, in economic terms, contingent faculty are far less expensive and much more disposable than full-time, tenure-track faculty members. Some institutions, in order to solve the ethical labor problem of turning to low-paid contingent faculty with little to no job security to teach college writing courses, have turned to creating full-time instructorships or teaching-intensive faculty appointments, creating a multi-tiered faculty structure at several American universities and colleges. Such appointments, however, contradict faculty labor standards set by the American Association of University Professors. At other institutions, contingent faculty has unionized in order to raise their salaries and improve their contracts.

Independent writing programs are interesting places to study the contingent faculty issue because, in comparison to most other academic departments, writing programs contain a larger

percentage of contingent faculty. At some stand-alone writing programs – such as the Thompson Writing Program at Duke University and the University Writing Program at the University of Denver – only one or two full-time faculty or administrators oversee a large number of fellows, lecturers, or instructors who teach the vast majority of the required writing courses. In addition, many independent writing programs are horizontal in nature: they do not include many upper-division course offerings, undergraduate majors or minors, or graduate programs, which require more full-time, tenure-track faculty participation and oversight.

It is difficult to pigeon-hole writing programs into particular categories – stand-alone or not, vertical or horizontal – because the institutional structures and constraints that shape each writing program are unique to each institution and sometimes can only be felt or detected by those who work there. Even still, the contingent faculty labor problem is one that pervades and troubles many writing programs in the United States, and is an important one for current and future writing program administrators to understand (CCCC Committee on Part-time/Adjunct Issues 344-347).

Writing program administrators who lead writing programs that employ contingent faculty are faced with the unenviable challenge of finding creative ways to support these faculty members in their development as teachers and professionals even when there is no obvious solution for the contingent labor problem at their own specific institution. It is much like the job of factory manager, looking at the overwhelming crisis of global warming, who tries to figure out small-scale solutions that will reduce the carbon emissions at his own factory. The work of a leader is to find innovative solutions, to do good work at a particular place at a specific time, even if it doesn't seem to fix the macroscopic problem.

At the Syracuse University Writing Program, the full-time faculty administrators worked since the Writing Program's inception in 1986 to find creative, inventive ways to support their part-time writing instructors' growth as teachers and professionals. This study looks in-depth at two of these structures: the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. Together, these two structures invested the part-time writing instructors in the program with the authority to help construct the Writing Program's curriculum for its university required writing courses and to participate in a peer evaluation system. Through these structures and other opportunities developed in the Writing Program since 1986, the part-time writing instructors together became a strong and deeply knowledgeable teaching force, one that asserted its professionalism and, through the help and guidance of the Program's faculty administrators, was able to secure multi-year contracts and increased salaries and benefits.

This study of the professional development and evaluation structures for the Syracuse University Writing Program's part-time writing instructors does not try to outline a particular model for approaching the contingent faculty problem at other institutions. Writing program administrators must fine-tune structures and systems to fit the needs of their college or university and the demographics of their faculty. What this research study hopes to do is to describe in depth how these structures were conceived, how they developed and evolved, how they worked, and how they were experienced and understood by various members within the program over a ten-year time period. This longitudinal, descriptive study is unique because it shows the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation initiatives for part-time faculty: both how they affected the culture and growth of the Syracuse University Writing Program and how they influenced the careers of those who participated in these structures and initiatives. This long-range study of the Syracuse University Writing Program shows the generative power of

professional development and evaluation that is built into the engine of program administration: professional development and evaluation structures for contingent faculty in a writing program should be regarded not as add-ons, placed on top of an already-determined curriculum and administration. Rather, these professional development and evaluation systems can be crucial sites of dynamic curricular and theoretical invention in a program's administrative structure.

Methodology

This study draws on two complementary methodologies: historical archive work and qualitative interview and oral history methodology.

Histories in composition and rhetoric, those histories written about rhetorical education and practices both within academic institutions and also outside of them, often rely on archival research, a well-theorized methodology in the field. In his 1992 essay, "Dreams and Play," composition historian Robert J. Connors discusses the potential richness archives lend historians and the difficulty in assembling sense out of them through our own biased terministic screens. The work of historians in an archive, Connors notes, is "a kind of directed ramble, something like an August mushroom hunt" (23). The archival historian must always simultaneously work on two levels: engaging in the coincidental play of finding unknown and unexpected data and also placing the newly uncovered information in conversation with a larger context. This attention to "serendipity in the archives" is discussed in the 2010 collection *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. David Gold, who relied on archival methodology in his study, *Rhetoric at the Margins: Revising the History of Writing in Instruction in American Colleges, 1873-1947*, maintains in his interview included in that 2010

Working in the Archives collection, “On Keeping a Beginner’s Mind,” the importance of the researcher being both led by her own research questions but open to what surprising and unexpected things the archive might tell (43). Thus, unlike other more scripted methodologies used in composition and rhetoric, archival work requires a researcher to continually construct and de-construct meaning over a long period of time, listening as much as analyzing.

Archival methodology in the field has led to nuanced understandings of a wide range of rhetorical practices, including the nature of rhetorical educational institutions and curricula in the 19th and 20th centuries (Enoch, Gold, Marshall, Masters, Mirtz, Ritter, Varnum) and non-academic rhetorical practices of women and African-Americans (Glenn, Johnson, Royster and Williams.)

Historical archival methodology has also been used to shed light on issues relating to writing program administration, most notably through Barbara L’Eplattenier and Lisa S. Mastrangelo’s 2004 collection, *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration: Individuals, Community and the Formation of a Discipline*. What distinguishes L’Eplattenier and Mastrangelo’s collection, as well as other historical archival studies of writing program administration (Rose and Weiser, McBeth, Varnum), from other archival histories in composition and rhetoric is their use of administrative documents – memos, reports, letters, contracts, staff directories, budget spreadsheets – to tell a history of the discipline. Unlike curricular documents, which showcase the teaching and instruction in a particular classroom, these administrative documents show the archival historian how the program functioned on a larger managerial level. These documents are often not narrative in nature, but rather the fossilized remnants of lived discussions, debates, and negotiations that in turn affected how classrooms were constructed and staffed and how curriculum was imagined.

For this historical study, I used administrative and curricular documents written by and about the Syracuse University Writing Program to write the history of the professional development and evaluation structures created for part-time writing instructors in the program. The vast majority of the documents – hundreds of reports, letters, memos, meeting minutes, agendas, programs, newsletters, and teaching portfolios – were given to me by the Syracuse University Writing Program’s first director, Louise Wetherbee Phelps. Some of the major planning documents authored by members of the Writing Program were also saved by the program itself, and some of them were digitized and are available online on the Syracuse Writing Program’s public website.

The documents Phelps loaned to me were from her own personal archive, saved both in her office at Syracuse University and at her home, filed in filing cabinets and bank boxes. I read, scanned, and labeled each individual document into a working digital archive for my project, organizing the documents chronologically. When I began my research, I did not know what I would find. I decided to write a history of the Syracuse Writing Program because I knew the program was a well-known program in the field, as it is cited in disciplinary literature and known for its unique position as an independent writing program with both a PhD program and an undergraduate major in writing and rhetoric. Other than that general direction, though, I had no driving research questions. I wanted to be open to “accidental discoveries” within the archives as Peter Mortensen describes in his interview in the *Working in the Archives* 2010 collection, “I Had a Hunch,” listening to the documents tell a story and taking my lead from them (45). I wasn’t working blind, though: as a graduate student and teacher in the Syracuse Writing Program, I had a great amount of contextual information about the people and places referred to in the documents, which helped me quickly read and sort them into categories.

As I read, scanned, and sorted the documents, I was most impressed by the early notes, newsletters, and reports, all deeply entrenched in the exciting rhetoric of change, discovery, and revolution. The Writing Program was new – a new director, a new curriculum, a new institutional place at the university. I narrowed my focus on these early years, and through my investigation, I realized what made the Writing Program so prolific then was the consistent, dedicated work and inquiry done by the part-time writing instructors. They were the key: their creativity shaped the curriculum and pushed the Writing Program to branch out and explore technology, service-learning, and partnerships with other academic departments and units on campus. The part-time writing instructors' activity in the first ten years of the Writing Program centered largely on the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. I chose to focus my research on these two structures, the most consistent and important structures in the Program dedicated to the instructors' professional development and evaluation. After narrowing the scope of the archive I created, I revisited the documents, this time asking my driving research questions: How are teachers of writing best prepared and supported for the work they do? How do independent writing programs (those writing programs that operate as stand-alone academic units, separate from traditional English departments) manage and support their part-time, contingent faculty? How are professional development and teacher evaluation structures experienced and understood by various members within a writing program? What are the long-term effects of professional development on both contingent faculty and the writing programs they are (or were) part of? How can those effects be measured and communicated within and outside writing programs?

I realized, while reading through the documents I was organizing, that their perspective was limited: they were primarily from Phelps' personal collection, and so represented what she

thought was important to save from her vantage point as the Syracuse University Writing Program's first director and as a scholar in composition and rhetoric. Her collection was extensive, and not all of the documents were authored or addressed to her, but there were gaps. Obviously, not every scrap of writing written by every person in the program could be saved, and, on top of that, there were probably countless ideas or impressions that were thought or discussed by members of the Writing Program that were never written down, lost to future researchers.

I had the advantage of conversing with Phelps throughout my project, getting her perspective about events I read about in the archives. However, in order to complicate my understanding of the Syracuse Writing Program's early history, I decided to interview twelve members of the Writing Program who worked in the program during its first ten years, from 1986 to 1996. The people I interviewed served as faculty, administrative staff, instructors, and teaching assistants in the Program, and though some still work in the Writing Program, others have moved on to other institutions and careers. I recorded the interviews, which lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and half, and then transcribed the recordings. The interviews were largely open-ended and retrospective in nature. I prompted the interviewees by asking them what they remembered about the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. From there, the people I interviewed spoke at length about their personal experiences in the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee and also more broadly about what it meant to them to be part of the Syracuse University Writing Program. They told many anecdotes and stories, and my archival research gave me a rough framework through which to map their experiences.

Together, the archival research and interviews provide a multi-dimensional history of the professional development and evaluation structures for part-time writing instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986-1996. My study here tries to represent the layered voices and stories I discovered in the archives and in my interviews, using them to make an overarching argument about writing program administration design and the long-term efficacy of professional development for contingent faculty.

Writing at Syracuse University before 1986

Institutional histories are complicated, affected by budgets, physical spaces, intellectual preferences and loyalties, individual personalities, and relationships. Although histories, which are dynamic negotiations between past records and present perspectives, are neither objective nor complete, they are necessary in order to understand why and how structures and practices were proposed, developed, and implemented. For this reason, this section will briefly explain the history of Syracuse University's writing instruction – both its curricular content and its administrative and teaching structure – before the Syracuse Writing Program was founded in 1986. This history draws on archived administrative documents, including memos and internal and external evaluation reports.

Before the Syracuse Writing Program was founded in 1986, the Syracuse University English Department, housed in the Hall of Languages, administered and controlled the Freshman English program, the university-wide writing instruction at Syracuse University. The Freshman English program (ENG 101 and 102) comprised of six-week module mini-courses which enrolled nearly 3000 first-year students every semester. Students first took a six-week module on

the academic essay, taught exclusively as the formulaic Baker model. Once students successfully demonstrated their competence with the Baker essay, they progressed to literary analysis instruction in fiction and poetry. Students who failed to pass the first six-week module were assigned to part-time instructors who worked with them one-on-one as tutors (McQuade and Slevin 4-6).

Randall Brune, a full-time faculty member in the English Department and a Coleridge scholar, directed the Freshman English program, and had supervised the program since the early 1970s. The Freshman English program was not physically located in the same hall as the rest of the English Department; instead, the teaching assistants, part-time instructors, and Brune were housed in the adjacent building, HB Crouse Hall, where they were crammed into small basement offices. This physical separation from the English Department full-time faculty led to an “out of sight, out of mind” attitude toward the Freshman English program: the vast majority of the other English Department faculty had no interest in the Freshman English program, and only a few full-time faculty members taught the occasional Freshman English course. The Freshman English sequence was taught by English graduate teaching assistants and part-time instructors; in the fall of 1983, the 168 sections of ENG 101 were taught by 39 teaching assistants and 40 part-time instructors and 12 tutors with part-time instructor appointments provided 330 hours of tutoring each week (Brune 1). In the early 1980s, the English Department hired Carol Lipson and Margaret Himley, two assistant professors with expertise and interest in writing and literacy. Lipson and Himley taught upper-division writing and technical communication courses, but these courses were considered intellectually and administratively separate from the Freshman English enterprise. Though the Freshman English program was administratively housed and funded in the English Department, it functioned as its own separate entity, with little to know

intellectual or practical exchange with the rest of the English Department (McQuade and Slevin 8-9).

In 1984, the Syracuse University Faculty Senate, spurred by complaints of “problems of literacy and numeracy in the present student body,” commissioned a study and evaluation of both the writing and mathematics instruction at Syracuse University (Jones 1). Robert Gates, a professor in the English Department, chaired the Ad Hoc Writing Evaluation Committee. The committee organized an external evaluation of the Freshman English program by the Council of Writing Program Administrators and spent nearly a year collecting data on the program and conducting surveys and interviews with students, teaching assistants, instructors, tutors, and faculty involved with the Freshman English program.

The two members of the external evaluation team – Donald McQuade and James Slevin – visited Syracuse twice, on September 27 and 28, 1984 and on November 8 and 9, 1984. The second visit was not originally planned; they had to return because several senior administrators thought the purpose of the external evaluators’ visit was for them to serve as consultants to Brune and the English Department, not to evaluate the Freshman English program. This confusion seemed to highlight the lack of attention given to the Freshman English program by the English Department and the greater university community (McQuade and Slevin). McQuade and Slevin returned in November so that they could collect the necessary data, through reports and interviews, that could help them assess writing instruction at Syracuse University.

The twenty-page Council of Writing Program Administrators external evaluation report addressed the four parts of the Syracuse writing curriculum: the Freshman English program, the university-required Continuing Writing Skills courses (part of the liberal arts core curriculum),

the upper-division writing courses offered through the English Department, and the graduate courses in composition (specifically ENG 613, the required composition pedagogy practicum for English graduate teaching assistants.) In their report, McQuade and Slevin noted that “Syracuse University treats each of these four aspects of the teaching of writing, in both intellectual and procedural terms, as a separate entity...In effect, neither the College of Arts and Sciences nor the Department of English has yet to articulate a clear and convincing policy and philosophy of instruction in matters of composition” (4). In its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the writing curriculum at Syracuse, the external evaluation report lambasts the English Department and university administration for its negligence of the Freshman English program – of having no professional, intellectual, or collegial contact with the instructors of ENG 101 and 102 – and for its ignorance of contemporary composition theory and pedagogy. The Freshman English module on essay writing was, through the evaluators’ perspective, “not just *essentially* a skills course but *exclusively* a skills course,” and its use of the Baker essay model constituted a disservice to students, who were assessed based on their adherence to a specific form rather than how they could use writing to shape and explore their ideas (5).

The external evaluation also pointed to how the reductive Freshman English curriculum also constituted a disservice to its instructors, whose opportunities for curricular invention were severely limited. The restricted Freshman English program seem to be geared to both the inexperienced writing student and the inexperienced writing teacher; the prescriptive six-week modules made it easy for a new instructor to quickly jump in, but it provided no room for growth or pedagogical creativity for the experienced teacher. McQuade and Slevin noted that the majority of the part-time instructors (PTIs) they spoke to “complained strenuously of the lack of professional confidence afforded them by the Program and its Director” (12). McQuade and

Slevin also criticized the teacher evaluation process for PTIs, which mirrored the Freshman English curriculum: it was restrictive, reductive, and out-dated. They recommended renovating the Freshman English curriculum and teacher evaluation procedures and providing resource materials and professional development that would allow the PTIs to develop new, innovative writing curriculum (4-6).

The external evaluation report argued that “the most serious problem confronting the success of writing instruction at Syracuse University is the lack of interest on the part of full-time English department professorial faculty in the development of the Freshman English Program” (17). The report lambasted both the English Department and higher university administrators for its poor, dismissive treatment of both the Freshman English program and its instructors. The Freshman English program had no secretary, no central office space, and the part-time instructors were packed in small windowless basement offices, sharing desks and conferencing spaces (7-9). In order to fix writing instruction at Syracuse, the university needed to invest in its writing instructors and treat them as valuable members of the university teaching community. The evaluators recommended placing PTIs standing committees with full-time faculty, as an attempt to bridge the sharp divide between part-time and full-time faculty in the English Department, and improving the professional working conditions of PTIs by raising their salaries, instituting three-year contracts, putting PTIs on 3/2 loads so they can get university benefits, putting the PTI’s name on course listings instead of “Staff,” and creating a fund for PTI professional development, which could be used for conference and workshop attendance (19). The main responsibility for implementing these major changes rested, the external evaluation report argued, not in the hands of the current Freshman English Director nor even with the English Department chair. Rather, the responsibility for upgrading the Freshman English

curriculum to reflect contemporary composition theory and for improving the treatment of part-time instructors to be both more professional and ethical lay in the hands of the most senior administrators at Syracuse University (19). It is here, in the senior administration, where real, permanent change could happen.

Based on both the recommendations included in the external evaluation report and their survey and interview data, the Ad Hoc Writing Evaluation committee issued their final report to the University Senate in April 1985. This report, thereafter known as the Gates Report, named for the chair of the Ad Hoc Writing Evaluation committee, proposed a radical change to the writing curriculum at Syracuse University. Instead of the Freshman English sequence of ENG 101 and 102 and the poorly-overseen Continuing Writing Skills courses, the Gates Report recommended that the university adopt a four-year, four-course required writing sequence. These new Writing Studio courses would emphasize process pedagogy, critical reading, and analysis, and as the undergraduate students progressed into their academic majors, the Writing Studio courses would address disciplinary-specific writing. In addition, the Gates Report recommended that the university hire a writing program administrator “of faculty rank” with intimate understanding of current composition scholarship to oversee the new writing curriculum and to direct plans for constructing both a university Writing Center and a graduate program in composition and rhetoric (Gates iv).

The Gates Report states that one of its key recommendations is to improve “the working conditions, professional status, and morale” of the part-time writing instructors “consonant with their contribution to the teaching of writing at Syracuse,” but the only concrete suggestions the report gives is to encourage and fund part-time writing instructors to attend workshops and conferences where they can learn current composition theory and use that theory to build new

courses (iv; 14). The report recognizes that Syracuse “cannot, either morally or intellectually, defend building such an ambitious program on the backs of grossly underpaid part-timers,” acknowledging that the part-time writing instructors will be responsible for the majority of the writing instruction in this new university writing program (18). Rather than mandate certain changes to the working conditions of part-time instructors, the report focuses on the higher administrative and intellectual changes necessary to transform the “fractured and ineffectual” Syracuse writing curriculum “into the finest coordinated program of writing instruction available anywhere.” (9; 17) It is the belief of the Ad Hoc Writing Committee that those in the field of composition and rhetoric will have a solution to this labor problem, and that if the university hires the right tenure-track faculty administrators for the Writing Program, those people will know how to address and correct this problem. Focusing on what faculty the university needs to hire allows the Ad Hoc Writing Committee to stay general in its recommendations, leaving the issue of part-time writing instructors to the future directors of the Writing Program. The focus on the hiring of the administrators of the program and the subsequent marginalization of the specific needs of the teaching force, the part-time instructors, in the Gates Report is representative of the sharp division between the full-time faculty and the part-time writing instructors and the respect given to the knowledge and expertise they will bring to the new Writing Program.

Because of the proposed new writing program’s “complexity and scope,” the report recommended that the new director of the program answer not to the English Department chair but rather to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences or the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (17). The report does not formally remove the Writing Program from the English Department; rather, in its administrative chain-of-command recommendation, it makes the point that university-wide writing instruction extends beyond the jurisdiction of the English

Department. When Louise Wetherbee Phelps was hired as the first Director of the Writing Program at Syracuse a year later, in 1986, she took the report's structural suggestion seriously, creating *de facto* a writing program independent of English Department curricular and administrative control.

Unlike other independent writing programs, which were established with much debate or out of internal divisions within departments, the independent Syracuse Writing Program evolved over time into a stand-alone institutional unit. Its independence happened through an alignment of the Gates Report chain-of-command administrative recommendation, the embedded disinterest for writing instruction by many of the faculty in the English Department, the intellectual divisions of faculty that resulted in a splintering of the Syracuse English Department, and the actions of Phelps, Lipson, Himley and subsequent directors of the Writing Program, who led the Program as if it were an independent unit, even it was not officially recognized as such until years later. This independence – and the Writing Program's identity not as a department but as a more undefined program – allowed the Syracuse Writing Program to experiment both in its curriculum and its administrative structure. Many of the choices and systems the Writing Program implemented since 1986 would not have been possible either if the Program was inside a traditional departmental structure or if the Program's budget, staffing, and vision was controlled more closely by a traditional department chair, more concerned with the department's vertical undergraduate and graduate curricula than the service courses the department provided for all students at the university as part of a core curriculum.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 develops a disciplinary context for the study, placing the history of the Syracuse Writing Program in conversation with contemporary (mid-1980s through late-1990s) research on independent writing programs and contingent faculty labor, two institutional issues theorized by writing program administrators. This chapter surveys the research and discussion about contingent faculty labor and the establishment of independent writing programs, demonstrating how the Syracuse Writing Program's administrative decisions both in its stand-alone department-like status and operation and its professionalizing structures for its contingent faculty instructors reflect the contemporary (mid-1980s through late-1990s) research and also complicate it. The Syracuse Writing Program's history from 1986 to 1996 can be seen as a practical laboratory for research about professionalization of contingent faculty and the identity of composition and rhetoric as an independent field of research. This chapter argues that the independence of the Syracuse Writing Program did not completely solve the contingent faculty labor problem that plagues many writing programs in American colleges and universities, which was a hope held by many who advocated the separation of writing programs from larger English departments.

Chapter 3 explains the structure and evolution of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee in the Syracuse University Writing Program from 1986 to 1996. It uses archived administrative documents to show how a variety of institutional forces and constraints affected these two professional development and evaluation structures. This chapter also describes how these two systems changed over time as the needs of the professional writing instructors shifted and as the Writing Program was compelled to pool their resources and

attention towards other initiatives within the program. The description of the design, implementation, and evolution of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee argues for a kind of administrative philosophy that places the support, preparation, and evaluation of its teachers at the center of the program's activities: they are not seen as afterthoughts, but rather as necessary activities that fuel the program's curriculum and theoretical vision.

Chapter 4 looks at how the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee were experienced and understood by various members of the Syracuse Writing Program. In contrast with Chapter 3, which uses documents from the time to explain these two structures, Chapter 4 relies on retrospective interviews. The data culled from the interviews is not as cut-and-dry as the information found through the archives. The people I interviewed had very vivid and very specific memories; the stories they told were not necessarily chronological, complete, or complementary to the "facts" I found in the archives. Through the interviews, though, the reader gets a sense of what the professional development and evaluation structures provided to the part-time instructors at the Syracuse Writing Program meant to the people there at the time, how they now understood them. This chapter argues that the effects of a program's professional development and evaluation structures on its faculty (and the program as a whole) may not be understood or felt until years after the fact. This argument underscores the importance of seeing professional development as a long-term, developmental commitment by a writing program's administration. Instead of focusing primarily on the short-term results of a professional development system (the production of teaching materials or the results of a evaluation decision), a writing program can invest in the quieter, long-term effects of professional development and evaluation systems, the effects that slowly change a program's

entire culture and solidify its collective values about teaching and writing. This chapter in many ways gives the reader the postscript, the long-term conclusion to the specific activities described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 gives an overview of what has happened in the Syracuse University Writing Program since 1996, focusing how the PhD program in composition and cultural rhetoric and the university-wide unionization of part-time faculty affected the part-time writing instructors in the Program. It also emphasizes how any research of human institutions like writing programs must look beyond seemingly inanimate structures and instead trace how the people in them work, communicate, understand, and relate to one another. This chapter situates this research on the Syracuse University Writing Program with current scholarship in writing program administration and writing teacher preparation at the college, secondary, and elementary levels. Ultimately, this chapter emphasizes the importance of seeing structures for teacher support and evaluation as long-term, continual investments in a writing program's administration.

Chapter 2: A Sign of Its Times: Situating the Syracuse Writing Program in Contemporary Scholarship in Contingent Faculty Labor and Independent Writing Programs, 1985-2000

Time is relative. I don't mean in an Einstein way; I mean psychologically. When I read through past digitized journal articles, tracing the history of the field of composition and rhetoric in the late 1980s, I can't help but superimpose a vision of what I was doing at this time, a time when conversations bounced back and forth about the theoretical identity of rhetoric and composition, the institutional location of the discipline, and the professional treatment of those working in that field.

In 1987, the year the Wyoming Resolution was unanimously endorsed by the CCCC Executive Committee, I was entering kindergarten. I remember standing in my classroom, navy knee socks pulled up straight beneath my plaid parochial school jumper, painting pictures on the easel set up next to the row of windows that looked out to the courtyard. I remember singing "The Farmer in the Dell" on the blacktop playground, hoping I wouldn't be the cheese that stood alone.

The fire and passion of the scholar-teachers flies off the page of the articles, conference papers, chapters, and books that I read from this time. In the statements and reports about the treatment of contingent labor in writing programs, scholars in the growing field of rhetoric and composition argue for a disciplinary identity endowed with respect and a professional status that reflects this respect. They even envision "homes of their own," to borrow a term from Barry Maid: separation from traditional English departments that would give them a space to invent,

research, and administer in programs that valued their often-marginalized work. It is the rhetoric of change, of revolution, a rhetoric that taps into the appeals of passion-driven *pathos*, their own *ethos*, and clear, reasoned *logos*. As I sit in the early mornings, reading and taking notes, I want to shout through the near-empty coffee house where I work, yell out “Yes! Yes! Yes!”

But then I fast-forward to today. I think about an institution that I know where the adjuncts, what the contingent faculty are called, are housed together a floor and building away from the rest of the English department in a converted classroom, their desks divided by cubicles that afford no quiet, private space to work or to conference with students. They are those freeway flyers I read about, dropping in and out during the day; no one save a few of their own students say hello in the halls. They don’t even know each other’s names. They scabble together a few courses here, a few courses there at a neighboring college, worrying in November if their contract will be extended for the spring.

It’s 2012. Twenty-five years after the Wyoming Resolution was lauded by our national professional organization, our institutions are still rife with the same labor problems. Our discipline is still treated by many as a feminized service field lacking an intellectual foundation, even as the number of majors and minors in writing are growing at a rapid pace, from 45 institutions with undergraduate majors in writing in 2005 to over 72 institutions with writing majors in 2009 (CCCC Committee on the Major of Writing and Rhetoric). Twenty-five years after I was learning to write my letters in kindergarten, my five-year-old son is learning his, bringing home his broad-stroke paintings of houses and monsters and robots, playing tag on his school playground.

It's been a generation since the Wyoming Resolution, though the problem of contingent faculty labor extends even farther back in the history of American higher education. Where are we? What has been solved?

* * *

In this chapter, I survey research in composition and rhetoric that addresses contingent faculty labor and the establishment of independent writing programs, focusing on the time period between the mid-1980s and the late-1990s, which coincides with the first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program (1986-1996.) The goal of this review is contextualize the history of the Syracuse Writing Program's professional development and evaluation structures, which were designed for its contingent faculty instructors, situating the Syracuse structures in the discipline's contemporary conversations in the field about contingent faculty labor practices and the formation of independent writing programs. Through this review, I argue that the activities that took place in the Syracuse Writing Program reflect in many ways the current thoughts of disciplinary scholars: that the contingent faculty labor problem could be addressed through efforts to professionalize non-tenure-track writing instructors and that creating stand-alone writing programs, ones that reject the historically bitter dichotomy of literature and composition, could create an institutional environment that promoted the work of writing teachers, and through that, start to solve the ethical problem of employing low-paid contingent faculty instructors. The Syracuse Writing Program was known, largely through national conference presentations given from the late 1980s through the late 1990s by the Program's full-time faculty administrators and non-tenure-track writing instructors, as an independent writing program that invested in its writing instructors' professionalization. This chapter also points out that independent writing programs were not the magical solution many thought they would be:

though the contingent faculty labor problem was addressed in many of these programs, the larger, ethical issue was not solved.

This literature review, which first describes and analyzes the scholarship addressing contingent faculty labor and stand-alone writing departments from the mid-1980s through the late 1990s, turns at the end toward the case study of the Syracuse Writing Program. Though the following chapters in this study draw on hundreds of internal administrative documents, the last section of this chapter relies solely on publically-accessible documents about the Syracuse Writing Program, including conference presentations by Writing Program faculty and part-time instructors given between the mid-1980s and late-1990s, faculty evaluation and tenure guidelines widely distributed to the field, and articles and chapters published in this time period that describe some of the specific administrative structures in the Syracuse Writing Program. This last part of this literature review shows how the professional development and leadership opportunities developed in the Syracuse Writing Program, discussed in detail in the rest of the dissertation, both reflected and complicated the contemporary conversations in the field about independent writing programs and the role of part-time instructors in them. The literature about the Syracuse Writing Program also demonstrates how professional development and evaluation systems in an independent writing program can cultivate and strengthen the teaching community within it.

These two conversations – one about independent writing programs and the other about contingent labor issues – address a variety of issues on the surface: questions of economics, ethics, gender, curriculum, disciplinary theory, and physical and psychological institutional locations. However, implicit in both these conversations from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s is a constant undercurrent of questioning and defining of the field's identity: What do those who

make up the field – the teachers, the scholars, the administrators – believe the discipline to be? What preconceptions about composition and rhetoric are they challenging? What do they hope for the future of rhetoric and composition in the university and in the larger community? This time period for rhetoric and composition was one of soul-searching and self-defining, and the questions of where the discipline belonged at the institution and how those in the discipline were treated by others in the institution were critical questions to address and discuss in this identification process.

The first section of the literature review will focus on scholarship written on contingent labor issues in composition and rhetoric and some of the resolutions and statements written and adopted in response to the working conditions of contingent writing faculty. The body of scholarship I focus on was published between the mid-1980s and 2000. My last chapter of this study comments on how the conversations and policies about contingent faculty at the university have changed since then, using the case study of the Syracuse Writing Program as a focal point. The second part of this literature review looks at independent writing programs, which were proposed by some in the discipline in part as a way to address the labor issues surrounding the teaching of writing. The Syracuse Writing Program, founded in 1986, was one of the first modern independent writing programs in the country and one of the few independent writing programs at a private research university (O'Neill and Schendel 186). Many of the early efforts of the Syracuse Writing Program administrators were aimed at solving some of the local, Syracuse-specific labor issues for both the teaching assistants and part-time writing instructors in the Program. The last section of the literature review looks at publically-accessible and distributed scholarship written about the Program from 1986 to 1996, including articles, chapters, essays, reflections, and conference papers written by those faculty and part-time

instructors in the Program, those faculty who had left Syracuse, and outside consultants, visitors, and scholars who were commenting on the Program from an outside perspective. I believe this extensive survey and analysis of disciplinary scholarship on contingent labor issues, independent writing programs, and the Syracuse Writing Program in particular from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s gives the necessary background and context in which to understand the specific structures put into place in the Syracuse Writing Program that enabled the part-time instructors there to have leadership roles and a voice in building the curriculum and evaluation procedures of an independent writing program.

Contingent Faculty Labor, 1985-2000

The first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program – from 1986 to 1996 – coincided with an explosion in discussion, scholarship and policy-making about the working conditions of contingent university faculty. These conversations did not just take place in rhetoric and composition: others in sociology, education, economics, and administration also began in the early to mid-1980s researching and discussing the implications of the growing use of part-time adjunct faculty to teach undergraduate courses.

Non-tenure-track instructors have taught first-year writing since the turn of the 20th century, a phenomenon chronicled by Robert J. Connors in his 1990 *Rhetoric Review* article, “Overwork/Underpay.” Connors weaves together reflections by the Boylston Chairs at Harvard, their students, other prominent late-19th and early-20th century professors of rhetoric, and surveys conducted by NCTE and MLA to show how the abusive working conditions of composition instructors – a problem that gained traction in the field in the late 20th century – has deep and

gendered roots, as historically, composition had a disproportionately large percentage of women teaching underpaid, labor-intensive freshman writing courses. Connors argues that the advent of the required freshman writing course, often attributed to Harvard in 1885, led to the undervaluing of rhetoric and composition, as writing was regulated as a basic skill and scholars fled the teaching of rhetoric, which required time-intensive individual instruction, to literature, which was far less demanding, as it relied on lecture and discussion (“Overwork” 112-113). This exodus from rhetoric occurred at the same time the German research model and university elective system took hold, which held tenured professors accountable not just for teaching, but also for producing scholarship, which took a considerable amount of time (Veysey 125; 158). It made sense, then, for universities to turn to composition instructors, who did not need to publish, to teach the required composition course (Connors “Overwork” 115-116). The surveys and reports that profile early 20th century college faculty and freshman English instruction, published by NCTE, MLA, and in journals like *English Journal* and *Educational Review* show that the composition instructors were grossly underpaid, as compared to assistant tenure-track professors, and often considered composition an “apprenticeship,” a term Connors uses, to drudge through before moving on to a better literature job. In addition, as noted in Warner Taylor’s 1929 *A National Survey of Conditions in Freshman English* and Warner G. Rice’s 1962 investigation of the teachers of college English, as compared to other academic fields, “women were a disproportionate percentage of the composition staff” at American colleges (Connors “Overwork” 121). Stith Thompson’s 1930 essay in *English Journal*, “A National Survey of Freshman English,” addresses Taylor’s survey of conditions in the teaching of writing in American colleges and universities and speculates as to why so many women were teaching composition. Thompson notes, “women instructors – who do often seem to be willing to settle

down to a life of efficient Freshman teaching without any idea of going farther in their academic career.” Thompson’s analysis as to the cause of the disproportionate number of women composition instructors teaching at American colleges and institutions makes the argument that female instructors are attracted to teaching composition because it is a comfortable job and because they have no higher ambition for furthering their careers through advanced study or teaching of literature.

Helene B. Magee, in her 1918 *English Journal* article, “Inspiration in Freshman Composition,” echoes Thompson’s and Taylor’s underlying argument about the undesired work of teaching composition – work for those who are not as ambitious or intellectually advanced as those who teach literature – as she describes the reaction she often receives after she explains to a well-meaning inquirer her work of teaching (only) freshman composition: “He is full of pity” (313). Magee then responds to this expected response:

“Just why it is that those of us who teach the English-composition required of Freshman in all, or nearly all, our American colleges should be considered too stupid or too unfortunate to have secured berths in the literature section of English work or in the advanced courses in composition has for years been a mystery to me. Why people in general and college communities in particular should look down on anyone who prefers to teach Freshman English as a person of low mentality and attainments, devoid of ambition and unworthy of promotion, is another mystery to me” (313)

Magee, a woman instructor of composition, explains the underlying attitude towards composition instructors (who, as Thompson and Taylor point out, are largely women): composition instructors are pitiful because their stupidity or unluckiness denied them a post in teaching literature. Teaching composition is the consolation prize for those who wanted to, but were unable to secure, positions in teaching literature. Even in 1918, Magee questions this presumption, saying twice that it is “a mystery” to her, and she argues as well that it is a

perception not only held by faculty but by students as well, who ask whether freshman composition instructors had been “promoted” yet to teaching more advanced courses (313-314).

The presumption that teaching composition is “pity” work, coupled with the fact that many college composition instructors from the early 20th century to today were women, led to what Sue Ellen Holbrook described in 1991 as the “feminization” of composition, in which the field of composition is “associated with feminine attributes and populated by the female gender” (201). Holbrook argues that this feminization is historically situated in socioeconomics centered on the traditional division of labor between men and women. Holbrook uses research in sociology, labor studies, and demographics to claim that teaching composition is women’s work because it shares four characteristics that she believes defines women’s work (as opposed to men’s work): “it has a disproportionate number of women workers; it is service-oriented; it pays less than men’s work; it is devalued” (202). The study and teaching of composition, a discipline that seemed suited for women and that employed many, was placed at the early 20th century underneath the more masculine, ambitious discipline of literature, and it continues to be located there today.

The growth in the American university student population that occurred between the mid-19th and late-19th century was exponentially echoed in the 1970s, when the first wave of baby boomers entered college and open admissions took hold at some public community colleges and universities, overwhelming the higher education system.¹ This rapid increase in student enrollment happened at the same time as another demographic shift, when more and more middle and lower-class students and students of color entered the university as first-generation

¹ This demographic shift in American colleges and universities (and some of the underlying reasons why the student population dramatically altered during this time) is discussed in Robert J. Connors’ 1990 *Rhetoric Review* essay, “Overwork/Underpay,” Richard Lloyd-Jones’ 1992 *College Composition and Communication* article, “Who We Were, Who We Should Become,” and Mina Shaughnessy’s 1979 *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*.

college students. LaVonna L. Reeves explains in her essay, “Mina Shaughnessy and Open Admissions at New York’s City College” that the 1970 decision by the New York City Board of Higher Education to institute an open-admissions policy at the City University of New York (CUNY) colleges led to an immediate need to hire more teachers to accommodate the influx of students, many who required remediation courses (including basic writing courses) in order to prepare for college-level work (118-120).

The change in student demographics, coupled with the increase in need for remediation courses, heralded in the American “literacy crisis” of the mid- to late-1970s.² Instead of adding expensive, inflexible tenure lines, as both James Slevin and John Lovas explain, the growing university administration turned to short-term, stop-gap adjunct faculty positions (Slevin “Depoliticizing” 4-5; Lovas 201). This decision to use contingent faculty to staff required writing courses, Nicholas Tingle and Judy Kirscht argue in their essay “A Place to Stand: The Role of Unions in the Development of Writing Programs” in the pivotal 2000 collection, *Moving a Mountain: Transforming the Role of Contingent Faculty in Composition Studies and Higher Education*, had little to nothing to do with providing quality undergraduate education: “The iron law governing the employment of lecturers, and all ‘temps’ for that matter, has been and always will be economics” (220). So even though the expanding student population, who came from socioeconomic groups historically underprepared for college-level work, demonstrated a pressing need for intensive literacy instruction, universities turned away from tenured faculty, staffing classes with cheaper contingent faculty who could be denied adequate salaries, benefits, and teaching contracts (Slevin “Depoliticizing” 15-17; Lloyd-Jones 491). This is shown through

² For discussion and in-depth analysis of the relationship between institutional demographics and local and national politics, see Lisa Ede’s 2004 *Situating Composition: Composition Studies and the Politics of Location*; Susan Miller’s 1993 *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*; Susan Crowley’s 1998 *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*; and Joseph Harris’ 1996 *A Teaching Subject: Composition since 1966*.

statistical evidence: between 1972 and 1986, the number of English PhDs securing full-time tenure-track jobs plummeted from 93% to 40% while college enrollments increased significantly (CCCC Committee on Professional Standards).

This overreliance on contingent faculty happened throughout the university system, but it particularly affected composition, as Slevin points out in “Depoliticizing and Politicizing Composition Studies,” both because of composition’s “underclass” position in relation to literature and the “underclass” position of the majority of composition instructors, who are part-time adjunct labor (“Depoliticizing” 6-7). Slevin uses statistical evidence to show that English departments with strong rhetoric, technical communication, and writing programs grew in their undergraduate and graduate program enrollments through the 1980s, but that the required writing courses, the vast majority of English departments sections taught, were primarily by contingent faculty labor. This decision signaled a corporate turn in higher education, a turn documented by Marc Bousquet and others in rhetoric and composition. Universities hired more and more administrators and fewer and fewer tenure-line faculty, a trend scrutinized by Thomas J. Farrell in 1991 (Farrell 159). The bottom line, a term Eileen Schell uses in the title of her 2000 essay, “What’s the Bottom Line? Literacy and Quality Education in the Twenty-First Century”, became economics, not student needs (Schell 324). It was a bottom line justified not just by universities but also by American businesses and corporations, who began to turn to outsourcing in Asia, Africa, and South America, countries with large supplies of labor and low to no minimum wage laws, in order to cut costs (Pink 36-37).

Surveys of American colleges and universities showed that by the mid-1990s, this short-term solution had become permanent. James Sledd, in his 1991 *JAC* essay, “Why the Wyoming Resolution Had to Be Emasculated: A History and a Quixotism,” argues that the continual

mistreatment of contingent faculty is due to conscious decisions by university faculty and administrators to maintain a hierarchy in English departments: as he states, “a long history answers that administrators, literari, and eminent compositionists have been led by mis-conceived self-interest to perpetuate old injustice” (269). Sledd spreads the blame for the contingent faculty labor problem in composition: he calls out the “newly risen” or “boss” compositionists, the emerging, publishing cohort of scholars in composition and rhetoric in the 1980s, whose focus on research and administration yet again places the teaching of writing in a subordinate position; he points out the decades-old exploitation of teaching assistants in English departments, who teach the “drudge” work of writing and leave the teaching of literature to tenured faculty; and he describes the historical service identity of the first-year composition course (270-272; 274-275).

A 1997 AAUP statement reported that contingent faculty comprise over half of the teaching faculty at American colleges and universities (Benjamin, cited in Schell and Stock “Introduction” 4-5). It’s no wonder why: contingent faculty are a cheap source of (usually) non-threatening labor. Universities can hire instructors with master’s or even doctorate degrees – those unqualified for tenure-track faculty positions or who have been unsuccessful in obtaining the “academic hoops dream” – and pay them a non-livable wage, deny them benefits and year-long teaching contracts, refuse them offices, and then get rid of them quickly, easily, and silently. Even though they form the majority of the teaching faculty, this mass of instructors is often powerless at the university because they lack the time, energy, and resources to collectively band together (Jacobsohn 178-179). Many contingent faculty piece together a living by working at multiple institutions, and these “freeway flyers” often do not have the time to cultivate collegial relationships with their fellow non-tenure-track instructors, and also are often isolated from one

another on campus, teaching at different and odd hours, perhaps with no common meeting or office space (O'Grady 32).³

These faculty members, described aptly as “invisible” by both those in rhetoric and composition and by Judith Gappa and David Leslie, sociologists who have studied the larger contingent faculty phenomenon in higher education, began to be noticed and discussed on national platforms in the early 1980s. One notable event was the drafting of the Wyoming Resolution in the summer of 1986 at the Wyoming Conference in Laramie. At this conference, tenured faculty joined together with teaching assistants and their contingent colleagues to write the Wyoming Resolution, a statement that outlined the necessary working conditions for contingent composition instructors, including both part-time adjuncts and graduate teaching assistants. The next spring, at the annual CCCC conference in 1987, the CCCC Executive Committee unanimously endorsed the Wyoming Resolution, a move that catapulted contingent labor issues to the national disciplinary stage. As part of endorsing the Wyoming Resolution, CCCC also commissioned a Committee on Professional Standards for Quality Education, who were charged with drafting a set of professional standards and expectations for the employment of university writing instructors (McDonald and Schell 360; 370).⁴

³ For other personal accounts of this larger problem faced by non-tenure-track writing instructors, see also selections from the 2000 *Moving a Mountain* edited collection by Eileen Schell and Patricia Lambert Stock (Chris Anson and Richard Jewell’s “Shadows of the Mountain,” Walter Jacobson’s “The Real Scandal in Higher Education,” John C. Lovas’ “How Did We Get in This Fix,” Elana Peled et al’s “Same Struggle, Same Fight: A Case Study of University Students and Faculty United in Labor Activism,” and Eva Brumberger’s “The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: One Version of ‘Humane’ Lectureship,”), along with Anne Whitney’s 1999 *Forum* article, “Bringing Our Theory Home: Addressing Inequality through Dialogue,” Teresa Purvis’ 1999 *Forum* article, “Creating Equity for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?” and the parody song, “I’m Just a Poor Part-Timin’ Teacher” published in *College Composition and Communication* in 1991.

⁴ For perspectives on the history of the Wyoming Resolution, see James Slevin 1987’s essay, “A Note on the Wyoming Resolution and ADE,”; Linda R. Robertson, Sharon Crowley, and Frank Lentricchia’s 1987 *College English* essay, “Opinion: The Wyoming Conference Resolution Opposing Unfair Salaries and Working Conditions for Post-Secondary Teachers of Writing”, and James C. McDonald and Eileen E. Schell’s 2011 *College English* article, “The Spirit and the Influence of the Wyoming Resolution: Looking Back to Look Forward.”

Two years later, in 1989, the CCCC Executive Committee published the Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing in *College Composition and Communication*. The Statement, realizing that appeals to ethics alone would not change the practices of a university increasingly governed by market forces, linked the treatment of teachers to the quality of undergraduate education, claiming that poor working conditions compromise students' education (CCCC Executive Committee 329). The keystone argument of the Statement is that the deep, troubling labor issues of university composition teaching can only be solved through converting part-time contingent positions to full-time, tenure-track ones. Part-time instructors and graduate assistant teachers form an "enormous academic underclass" at the university, and the Statement argues that part-time positions should only be created to teach specialized courses (where the instructor may be a professional in another field) or to meet unexpected rises in enrollment (CCCC Executive Committee 330; 332-333). The Statement also outlines the necessary working conditions for contingent faculty: training, office space, adequate professional pay and benefits, and a voice in the department they teach in about the courses they teach and how they and their courses are evaluated (CCCC Executive Committee 333-334). The statement also claims that in order to ensure good writing instruction, there should be no more than 20 students in a section, no more than 60 students per instructor per term, and instructors should be supported with a writing center and access to scholarship and conferences in rhetoric and composition. Without these conditions, the Statement maintains, "all lose: teachers, students, schools, and ultimately a democratic society that cannot be without citizens whose education empowers them to read and write with critical sophistication" (CCCC Executive Committee 330).

Reaction to the Statement was mixed in the field. Some lauded it; others pointed to the complexity and difficulty of enacting the guidelines at individual institutions whose structures were entrenched in and dependent on contingent faculty. In 1991, the CCCC Committee on Professional Standards, commissioned to oversee the Statement and its implementation, issued a Progress Report in *CCC* which clarified and constrained some of the pronouncements in the Statement. Recognizing that institutions are structured differently and the far-reaching goals outlined in the Statement could only be possible through extensive restructuring of the university system, the Progress Report explained that changes to contingent faculty labor practices needed to reflect the needs and constraints of the local university context (CCCC Committee on Professional Standards 332). Instead of authorizing the censure of all colleges and universities whose writing programs depend on contingent labor (a legal action that would be nearly impossible, both politically and financially,) the Progress Report suggests that only those institutions who actively resist improving the conditions of their graduate teaching assistants and contingent faculty be publically reprimanded (CCCC Committee on Professional Standards 341). However, the Progress Report maintains the seriousness of the contingent faculty labor problem, connecting it to the low status of women and composition at the university. The only way to correct the contingent faculty labor problem, the Progress Report argues, is for all involved in university writing instruction to work together: full-time tenured faculty, upper administration, national professional organizations like CCCC, part-time instructors and teaching assistants (CCCC Committee on Professional Standards 343).

This kind of local action is endorsed by both Chris Anson and Greta Gaard in their 1991 reflection published in *CCC*, “Acting on the ‘Statement’: The All-Campus Model of Reform,” which explains the work done to improve the conditions of part-time instructors at the University

of Minnesota and by Susan Wyche-Smith and Shirley K Rose, who outline in their 1990 *College Composition and Communication* article, “One Hundred Ways to Make the Wyoming Resolution a Reality” exactly that – a host of specific strategies for how all involved in university writing instruction – students, part-time faculty members, graduate assistants, WPAs, deans, and professional organizations and journals – can work towards enacting change for the benefit of contingent faculty.

Although the Statement and the Progress Report both contend that shifting all part-time positions to full-time, tenurable ones is the “ideal,” others in the field argued against that solution, calling it too simplistic and unreflective of the needs of instructors, writing programs, and universities. Between 1990 and 1991, several articles, reflections, and responses were published in *College Composition and Communication* addressing the pronouncements of the Statement, including a Symposium published in 1991 which included reflections about the Statement from various constituencies in the discipline, including full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and graduate students. Robert Merrill, a tenured professor and chair at the time, points out the impossibility of hiring enough full-time tenure-track faculty to teach the required writing course: the first-year writing requirement depends, financially, on non-tenure-track, part-time labor, and he and others contend that if the Statement was made a reality, the abolition of required college composition and “the destroying of English departments as we know them” might be an unintended consequence (155; 158). Furthermore, as both Myron C. Tuman and William S. Robinson explain in their 1991 *CCC* articles responding to the Statement, the majority of part-time faculty teaching college writing lack graduate degrees and training in rhetoric and composition, so why should university administrators place them in tenure-track jobs? Teachers of rhetoric and composition cannot demand professional treatment if they do not

have professional expertise in what they teach (Tuman 357; Robinson 348-349). Requiring writing instructors to have advanced degrees in composition and rhetoric is not a solution, as many current part-time faculty lack the resources, time, or desire to pursue a doctorate in the field. Making a blanket call to move all part-time instructors into full-time tenure track jobs, jobs that require advanced degrees, has the unintended consequence of making the current writing instructors suddenly unqualified for the jobs they have, resulting in “the prospect of current instructors losing their positions, a far cry in the minds of many instructors from the better treatment they seemed originally promised” (Tuman 357). Working within the constraints of a 19th-century German research university model, one that presumes a one-tier (tenure-track) academic faculty, did not address the needs of current universities and students. Instead of trying to squeeze writing instructors into the tenure-track mold, some in the field suggested that universities explore other kinds of positions, like full-time lectureships or practitioner instructors (Merrill 157; Tuman 358). The modern university needs teaching-intensive faculty, and these kinds of positions would move part-time labor out from the shadows. This move toward establishing a second faculty tier at the university is not popular among tenure-track faculty and administrators, who see it as a violation of AAUP regulations.

The rhetoric embedded in the Wyoming Resolution, the Statement of Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, and in the ripple of articles, essays, conference presentations, and letters written in the few years after the Resolution and Statement were endorsed by CCCC shows that labor lines and camps were being drawn. The call by the Statement for all part-time contingent positions to be converted into full-time, tenured or tenure-track jobs actually signaled for some a consequence of the professionalization of the field in the 1980s, a political move in the institution and the discipline charted by Lisa Ede in her 2004

monograph, *Situating Composition: Composition Studies and the Politics of Location*.⁵ Ede ties the 1970s American literacy crisis and the writing process movement of the 1970s and 1980s to the professionalization of composition, when the discipline moved from being “the step-child” of the English department to a field in its own right (52). The move in location, stepping away from its traditional marginalized position, Ede argues, was due in a very large way to the work of those scholars who earned their PhDs between 1969 and 1980, secured tenure-track jobs at universities, served as writing program directors, and published research (54-55). The field became defined by the work of these faculty, the new graduate students, and writing program directors, not the instructors teaching writing in the undergraduate classroom. Ede argues that the field’s decision to turn focus on writing process theory, research, and the professionalization of the field encouraged “a devaluing of practice and the distancing of scholarly work from the scene of classroom” (77). It was an ironic shift: the theories and research promoted by the field’s scholars and leaders often did little to improve the working conditions of contingent writing instructors (Ede 77; 125; 179).

Some felt CCCC, through its 1989 Statement of Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, was aligning with the needs and desires of teaching assistants and full-time faculty in composition, who had the degrees to secure tenure-track jobs, instead of meeting the needs and desires of part-time contingent instructors teaching or working in writing centers, who either did not have PhDs or did not want a tenure-track job: they wanted to teach college writing and be treated professionally in their work. Jane E. Hindman cites the Wyoming Resolution

⁵ The politicization of composition and the emergence of composition as a discipline at the academy has been explored in works such as Stephen North’s 1987 *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*; Louise Phelps’ 1988 *Composition as Human Science: Contributions to the Self-Understanding of a Discipline*; Susan Miller’s 1991 *Textual Carnivals: The Politics of Composition*; Sharon Crowley’s 1998 *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*; and Bruce Horner’s 2000 *Terms of Work for Composition: A Materialist Critique*.

directly as an instance where CCCC stepped away from the non-tenure-track labor issue and instead chose to focus on improving the status of the discipline by arguing for more tenure-track faculty jobs for PhD holders. Hindman argues, connecting the call of the Wyoming Resolution to the creation of an independent Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University, “In actuality, however, this dream of independence has been less than liberating for many. Some argue that the status of the profession has improved at the expense of the material working conditions of many professionals. While the discipline of composition studies has apparently survived its legitimization crises, the expertise and authority of a majority of its practitioners are persistently and willfully ignored on a massive, institutional scale” (Hindman 107). According to Hindman, the non-tenured writing instructor was left behind in composition’s race to defend and define itself as an intellectual discipline. Hindman does not hold CCCC or the Wyoming Resolution solely responsible for the continued mistreatment of contingent writing instructors; she argues that non-tenure-track faculty are part of an ingrained “caste system” in American higher education (109).⁶

The Statement’s call to convert all composition instructor positions to full-time also did not adequately address the foundation of the contingent labor problem: the feminization of composition and rhetoric (a term used by Susan Miller); the undervaluing of pedagogy and the scholarship of teaching; the reluctance of university faculty to regard their work as labor; and the continued abuse of the labor of women and minorities, who make up the bulk of part-time and non-tenure-track university writing instructors.⁷ As Schell aptly describes in her monograph,

⁶ This tension between the professionalization of the field and the identity of the teacher-practitioners working in the writing classroom and writing center is also explored in Valerie Balester’s 1992 *College Composition and Communication* article, “Revising the ‘Statement’: On the Work of Writing Centers” and McDonald and Schell’s 2011 *College English* article “The Spirit and Influence of the Wyoming Resolution.”

⁷ For discussion of these larger systemic issues that impact the working conditions of non-tenure-track writing instructors, see Susan Miller’s 1991 *Textual Carnivals*; Susan Crowley’s 1998 *Composition in the University*:

Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction, the “imperfect problems” of a contingent faculty system dependent on the underpaid labor of female instructors result in “imperfect solutions” (90). Schell, through a survey of the literature and professional movements in the field toward addressing the contingent labor problem in the 1980s and 1990s, identifies four of these imperfect solutions: converting part-time positions to full-time tenure-track ones; reforming the working conditions of part-time instructors; collective bargaining; and abolishing the first-year course, which relies on unethical contingent faculty labor. All of these hotly-debated solutions, though, fail to take into consideration a deep understanding of how corporate higher education works, and this “higher education illiteracy,” as Schell deems it, plagues those working in the academy, who do not want to admit to the economic and bureaucratic forces that form the scaffolding that holds up the modern academy (119). Contingent labor is a problem that can’t be fixed with a fresh coat of paint; it requires, instead, a dismantling and reconstructing of the entire system of higher education. This restructuring can only be done by those with an intimate understanding of higher education, and Schell re-asserts the importance of conducting case studies and other research on the contingent labor problem in composition, a call given through the CCCC Statement on the Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, in order for the field to gain an insider perspective and argue for change within the system.

Many of the chapters of Eileen Schell and Patricia Lambert Stock’s 2000 collection, *Moving a Mountain*, one of the books written in response to that call, point toward the solution of collective bargaining, a solution that gained traction in the 1990s and early 2000s. Local,

Historical and Polemical Essays; Ernest Boyer’s 1990 *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*; Eileen E. Schell’s 1995 *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction*; and Bruce Horner’s 2000 *Terms of Work for Composition: A Materialist Critique*.

institutional efforts – the “can-do” solutions promoted by Rose and Wyche-Smith – depend on cultivating relationships between part-time faculty, full-time faculty, and administrators (Schell and Stock “Introduction” 22-23; Schell 337-338). When something shifts in that network – a new chair is appointed, a dean leaves – these micro-level solutions can evaporate. This is explained by Chris Anson and Richard Jewell in their co-edited chapter in the collection, “Shadows of the Mountain.” Jewell, a non-tenure-track writing instructor who taught at six different Minnesota institutions over thirteen years, explained that when his supportive first chair, who gave him a flexible schedule and upper-division teaching assignments, retired, that chair was replaced by three others (who came and left quickly), and the work schedule and expectations he had worked for disappeared. Encountering much more resistance towards his teaching and place in the department, Jewell left and found teaching work elsewhere (Anson and Jewell 50-54). Jewell also argues that non-tenure-track faculty “must always have the support of the powerful factions in their department,” citing his experience being let go as the writing center director because, although the dean like his pedagogy, members of the department, who had the power to hire and fire him, did not (57).

Instead of relying on administrators to construct ethical and responsible working conditions, unions guarantee contingent faculty a collective voice in which to bargain for fair contracts and salaries. Unions are one way to make visible what Schell calls the “hidden economy” of part-time labor, “the ways in which institutions often profit from the undercompensated emotional and material investments that non-tenure-track faculty make in their teaching” (327). Institutions depend on these investments that contingent faculty make in order to continue spinning a profit, and unions, as Schell and others argue, give these instructors a place at the table in the system that relies on their labor. Higher education in the 21st century is

a capitalist enterprise, and as Tingle and Kirsch explain in their chapter in *Moving a Mountain*, throughout history, “a central factor mitigating against the more inhumane excesses of capitalism has been and continues to be unions and the threat of unionization” (231). Unions for contingent faculty, which join together part-time faculty across all departments, give instructors a powerful, collective voice, and are in place at a growing number of institutions.

Unions, however, are not a silver-bullet solution. Creating two faculty tracks – the full-time tenured research faculty and the non-tenure-track teaching faculty – can further reinforce the binary between research and pedagogy. Nicholas Tingle and Judy Kirscht, both unionized lecturers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, argue that unionization at UC has brought to light the fact that “the teaching-centered professional interests of composition lecturers simply do not coincide with the interests of the research institution. The result is an invisible wall, as real and as corrosive as any class barrier, between those who teach (particularly those of us who teach ‘skills’ rather than ‘content’), and those who conduct research (Tingle and Kirsch 219). It is interesting to note that this argument to create practitioner faculty, full-time faculty whose job does not require or expect scholarly publication, has the possibility of creating an even sharper divide between teaching and research, a divide that some argue is at the heart of the tension between composition and literature.⁸ The conversations surrounding contingent faculty labor in the late 1980s and early 1990s occurred at the same time higher education was working towards revising their faculty expectations and tenure guidelines in response to critiques like Charles J. Sykes’ 1988 *ProfScam*, which argues that the American professoriate has moved its priorities away from undergraduate teaching, and calls such the one in Ernest Boyer’s 1990

⁸ For discussion of the history of English departments and the field of composition’s own struggles between practice and theory, see Bruce McComiskey’s 2006 *English Studies: An Introduction to the Discipline(s)*; James Berlin’s 1985 *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*; Robert J. Connors’ 1997 *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*; and Stephen North’s 1987 *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*.

Scholarship Reconsidered, which argues for recognizing and rewarding the scholarship of teaching. Even when the practitioner faculty track is named as faculty, often through full-time, non-tenure-track instructor appointments, tried in writing programs like Barry Maid's at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, this teaching-intensive track is not considered to be equal in status to the traditional research-scholar track at the university. Maid points out this problem, and he claims in his 2000 essay, "Non-Tenure-Track Instructors at UALR: Breaking Rules, Splitting Departments," that full-time faculty are not always interested in bridging the divide: "When it comes to those issues that are closest to them, labor issues and the governance of the academy, some are aristocrats of the first degree. Once a group sets itself up as being inherently superior to another group – whether that group is defined by academic degree, gender, or race – the first group cannot value or respect the different skills of the second group" (86). Unionized contingent faculty and non-unionized instructors placed in full-time lectureship positions are still paid far less than tenure-track faculty, have fewer voting rights in the departments they teach in, and have fewer chances to teach upper-division courses, attend conferences, or engage in other forms of professional development (Brumberger 93, 96-97). Even when full-time instructors are hired and told they are only expected to teach, they often push to present at conferences and publish, trying to fulfill the expectations of a tenure-track faculty member even though there is no promise and no potential to be compensated adequately for their extra work. Barry Maid, who described the effects of creating full-time instructorships for the University of Arkansas Little Rock Writing Program, explained this phenomenon: "The instructors were hired to be teachers first, who were then expected to engage in professional development. However, it seems as though over time they raised the ante themselves...they have come to believe that these professional activities are expected – not exceptional" (Maid "Non-Tenure-Track" 87). This

situation further extends the hidden economy of higher education, as students and institutions benefit from the unpaid, non-required, voluntary investments of these non-tenurable faculty members.

What is made clear through collections like *Moving a Mountain* and other case studies that chronicle the struggle for improved working conditions of contingent faculty is that there is no perfect solution to this complex problem, a problem that is intertwined with the structure of higher education. It is almost like trying to tear off the ivy from the walls of the ivory tower's stone halls: the roots of contingent faculty labor have kept, in many ways, the academy together. Some argue that because of the interlocking roles and fates of university faculty, administrators, and contingent faculty, that part-time, adjunct, and contingent faculty cannot lead the struggle for their ethical and responsible employment alone. Contingent faculty, full-time faculty, administrators, students, deans, taxpayers, and parents should instead work together to demand better working conditions for contingent faculty. Eileen E. Schell explains that improving the working conditions of contingent faculty – and through that, working towards the call for “quality writing instruction” argued in the CCCC Statement on Principles and Standards for Postsecondary Writing Instruction – depends on “enacting the four Cs: compensation, contracts, conditions, and coalition building” (“What’s the Bottom Line” 332). One way to improve working conditions is through advocating for higher salaries, which could, Schell claims, encourage contingent faculty members to continue innovating pedagogically and invest in their growth as a teacher and in their institution and students (“What’s the Bottom Line” 333). Schell also argues against the “piecemeal” system of contingent faculty labor, in which instructors are paid by the course and do not receive multi-year or renewable contracts (“What’s the Bottom Line” 333). In addition, Schell claims that changing the culture at the academy to one that values

teaching is as critical to improving conditions for part-time faculty as better salaries or contracts (“What’s the Bottom Line” 334). Finally, Schell raises the point that although some argue that unionization efforts create a two-tiered faculty system, that tiered, hierarchal system is in place, and ignoring it further marginalizes contingent faculty at the academy (“What’s the Bottom Line” 335). Schell recommends that those working on coalition-building in their institutions turn to advocates inside and outside of the academy, including filing complaints with accrediting agencies (“What’s the Bottom Line” 336-337). Relying on an alliance or coalition-building is tenuous, however: faculty and administrators do not always stay at an institution or at a particular position in an institution, so support for better working and living conditions for contingent faculty can evaporate when a key leader leaves.

Still, in the 1990s, more and more full-time tenured faculty members in rhetoric and composition published and presented research about contingent faculty labor, making the issue more visible in the field. The Non-Tenure-Track SIG at CCCC expanded in numbers and in presence in the late 1990s, hosting rallies that featured speakers and writing press kits that faculty could use at their institutions to build coalitions around the contingent faculty issue (Kirby-Werner A1). CCCC resolved in 1998 to sponsor the publication and editing of *Forum*, a newsletter published in *College Composition and Communication* that highlights essays, articles, and reflections written by non-tenure-track and adjunct writing faculty. The essays in *Forum* and others in the field’s other journals pointed at the unique location of rhetoric and composition in the struggle for improved contingent faculty working conditions: a significant majority of those in rhetoric and composition, because of its place at the academy, often responsible for administering the first-year writing requirement and the university writing center, are either contingent faculty or have been in contingent faculty positions in the past. It makes sense, given

those demographics and the discipline's historical valuing of the scholarship of teaching, that the field at large should lead the discussion of and actions toward improving the position of contingent faculty at the university.

Many of the full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members who took up the contingent faculty issue in their own scholarship did so in response to their practical, everyday work as writing program administrators who managed large writing programs dependent on contingent faculty. For example, Barry Maid's position as the writing program director of the stand-alone Department of Rhetoric and Writing, created at the University of Arkansas-Little Rock in 1993, gave him a valuable perspective through which to view the problems of a department whose labor force primarily was constituted by non-tenure-track writing instructors. Maid's research on contingent faculty labor is taken directly from his experiences overseeing non-tenure-track writing instructors. By seeing first-hand the connection between faculty working conditions and the quality of undergraduate teaching, scholars in composition and rhetoric have argued with chairs and deans, creating local coalitions to improve salaries, benefits, contracts, and access to professional resources for their faculty.

One of the solutions to the contingent faculty labor problem tried at a number of institutions was creating stand-alone writing programs; the scholarship on independent writing programs concurrently expanded with the scholarship on contingent labor from the mid-1980s to the late-1990s. Instead of being second-tier faculty teaching a second-tier discipline inside a traditional English department, scholars like Louise Phelps, Barry Maid, Ellen Cushman, and Carol Lipson and Molly Voorheis argue that moving composition into its own department or program gives those administrators and faculty working in it the opportunity to construct a teaching culture that values the scholarship of teaching and the labor of non-tenure-track faculty

members. Some of these independent writing programs had unionized faculty labor; others did not, but in either case, the move away from English department control both offered new opportunities and presented unexpected challenges for the full-time and contingent faculty working in them.

The contingent faculty labor problem, which pervades both rhetoric and composition and all of higher education, is not a simple problem to fix. However, it was an issue that the field took up with new fervor from the mid-1980s through the late-1990s and beyond: beginning with pronouncements like the 1986 Wyoming Resolution and the 1989 CCCC Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing and moving into coalition-building at CCCC, increased visibility through publications like *Forum* and collections such as *Moving a Mountain*, and local institutional efforts at collective bargaining in the mid- to late-1990s.

It is important to remember the context of the first, formative ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program – a program that employed, at times during this decade, over one hundred non-tenure-track writing instructors and teaching assistants. From 1986 to 1996, contingent faculty labor issues were highlighted continuously in the field of composition and rhetoric: through statements and resolutions like the 1986 Wyoming Resolution and the 1989 CCCC Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing; through conference presentations and special interest groups that addressed contingent faculty labor; through symposiums and responses in the field's major journals, like *College English* and *CCC*. The teachers of the Syracuse Writing Program went to the conferences, read the statements and responses, and participated in this conversation. The national discussion of teacher professionalization, unionization, and improving working conditions had an effect on the local structures and systems being developed at the Syracuse Writing Program.

Independent Writing Programs, 1985-2000

The 1980s and 1990s was a time of expansion for composition and rhetoric: membership in its professional organizations like CCCC and the Council of Writing Program Administrators was growing; attendance at the national conferences was on the rise; faculty were beginning to be tenured through their publications in the field's journals and book series; more and more monographs on disciplinary theory and history were published; universities were beginning to hire specialists in composition and rhetoric to run their writing programs, writing centers, and writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives; doctoral programs were established with concentrations and tracks in composition and rhetoric (trends described by Chris Anson and Hildy Miller in 1988 and Maureen Daly Goggin in 1997). It was a time of visible growth within the field. In contrast to the work of countless, nameless administrators, teachers, and scholars of composition and rhetoric – such as those histories told by James Berlin, Robert J. Connors and in Barbara L'Epplantier and Lisa Mastangelo's collection *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration* – who had no national, regional, or even institutional forum in which to publish and share their work, the last twenty years of the 20th century marked a time when the work of compositionists and rhetoricians began to be more systematically organized, published, and voiced through journals, edited collections, books, national organizations, and national and regional conference proceedings.

Many who experienced this phenomenon likened it to the process of growing up: that those in composition and rhetoric, like many teenagers on the brink of young adulthood, were beginning to assert themselves both on the national disciplinary community and in their local

institutions, to question where they were and who controlled them, and to demand change. Probably one of the most well-known assertions was declared by Maxine Hairston 1985 CCCC Chair's Address, which was reprinted in *College Composition and Communication* (a year before the creation of the stand-alone Syracuse University Writing Program in 1986.) In her landmark address, "Breaking Our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections," she argues, "We must listen to our different drummer and pay attention. For we are different" (Hairston 278-279). Her statement both echoed and started other conversations about the creation of independent writing programs – those writing programs and departments that were administratively separate from another disciplinary department, such as English. Her "breaking bonds" metaphor was tapped by other scholars, who showed through individual case studies of independent writing programs both the benefits and drawbacks of moving out (see, for example, the *A Field of Dreams* edited collection). These stand-alone departments and programs, no longer dependent on replicating the intellectual or institutional practices of English departments, could begin to experiment and figure out what the theories bounced about in the field's journals, conferences, and publications could look like on the ground, in practice. The rhetoric of much of the scholarship on independent writing programs from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s is the stuff of revolutions: of breaking bonds, to borrow Hairston's rhetoric, of tearing away, of starting anew.

Not all the independent writing programs founded during this time period were a result of a Marxist-like overthrow of literature. Some, like Syracuse's Writing Program, founded in 1986, were carefully constructed by upper-level faculty and administrators, a top-down decision instead of a bottom-up change (Gates 17). The scholarship on these newly independent writing programs, published in the field's journals and in edited collections, is grounded in case study: each independent writing program and department evolved within the local constraints of a

particular college or university, and thus carried the characteristics and values of that specific institution. Understanding how independent writing programs and departments develop depends on understanding the history, mission, and relationships between departments, administrators, and faculty at that institution (Maid “More Than a Room of Our Own;” Deis, Frye, and Weese; Phelps “Institutional Logic”). Even with the difficulty of drawing abstract theories and concepts from these concrete cases, it is possible to identify greater themes in the scholarship on independent writing programs from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. Composition and rhetoric saw in stand-alone writing departments and programs the potential to cut off what was often a dysfunctional relationship with the traditions and values of literature-centered English departments, to solve the labor issues of the contingent writing faculty working in the independent writing programs, and to create a home for writing at the university that would reflect the intellectual and administrative needs of composition and rhetoric.

Many who argue for the separation of writing programs from English departments use the history of the evolution of English departments (a history charted by James Berlin, Bruce McComiskey, Robert J. Connors, Susan Crowley, Richard Ohmann, and Susan Miller) to contend that the relationship between composition and rhetoric is one of historical coincidence and therefore, composition and literature do not need to be preserved in one conglomerate department. This history is traced by William Parker’s often-cited 1967 *College English* article, “Where Do English Departments Come From?” Vernacular English literature was not studied in American colleges and universities until the late 19th century. The introduction of English literature into the college liberal arts curriculum (which emphasized rhetoric, philology, and oratory) coincided with the rise in the number of undergraduates attending American colleges and universities and the adoption of the German research model, which restructured universities

into departments focused on research, scholarship, and publication (Parker 344, 346). The swell in college attendance helped drive the argument for the universal first-year composition course, as faculty argued that this new population of students was not prepared with the necessary literacy skills for university work. The rise of the popularity of literature intersected with the wane of rhetoric, which was identified with the fading study of elocution and then reduced to the first-year composition course. English departments in the 20th century were loose confederations of a variety of disciplines related to the production, study, and teaching of language: literature, linguistics, communication, theater, creative writing, and English education. Parker argues that the introduction of English literature at the university did not depend on the disappearance of rhetoric, and furthermore, he contends, the absence of rhetoric at American colleges and universities is affecting the integrity of a liberal arts education (350).

Parker was appealing to his literature colleagues, asking them to open up their departments and begin to value, through their English undergraduate and graduate curriculum and their tenure decisions, the work of those in rhetoric. Eighteen years later, with literary theorists still in control of English departments, it was compositionists and rhetoricians who began to use this departmental history to argue for the dissolution of composition and rhetoric from literature. Hairston points out the tremendous intellectual gap between literature, which privileges the finished literary product, and composition, which values the dynamic and evolving process of writing. “We are different,” Hairston proclaims, and the only way to make that difference clear and accepted is to make a psychological, if not physical, break with literature, to “move out from behind their shadows and no longer accept their definition of what our profession should be” (274).

The placement of composition in literature-focused English departments is not only a problem because of competing philosophical and intellectual values. Since composition was first reductively identified with the required first-year composition course, the scholarship, teaching, and administration of composition has been regarded by those in English departments and the university in general as remedial, service, or even “women’s” work lacking in theoretical rigor. This low status of composition and rhetoric is compounded by the gender demographics of university labor: a 2006 report by the American Association of University Presidents notes that, although in 2004, 53% of PhD recipients in the United States were women, women constituted only 39% of all full-time faculty ranks and, including just 24% of full professor ranks (West and Curtis 5). Keith Hjortshoj uses the allegory of the “left-hand castes” to explain the paradoxical position of composition at the academy: writing instructors teach what everyone seems to value (for almost every American undergraduate is required to take first-year writing), but that work is seen as messy, dirty, and tedious, work one would only pursue as a “hobby,” a term Chris Anson uses, or do before “moving on” and up to literature (“Who Wants Composition” 166). Joy Ritchie and Kathleen Boardman, in their 1999 *College Composition and Communication* article, which looks at the feminism theories and principles enacted in the field of composition, argue specifically that “Composition was and still is constructed as women’s work, and the majority of workers were women” (Ritchie and Boardman 594)⁹ Ritchie and Boardman’s observation has been corroborated by others in the field, who contend that the teaching writing and administering writing programs and centers have been and continue to be marginalized as “women’s work” by

⁹ Other scholars who have explored how the teaching and administration of composition has been defined as “women’s work” include Janet Emig and Louise Wetherbee Phelps in their 1995 collection, *Feminine Principles and Women's Experience in American Composition and Rhetoric*; Susan C. Jarratt and Lynn Worsham in their 1998 collection, *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words*; Sharon Crowley in her 1998 *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*; and Eileen Schell in her 1995 *Gypsy Academics and Mother-teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction*.

full-time tenured faculty in English departments, other university faculty, and upper administrators at the academy.

However, though some scholars argued that the solution to this sometimes dysfunctional, troubled, and at times abusive relationship between literature and composition, was to sever ties with literature, others warned against the independence of writing programs and departments for both philosophical and pragmatic reasons. Richard Lloyd-Jones maintains that literature and composition are complementary areas of study: he states that indeed, Literature is a form of rhetoric,” suggesting that composition and literature should be taught and administered together (“Who We Were” 493). Angela Crow cautions that stepping outside a traditionally, institutionally-recognized department could cause problems for compositionists going up for tenure, arguing that “tenure is always a wager, and one hopes that a fit exists between the individual and the community, but composition traditions complicate the ability to wager tenure” (228). What she is referring to here is the large pedagogically or administratively-oriented research and tasks compositions often do, which does not always translate as scholarship to those outside the discipline. Finally, Wendy Bishop points out that talk of “change, separation, divorce” is often unimaginable for compositionists who got their degrees in traditional English departments and worked in literature-focused English departments for the whole of their professional lives because they had forged personal friendships and relationships with their colleagues there (235).

Those who did move out – and many did between the mid-1980s and the late-1990s – had their share of success and heartache. Independent writing programs and departments popped up all over the map of higher education; the 2002 *A Field of Dreams* collection edited by Peggy O’Neill, Angela Crow, and Larry W. Burton feature several of the independent writing programs

and departments that were founded between the mid-1980s and late-1990s: Syracuse University (1986), University of Winnipeg (1987), Colgate University (1989), San Francisco State University (1990), University of Arkansas-Little Rock, University of Texas at Austin, San Diego State University, Metropolitan State University (all 1993), and Georgia Southern University (1997.) The case studies included in this collection show how each independent writing program emerged from institutionally-specific conditions (faculty in-fighting; external reviews; administrative decisions) and then met with unique, local campus constraints in terms of budget, physical location, and tenure decisions. They house a variety of programs: required first-year writing programs, writing centers, writing-across-the-curriculum programs, undergraduate and graduate minors, majors, concentrations, tracks, and degrees in composition, rhetoric, technical communication, multimedia writing, and writing studies.¹⁰

The case studies in the *A Field of Dreams* collection as well as other articles, chapters, and essays published about these independent programs show how these programs and departments are trying to reverse the low status composition pedagogy, theory, and administration held in traditional departments. In an independent writing program or department, teaching writing is not dirty work – it is everybody’s work. That collective valuing of writing, which Royer and Gilles argue is at the foundation of the Department of Academic, Creative, and Professional Writing at Grand Valley State University, cultivates a department where writing theory and pedagogy is actively discussed and taken seriously (28). However, just creating independent writing programs does not magically fix the contingent labor issues that plague the

¹⁰ The rise of independent programs in the last half of the 1990s coincided with the rise of the undergraduate writing major as students, taking into consideration the changing economic and technological landscape, began to migrate in large numbers from the traditional literature English major to one that would offer them practical, marketable skills in communication, rhetoric and writing. The growth of the undergraduate major, signaling composition’s legitimization at the university by taking on a structural identity similar to traditional departments, has been discussed by Fleming, Connors, the spring 2007 special edition of *Composition Studies*, and the edited collection *Coming of Age: The Advanced Writing Curriculum*.

field. Those independent programs without undergraduate or graduate programs still rely on contingent faculty to teach required first-year writing courses and staff their writing centers (Thomas P. Miller 266). Although the cache of the few administrators and tenure-track faculty to run these stand-alone programs has increased, transferring from a traditional literature-centered English department to an independent writing program does not guarantee that the material working conditions of graduate teaching assistants or part-time instructors will get better. Jane E. Hindman, commenting on her own Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University, writes about the continued low status and poor working conditions of the department's non-tenure-track lecturers. "This dream of independence has been less than liberating for many," Hindman contends, as she points out that the lecturers in her independent department now actually have less job security than when the writing program was housed in the English department (107). Stand-alone departments, she argues, create jobs for those with PhDs in rhetoric and composition, but do not solve the caste problem in higher education labor: "the expertise and authority of a majority of its practitioners are persistently and willfully ignored on a massive, institutional scale" (Hindman 107). Even the material working conditions of the tenure-track faculty and administrators are at risk, as both Bishop and Crow note, because the labor involved in starting and maintaining a stand-alone program and establishing good diplomatic relationships across campus can lead to faculty burn-out, especially among a small corps of junior faculty (Bishop 243-246; Crow 227-228). In addition, at some universities with stand-alone writing programs, such as Harvard and Cornell, the writing program administrators are not tenured or tenure-track faculty, and their administrative positioning puts them on the outside of the rest of the university faculty, shutting them out of faculty governance, curriculum

decisions, and furthering the divide between scholarship and administration (O'Neill and Schendel 193-194).

Although the low status of composition in literature-centered English departments and the often-deplorable material working conditions of the contingent faculty who teach college-level writing were both cited as reasons to “divorce” writing departments and programs from traditional English departments, these were not the only reasons composition and rhetoric scholars argued for independence (Bishop 233-235). Another major motive for moving out of English was the argument that composition and rhetoric was really a different field than literature, one with its own distinct pedagogies, values, theories, and research methodologies (Hairston 275-276). Moving composition out from the umbrella of literature could be beneficial to the field in two major ways: first, creating stand-alone departments could allow compositionists allow to establish administrative structures that would serve the particular administrative and pedagogical needs of writing programs, and second, it could allow writing teachers and scholars to explore the identity of their field more freely, without having to constantly legitimize their work and place it in the framework of literary studies and criticism (Royer and Gilles 23; Turner and Kearns 90-91). Shirley K Rose and Sherry Burgus Little argue this point, claiming that building independent writing departments does not “separate reading from writing, but terminates the exclusive relationship between writing studies and literary studies” (20). This argument is echoed by Kurt Spellmeyer, who claims that rhetoric should reassert its place in the academy as a “metadiscipline,” one that is concerned with how knowledge is made and communicated (287). Some independent programs were founded on this

idea that rhetoric and composition was not owned by English, an idea made popular in the 1980s through writing-across-the-curriculum scholarship.¹¹

The move out of English departments is sometimes either catalyzed by (or catalyzes) the creation of an undergraduate writing minor, vertical writing major, or a graduate degree program, as seen at Grand Valley State University, Syracuse University, Georgia Southern University, Metropolitan State University, and others. These expanded writing curricula give faculty the opportunity to define to themselves and to others at their institution what the field is. Undergraduate and graduate curriculum are beginning to and will continue to name and delineate the interests, research sites, and specialties of the field, allowing composition to move into other conversations, such as those concerning education, new media, economics, deliberative politics, and social justice, expanding the field beyond an identity in the humanities to one that explores the discipline's connections to social science, business, and the design arts.¹²

Again, it is important to read the history of the first ten years (1986-1996) of the Syracuse Writing Program through the lens of the scholarship produced on the formation of independent writing programs. The Syracuse Writing Program was one of the programs highlighted by Peggy O'Neill and Ellen Schendel in the *Field of Dreams* collection; by 2002, the Syracuse Writing Program had already been recognized as one of the more well-known stand-alone writing

¹¹ For an introduction to writing across the curriculum theory and implementation, see Toby Fulwiler and Art Young's 1990 collection, *Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum*; David R. Russell's 1991 *Writing in the Academic Disciplines*; and Susan H. McLeod and Margot Soven's 1992 collection, *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs*.

¹² For conversation about the new directions for composition research, especially in its implications for the content and scope of pedagogy in the undergraduate writing major and first-year composition, see John Trimbur's 2000 essay in *College Composition and Communication*, "Composition and the Circulation of Writing;" Diana George and John Trimbur's chapter, "Cultural Studies and Composition" in the 2001 *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* collection, Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle's 2007 *College Composition and Communication* article, "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions;" and Kathleen Blake Yancey's 2004 CCCC Chair's Address, "Made Not Only in Words."

programs in the United States. The history of the Syracuse Writing Program, told in the next two chapters, demonstrates how the freedom that comes from breaking bonds with English Departments is played out through curricular and administrative decisions. The Syracuse Writing Program's independence was in many ways a current laboratory to test out the ideas concerning disciplinary identity that were being exchanged and debated in the field's journals and at the discipline's conferences.

The Syracuse University Writing Program in Composition and Rhetoric Scholarship

The founding and development of the Syracuse University Writing Program, an independent writing program dependent on part-time contingent faculty labor, coincided with the rise of scholarship in rhetoric and composition on contingent faculty labor and the move towards creating stand-alone writing departments and programs. It was a program that reflected the contemporary conversations of the field and, at times, offered different solutions and paths than those proposed through the field's journals and at conferences like CCCC. As shown through the previous section on contingent labor, through the 1990s, the disciplinary rhetoric surrounding improving working conditions for adjunct and part-time instructors began to center on collective bargaining and unionization efforts, efforts that were realized at many institutions and state university systems across the country. What is significant about the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996, the first ten years of this stand-alone writing program, is that coalition-building among administration, staff, full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants happened, but not solely in the direction of a union solution. The early administrators of the Syracuse Writing Program worked to integrate the diverse abilities, needs, and constraints

of the Writing Program members. The Writing Program created local solutions and structures that addressed the particular needs of its part-time instructors (see Lipson and Voorheis 114-115; Phelps “A Different Ideal” 3, 6).

This does not mean that part-time instructor unionization was not discussed as an option. As seen in the previous chapter of this dissertation, part-time instructors at Syracuse University worked along with other adjuncts across campus and the Association for Part-time Instructors toward creating an union before Louise Phelps arrived to help construct the new Writing Program in 1986, prominent full-time faculty members and professional writing instructors in the Program were nationally-recognized scholars and advocates for part-time faculty unionization, and, today, the professional writing instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program are members of a university-wide adjunct union, a union that several of the professional writing instructors actively campaigned for and led. Still, the non-union structures put into place by the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996 are important to study because they represent an alternate way – what was included in the umbrella term of “professionalization” used in the discussions leading up to and following the Wyoming Resolution and Statement of Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing – to conceive of part-time instructors as an integral part of a writing program. The attempt to unionize the part-time faculty failed at Syracuse in the early 1980s, but the drive to improve working conditions for the instructors did not. From its inception in 1986, the Syracuse Writing Program attempted – not perfectly – to work towards better working conditions, salaries, and benefits for the part-time instructors, creating through these efforts a dynamic and heterogeneous teaching and administrative force, one made of full-time faculty, staff, administrators, teaching assistants, and part-time faculty.

How the Syracuse Writing Program did this – creating structures for teacher evaluation, professional development, and curriculum development which tried to involve all stakeholders – was of great interest to the rest of the field. Both full-time faculty and part-time instructors in the Writing Program gave conference presentations and wrote articles and chapters about the administration of the program.¹³ In addition, outside scholars who came to Syracuse to do evaluations of the program or to speak learned about how the Writing Program functioned through their conversations with Program members. This last section of the literature review maps out some of the literature written about the Syracuse Writing Program from the mid-1980s through the late-1990s. This literature review focuses on “public” scholarship, scholarship disseminated through the field’s journals and conference proceedings. The later chapters in this dissertation will incorporate writing about the Syracuse Writing Program from internal administrative and curricular documents, such as memos, annual reports, teacher sourcebooks, and newsletters. Thus, this literature review gives a limited portrait of the Writing Program, a perspective that will be amplified and complicated throughout the rest of the dissertation. Some of the scholarship presented here in this literature review is written by members of the Writing Program; other scholarship is written from an outsider perspective. It is important to point out that although conference presentations are not typically written up and published, the presentations about the Syracuse Writing Program are a major way the field came to know about what was happening in the program, which led to further research on the Writing Program.

¹³ Some of this scholarship includes James T. Zebroski’s 1992 chapter, “The Syracuse Writing Program and Cultural Studies: A Personal View of the Politics of Development;” his 2002 chapter, “Composition and Rhetoric Inc: Life after the English Department at Syracuse University;” Carol Lipson and Molly Voorheis’ 2000 essay, “The Material and the Cultural as Interconnected Texts: Revising Material Conditions for Part-Time Faculty at Syracuse University;” Louise Phelps’ 1987 NCTE presentation, “Fitting the Institution That’s There;” and Nance Hahn and Steve Thorley’s 1988 CCCC presentation, “The Year of Living Dangerously.”

Many of these conference presentations placed the activities in and development of the Syracuse Writing Program in juxtaposition with the current conversations and debates in the field. Louise Phelps, the first director of the Syracuse Writing Program, explained in her 1991 MLA conference presentation, “A Different Ideal...and Its Practical Results,” how the heterogeneous staffing and professional development system in the Syracuse Writing Program acted as an alternate model for ethically treating part-time and non-tenure-track writing instructors. Instead of following the guidelines presented in the 1989 CCCC Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, which argued for converting all contingent faculty positions to full-time, tenure-track ones, Phelps joins others in the field, like Tuman, to ask pointedly about the practicality of the Statement’s ideal labor plan. Phelps questions the assumption implied by the Statement that the only solution to composition’s labor problem is equity through homogeneity. Phelps argues that the idea that all tenure-track positions in the academy are equal is a myth: the academy is a hierarchal monolith, and faculty are compensated and treated differently based on their gender, race, and discipline (“A Different Ideal” 6). The solution outlined in the CCCC Statement is impractical, she says: “the 4Cs Statement errs in trying to impose a universal answer when what is needed is imagination, flexibility, and fresh thinking about goals as well as means” (“A Different Ideal” 3). Phelps and other Syracuse Writing Program faculty and administrators, in the absence of a collective bargaining solution available at the university, cultivated another approach based on professionalization of writing instructors, one that was explained in detail as a “good practice” by Roberta Kirby-Werner, a part-time instructor in the Syracuse Writing Program who served as the editor of *Forum* in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Unlike many part-time writing instructors at other universities (or even other contingent faculty at Syracuse), Syracuse Writing Program

part-time instructors were given teaching loads and were placed on a merit pay structure that allowed them to construct a career as a university writing instructor.

Not only is insisting on tenure-line positions for all writing instructors financially impractical, Phelps points out in her 1999 chapter “Mobilizing Human Resources” that transforming the positions into ones that require a PhD puts instructors, some with decades of experience teaching in a college classroom, out of a job. A WPA cannot design a program around an imaginary corps of teachers; she must work with the faculty that she has. Instead of one-size-fits-all solutions, Phelps argues for local design, an inventive process that takes into account local stakeholders and constraints to come up with a realistic plan to ethically include part-time instructors in a writing program’s teaching faculty.

Phelps, as director and co-director of the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1993, authored much of the scholarship about the administrative structures designed for writing instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program, and the program became known to the field through her research. Present in much of her scholarship, and key to understanding her theory of writing program administration, is the concept of local design. In her 1987 NCTE conference presentation, “Fitting the Institution That’s There,” which foreshadows her response to the CCCC Statement, she argues that WPAs should to recognize and define their curricular and staffing challenges as design problems. To illustrate this, she explains how the Syracuse Writing Program’s early professional development system was a design solution to not just introduce the program’s part-time teachers to disciplinary theory in order to construct a new writing curriculum at the university, but also a way to professionalize the part-time teachers so that the Writing Program could argue for better working conditions for them. The needs of the students,

the administrators, and the part-time teachers, Phelps argues, were all considered together when constructing the Syracuse Writing Program's professional development system.

By investing part-time teachers with the power to help shape the Syracuse Writing Program's curriculum and administrative structure, Phelps is arguing in practice against the theory/practice divide in the discipline and in the academy, a schism she discusses in her book, *Composition as a Human Science*, and in other articles and conference presentations. Treating part-time instructors, who are far more experienced classroom teachers than many tenured composition professors, not according to what they lack (degrees, status at the university), but instead, seeing their unique practical wisdom, experience, and leadership potential as assets is key, Phelps argues, to designing an effective and ethical writing program. Practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, is characterized by critical reflection, purposeful experimentation, and knowledge born out of action ("Practical Wisdom" Phelps 864). One of the reasons part-time instructors have a low status in the university and poor working conditions is because their teaching is not regarded as knowledge-making. Phelps and others, such as Stephen North, argue that practice like pedagogy is not necessarily governed by theory: teachers, through their practical work, create valuable, context-specific knowledge. That knowledge is magnified and strengthened when developed inside a teaching community, and Phelps uses the work of the part-time instructors and the heterogeneous professional development structure in the Syracuse Writing Program to explain how knowledge and theory emerges out of activities like curriculum development ("Practical Wisdom" 867-868).

This transformation of the culture of the Syracuse Writing Program from a writing program managed and largely ignored by the English Department to an independent program that visibly and vocally valued the theory and teaching of composition helped transform the

material working conditions of the part-time instructors and teaching assistants in the Program. Carol Lipson, a founding full-time faculty member in the Syracuse Writing Program, and Molly Voorheis, a long-time part-time instructor in the Writing Program, explain in their co-written chapter in the *Moving a Mountain* collection how both revolutions – cultural and material – happened together in the Writing Program, informing and strengthening each other. For example, the part-time instructors’ study, discussion, and practical application of composition theory allowed the Writing Program’s administrators to claim to the university’s dean and provost that the part-time instructors were specialized, knowledgeable, and valuable, which in turn gave the Writing Program the opportunity to argue for peer evaluation and a merit-based pay structure for the part-time instructors. As Lipson and Voorheis argue, “the force of the new teaching culture was to emphasize the professional status of part-time faculty, and to underline their value to the program and to the profession.” (118). The new and dynamic culture in the Writing Program was not perfect for a few reasons. First, the culture of merit and promotion was dependent on funds from higher administration at the university. This had two problems: the merit-pay system was subject to university-wide budget cuts, which diminished the money pool that was supposed to both provide annual raises and merit pay increases, and also, the merit-pay plan accommodated promotion, but only to a certain point; there was not an infinite number of steps included in the plan, so instructors soon became veteran with no place to move up (118). Second, Lipson and Voorheis argue that some instructors did not want to be evaluated for merit: they wanted all instructors to be treated equally, and they did not want to go through the process of evaluation each year (116-117). Finally, there were some instructors who felt that the extensive administrative systems dedicated to part-time writing instructor evaluation and professional development added to a culture of supervision and monitoring (121-122). Instructors were

suspicious, Lipson and Voorheis explain, because although “the program identified these sites [professional development and evaluation structures, like the merit-bay pay plan] as generative places for the creation of a new culture, the part-time faculty viewed them through lenses ground in the old teaching culture – or in similar hierarchical environments” (121). Lipson and Voorheis’ description of the Writing Program’s part-time instructor evaluation system and administrative structure gives an important insider perspective of how a complex, independent writing program could integrate part-time instructors into the core of the program.

The articles, chapters, and conference presentations written by Syracuse Writing Program members about the administrative structures and material conditions of part-time instructors in the Program also intersect with the contemporary literature on establishing independent writing programs. Phelps emphasizes how important it is to research and understand local context, an argument also made by Maid and others who write about constructing independent writing programs. Her description of the early years of the Syracuse Writing Program, years marked by chaos and excitement, echoes other accounts of new stand-alone writing departments and programs. Two teaching assistants who taught in the first year of the Writing Program (1986-1987), Nance Hahn and Steve Thorley, dubbed their experience in their 1988 CCCC presentation “the year of living dangerously;” without any precedent, the teachers and the administrators in the brand-new stand-alone program were encouraged by Phelps to experiment and explore, freedom that was both exciting and frightening. In her 1999 chapter, “Telling a Writing Program Its Own Story,” a condensed version of her keynote address to the Syracuse Writing Program on its 10th anniversary, Phelps points out that this oscillation between chaos and order is a hallmark of any complex system or organization, and argues that WPAs must work with the uncertain, dynamic system, not against it. All writing programs evolve within evolving university systems

and greater socioeconomic and political contexts, and in order for a writing program to stay relevant to its faculty, students, and university, it must remain critical, reflective, and flexible.

In the *Field of Dreams* collection on independent writing programs, the Syracuse Writing Program is highlighted as one of the few stand-alone writing programs at a private research university. In their chapter, Peggy O’Neill and Ellen Schendel describe the features of the Syracuse Writing Program that allow it to succeed, including an independent budget, visibility on campus, and tenure guidelines that view teaching and service as scholarship. (These Writing-Program-authored tenure guidelines are cited as an example of flexible definitions of scholarship in Ernest Boyer’s 1990 landmark book, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, which addresses the changing landscape and expectations of American university professors.) O’Neill and Schendel’s account of the Syracuse Writing Program, based on interviews with full-time faculty members and administrators in the Program, does not explain the deep, integrated role the part-time instructors have in the day-to-day functioning of the program. The curricular, administrative, and evaluative work of the part-time instructors, which is “published” primarily to other Program members through newsletters or orally in coordinating groups, is largely undocumented and invisible to researchers who look at the Syracuse Writing Program from an outside perspective.¹⁴

The Syracuse Writing Program’s undergraduate curriculum, which was constructed in part by the part-time instructors in the program, has been both lauded and criticized by those in the field. The curriculum has changed in focus over the years, but its continual emphasis on studio learning, rhetorical principles, and writing process, all informed by contemporary

¹⁴ David Franke, who was a writing instructor at Syracuse University during its first ten years, discusses this concept, labeled by the Syracuse Writing Program as “teacher-talk,” in his 1999 dissertation, *The Practice of Genre: Composing in an Expert Community*.

composition theory, marked a sea change from the rigid curriculum that characterized the old writing curriculum the Writing Program replaced in 1986. The freedom Phelps and other administrators gave to the part-time instructors and teaching assistants to experiment with theory and pedagogy was, as teaching assistants like Hance and Thorley explained, both thrilling and terrifying.

One of the more visible critiques of the Syracuse Writing Program was from James T. Zebroski, one of the founding full-time members of the Syracuse Writing Program. He criticized the Syracuse Writing Program undergraduate curriculum, arguing that its studio and process-based structure ignored larger social, cultural and political implications of writing, in effect claiming that Syracuse had missed the social turn the rest of the field had taken (“The Syracuse Writing Program” 93). Zebroski extended his critique of the Syracuse Writing Program’s administration and curriculum in his 2002 chapter in the *Beyond English Inc.* collection, “Composition and Rhetoric, Inc: Life after the English Department at Syracuse University.” His 1992 essay evaluates the Syracuse Writing Program’s required writing curriculum five years after it was first implemented program-wide, during the 1987-1988 academic year. The design and development of the required writing courses, though overseen by the Writing Program’s full-time faculty and administrators (including Zebroski, who taught the composition practicum to teaching assistants teaching the curriculum for the first time), was largely constructed by the writing instructors themselves, who were given freedom, within the constraints of the Program’s administrative systems, to design courses that met the objectives for the core writing courses. Zebroski’s identification of the Writing Program’s curriculum as studio and process-based is correct: the two university-wide required writing courses created by the Writing Program were

called “Studio 1” and “Studio 2,” names which illustrates the theoretical foundation of the writing curriculum in those courses.

Zebroski’s critique that the Syracuse Writing Program privileges the individual at the expense of the larger social and economic implications of writing does not seem to be entirely correct. From 1986-1992, the Syracuse Writing Program was engaged in a non-stop process of development, churning out scores of statements, charters, guidebooks, and curricular materials, some which do not seem to be explicitly connected to the “social turn” in composition, instead focusing on the development of individual teachers and students. However, seen macroscopically, the activities in the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996, extending from the classroom to the administrative halls and offices, was decidedly interested in the larger cultural, economic, and social implications of writing and writing instruction. The efforts to professionalize the part-time writing instructors demonstrate in small part the concern the Writing Program had for the implications of treating teachers (and students) as producers, not merely receivers, of knowledge. In addition, research in cultural studies was a popular point of discussion in the Writing Program beginning in the late 1980s; as the next chapter shows, part-time instructors even established cultural studies reading groups in the hopes that the scholarship could inform their pedagogy.

During its first ten years – 1986 to 1996 – the Syracuse University Writing Program’s curricular and administrative structure reflected and complicated many of the current conversations in the field surrounding contingent faculty labor, independent writing programs, and the valuing of pedagogy and practical knowledge in the field. The administrators, faculty, and instructors who wrote and talked about the Writing Program’s structure spoke from an insider perspective, and although they understood the critical role the part-time instructors played

in constructing and developing the Program, a detailed historical account of the specific administrative mechanisms put into place by and for the part-time instructors has not yet been written. Since the Syracuse Writing Program is a nationally significant program – one of the first and only independent writing programs at a private research university, one that depends on a large corps of part-time contingent faculty instructors and that has recently grown into a department with a PhD program and undergraduate major – it seems important that this history be told. Outside studies of the Program, such as O’Neill and Schendel’s chapter, describe the role of full-time faculty and administrators in the Program, but do not sufficiently account for the work of the part-time instructors in building the Program.

From 1986 to 1996, the Syracuse Writing Program enacted many of the ideas discussed by others in the field, including finding ways to ameliorate the working conditions of contingent faculty, seeking out avenues to professionalize writing instructors, and establishing a curricular and administrative identity as an independent, stand-alone writing program. The activities happening in the Syracuse Writing Program added to these discussions, as shown through the scholarship produced from and about the Program.

The next chapter explains some of the methodological issues of this study. I have a clear insider position: I am a PhD student in the Syracuse University Composition and Cultural Rhetoric program, housed by the Syracuse Writing Program; I have taught for four years in the Syracuse Writing Program; and three members of my dissertation committee are former or current directors of the Writing Program. This position has benefits and drawbacks. I have been given access to administrative documents (memos to deans, program planning documents, teacher resource guides) that are not yet archived at the university. I also have the opportunity to work closely in the place and with the people that form the basis of my research. In order to

account for this insider perspective, I complement the history presented in the administrative document archive (which I have scanned, selected, and constructed) with interviews of part-time instructors, full-time faculty, and administrators who worked in the Syracuse Writing Program during its first ten years, from 1986 to 1996. The next two chapters look at two of the primary administrative structures developed for and by the part-time instructors in the Writing Program: the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. Both have been discussed by Phelps and others in articles, chapters, and conference presentations, and both show the significant freedom and responsibility the part-time instructors had in the early construction of the Syracuse Writing Program's curriculum, administration, and evaluation procedures. The chapters use the archived administrative documents and interviews to show how the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee were perceived and experienced by different stakeholders in the Syracuse Writing Program.

Chapter 3: The Syracuse Writing Program through the Archives, 1986-1996

Last summer, my husband and I spent seven weeks cleaning out his grandmother's house, garage, and barn. She died five years ago, but her things – all the furniture, books, clothing, and papers – had stayed there, abandoned, until it was finally time to get the place ready to go on the housing market.

You think a lot about life when you sort through photos and address books, calendars and cards. You're a sleuth, constructing portraits of people you've hardly met through the odds and ends they've saved. The story that emerges from what's left becomes a new definition of who these people were, what they believed, and what they meant to others around them.

My experience cleaning out my husband's grandmother's house and constructing her history reflects in many ways the challenges I encountered when assembling a history of the Syracuse Writing Program through snippets of scanned administrative documents and sound bites from interviews.

My husband and I opened a trunk that was in one of the upstairs bedrooms. Flo – that's what we called his grandmother – saved all her letters from her first husband, Jack, in that trunk. She met Jack, a Royal Navy officer, at a club in downtown Boston in 1944. It was the war: she was working as a secretary; he was stationed in Boston. They flew to Scotland and got married. They got pregnant, and she came back to the States to stay with her family. He stayed in England. She had her only child, a son, in the spring of 1946. Jack never came back. Flo found out that when they were dancing in Boston, he had another wife and son back in England, and now that the war was over, he was going to stay with them. Flo was alone.

The letters from Jack in the trunk were from the summer of 1945 through the spring of 1947. There are scores of them, written to “Darling,” ardently arguing that he still loves her, that he thinks of the baby all the time. When I read them, I wonder how Flo must have felt, inching closer to her due date, having a baby without her husband there, tending to a newborn on her own. The only frustration, anger, and worry I know of hers is what I glean from Jack’s responses, as I try to build an understanding of both of them from one side of the story, a side that seems to be rhetorically positioned to cover up any guilt or blame.

Though the history of the Syracuse Writing Program that I have written using archived administrative documents is a far cry from a star-crossed story of love and betrayal, I see interesting parallels between this project and Jack’s letters, written on thin, pale-blue Air Mail paper. When you begin to spin truths about people or events from the tangle of documents before you, it’s important to remember how fractured the stories contained in the papers are. Not everything is there. I don’t have Flo’s letters, and there’s no telling how many of Jack’s are missing: misplaced, torn up, thrown out. My history in this chapter has a similar narrow and incomplete perspective, relying heavily on director-written annual reports, memos exchanged between administrative staff members, and newsletters and guides written for the Syracuse Writing Program teachers. In my next chapter, I add to the complexity of this history by incorporating the retrospective interviews of part-time instructors, administrators, and faculty who worked in the Writing Program from 1986-1996. Even between these two perspectives – contemporary documents and retrospective interviews – I don’t have everything, and I don’t have an equal representation from all stakeholders: other full-time faculty, part-time faculty, teaching assistants. It is impossible to fully reproduce the past; what we write and know about it is only partial.

Added to this is another layer of rhetorical complexity. Each letter stamped and sealed by Jack was an argument, written to a particular audience (Flo) for a particular purpose (to sidestep accusations? To apologize? To comfort? We'll never know.) Certain truths were avoided; others amplified. So, too, was positioned each Writing Program annual report, addressed to a Syracuse University dean or vice chancellor who held budgetary oversight over the Program. Each statement of the Program's success was an argument for more faculty lines, more benefits for part-time instructors, and more funding for expanding the Writing Program's lower-division mission into one that incorporated a university-wide writing center, an undergraduate minor and major, and a graduate PhD program. In order to figure out, detective-like, what really happened, it is necessary as a reader to interpret the documents as subjective pieces to the puzzle.

My reaction to Jack's letters is also colored by how I knew Flo: spirited, independent, opinionated. I'm not surprised she left the baby for a month and flew to England to try to convince Jack to stay with her, only surprised that he didn't acquiesce. My response to reading about the coordinating group structure and the teacher evaluation committee in the Syracuse Writing Program is similarly influenced by my personal relationship with the Syracuse Writing Program as a PhD student, a teaching assistant, and a colleague of many of the teachers and faculty whose reports and letters were saved and found their way into this history. It is the struggle of the participant-researcher, trying to pull away towards a degree of objectivity, constantly having to come to terms with the effect on the research project of one's own subjectivity, knowledge, and personal relationships.

There's also the draw in history-writing to see yourself in the people you are investigating, especially when their lives seem relevant to your own. I'm sure Jack's letters seem to particularly resonate with me because, as a young wife and mother of four, I couldn't imagine

taking that journey through pregnancy and infancy alone. I read Flo through my own fears and anxieties. As I write the history of the work of the part-time instructors in the first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program, I see the efforts to validate their knowledge, give them leadership opportunities, and encourage critical reflective practices, and cultivate a teaching community through my current experience as working as a full-time visiting assistant professor at a local institution. Separate from the Syracuse Writing Program culture, I read the work to establish the coordinating group structure and teacher evaluation committee with a bit of awe, putting myself, a contingent faculty member at a small, neighboring liberal arts college, in the shoes of the Syracuse part-time instructors. I also interpret this history through the lens of a future writing program administrator, noting to myself how the faculty administrators tried to bridge their budget, space, and time constraints with the needs of their instructor corps.

Where I am now affects what I see. My identifications with the Syracuse Writing Program are present in my reading and writing of this history, but even so, I strive to exert a critical, historical lens over the story of the Syracuse Writing Program. The history that follows, built by piecing together archived administrative and curricular documents, is only partial, a problem that I address in the next chapter, which uses interviews to intersperse the retrospective perspective and understandings of others into this history. Even in its incompleteness, however, uncovering the details of a ten-year history about how the Syracuse part-time instructors helped build the curriculum and evaluation structures in a newly-formed independent writing program is helpful to the field. It gives the discipline, which still is embroiled in the deep, ethical problems of relying on contingent faculty labor to staff writing programs, a longitudinal study of how one stand-alone writing program dealt with those problems, and the effects, both good and bad, of the administrative systems created on both the Writing Program and those who worked in it.

* * *

This chapter explains the structure of two of the prominent professional development systems created in the Syracuse University Writing Program for its part-time writing instructors: the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. When Louise Wetherbee Phelps came to Syracuse as the Writing Program's first director in 1986, she was charged by the university to construct a new writing program informed by modern composition theory (Gates et al). However, a writing program as large as Syracuse's – one that taught 3,000 students every semester – is not run by the director alone. Phelps wrote about the necessity to rely on the work of *all* a writing program's faculty in her 1999 hypothetical case study, "Mobilizing Human Resources," which is a fictionalized case adapted loosely from the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Syracuse Writing Program. The handful of full-time faculty members in the Writing Program had their attention split between the needs of the Syracuse Writing Program and their own research agendas. From the very beginning of her time at Syracuse, Phelps took on as her responsibility cultivating an attitude among the part-time instructors – who, along with the teaching assistants at Syracuse, taught the vast majority of required writing courses –that they, alongside the full-time tenure-track faculty, were the faculty of the Writing Program who had the knowledge, expertise, and ability to have a say in the program's curricular and administrative agenda ("Mobilizing").

In much of the literature about independent writing programs, the focus is on the work of the full-time faculty and administrators, and the story sometimes becomes about how these often tenured or tenure-track faculty members negotiate with upper university administration, make decisions, and front challenges and difficulties. However, that's not the whole story. At Syracuse, through structures like the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation

committee, part-time instructors played a crucial role in the Writing Program's development and decision-making (Phelps "Telling").

It is important to note that the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee at Syracuse did not emerge solely out of a philosophical desire to give part-time instructors a voice in the Program. The work of recreating a writing program was too huge for a single director to do alone, even with the help of three or four other full-time faculty who served other administrative roles. The full-time faculty members in the Writing Program needed the part-time instructors in order to create a viable program: the instructors knew the local Syracuse context and Syracuse students, and they were the ones who would interpret the new writing curriculum in their classrooms. The part-time instructors needed to be on board if the new writing curriculum was to be more than a grand vision on paper. In this way, the professional development structures in the Syracuse Writing Program were a design solution: using the available resources of the part-time instructors and the teaching assistants, a limited budget, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards within the constraints of a university system that relied on adjunct labor. This orientation to thinking of administration as design is a central concept in much of Phelps' writing about the Syracuse Writing Program and writing program administration (see Phelps "Fitting the Institution That's There"; "Mobilizing Human Resources"; "A Different Ideal"; "Institutional Logic").

I use archived administrative documents from the first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program (1986-1996) to explain the structure and administrative reasoning for the coordinating group structure and the teacher evaluation committee, two of the major professional development initiatives cultivated in the Program's early years. The documents that I will use to construct this history come from both the Writing Program's own archives (the Program made efforts early on

to document and archive its major curricular and administrative initiatives) and the personal collections of Louise Wetherbee Phelps, who kept all the documents the Writing Program also archived in addition to other memos, annual reports, meeting agendas, correspondence, teacher sourcebooks, and curricular planning papers. Louise Phelps graciously gave me access to these items, which have given me a unique and intimate understanding of the inner workings of the early Syracuse Writing Program. I have transformed her physical collections, housed in bank boxes and file cabinets, into a digital archive collection, as I have scanned through, read, labeled, and sorted the documents into a working archive of my own. These scanned documents will eventually be incorporated in part into a publically-accessible archive at Syracuse University, in the hopes that the materials will be of use to future researchers. It was through this archival work that I became interested in the professional development structures for the part-time instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program. Through my in-depth reading of Phelps' collection, I began to notice how often part-time instructors had a hand in both making the major curricular and administrative decisions of the early Program and writing Program procedures and proposals. Through a cursory study of the Writing Program's budgets and staff listings, I started to see just how much of the Writing Program's resources were allocated to the professional development and evaluation of the part-time instructors, who, with the teaching assistants, constituted the vast majority of personnel in the Writing Program. It was obvious to me through reading through Writing Program documents that the part-time instructors were major players and stakeholders in the development of the newly independent Syracuse Writing Program, and also apparent, through both reading Phelps' conference presentations and articles and talking to her over the years as a doctoral student in the Syracuse composition and cultural rhetoric program, that Phelps understood how important the part-time instructors were to the success of the Syracuse

Writing Program. Her respect and regard for the expertise of the Writing Program's part-time instructors was shared by the rest of the full-time faculty in the Writing Program, and contingent faculty issues continue to be an area of study for some Syracuse Writing Program faculty members. Several faculty members in the Syracuse Writing Program worked for the benefit of the Program's part-time instructors. For example, Carol Lipson, who came to Syracuse University as an English faculty member in 1978 and served as the Writing Program's associate director, co-director, and director at times from 1986 through 2009, was primary advocate for the part-time instructors at the University during her career at Syracuse University. She was instrumental in arguing on the Faculty Senate Budget Committee for increased salary and benefits for the part-time instructors. Also, Eileen Schell, a faculty member in the Writing Program and Director of the Writing Program since 2008, has published scholarship in contingent labor issues (including her co-edited collection *Moving a Mountain*, edited with former Syracuse faculty member Patricia Lambert Stock, who herself worked on developing the Writing Program's Teacher Evaluation Committee and has done significant work through NCTE on contingent faculty labor issues) and has worked through the university's administration to advocate for the Syracuse Writing Program part-time writing instructors and contingent faculty members at other institutions.

I chose to focus my research on two of the professional development structures created for part-time instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program: the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee. They were not the only avenues for professional development: the Program also sent part-time instructors to conferences like CCCC, created and stocked a resource library for the part-time instructors in the Writing Program's main office, and involved part-time instructors in Program initiatives ranging from Writing Resources, a writing-across-the-

curriculum partnership program between the Writing Program and other departments and schools at Syracuse University, to the Summer Team, a group of part-time instructors, full-time faculty members, and teaching assistants charged with writing a common syllabus and the teacher handbook for the coming academic year. I am limiting my study, though, to the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee because they were some of the earliest and most structured systems put in place by the Writing Program, systems that allowed the part-time instructors a voice in creating the curriculum, assessment, and administration of a newly independent Writing Program. Both the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee also constituted a significant portion of the Writing Program's budget, a financial investment that would eventually strain the resources of the Writing Program, triggering a redesign of the evaluation of and roles for the part-time instructors in the Writing Program. This redesign, as Phelps points out in her own scholarship, is a necessary part of any dynamic system ("Fitting"; "Administration as a Design Art"; "Institutional Logic").

The documents I use to construct this history of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee do not just explain the chronology of these structures in the early Writing Program; they also describe some of the contemporary reaction to them, feedback encased in coordinating group reports, committee meeting agendas and minutes, and in the commentary within annual reports written both in the Program and to the Syracuse University Dean of Arts and Sciences. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I explore the retrospective reactions to these two professional development structures through describing and analyzing the interviews I had with former and current faculty, staff, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants who worked in the Syracuse Writing Program during my time period of study (1986-1996). These interviews gave me a deeper understanding of how different stakeholders in the Writing Program

– the part-time instructors, teaching assistants, full-time faculty, staff, and faculty administrators
– had very complex and sometimes contradictory reactions to the professional development structures in the Writing Program and, broadly, the role and responsibilities of the part-time instructors in creating the independent Syracuse Writing Program. This chapter, then, will be limited in its perspective, relying on the archived documents to describe the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee. The next chapter will deepen and complicate this history. It is my hope that these two chapters will construct a multi-voiced history of the first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program, one that explores the role of part-time instructors in its founding and early development.

The purpose of this chapter to understand how a comprehensive, multifaceted professional development and evaluation system, designed to support and prepare writing instructors for their work in the classroom, functioned over a ten-year history at an independent writing program in a private, mid-sized American university. The goal in this chapter is not to evaluate how good these systems were, or to suggest them as models to be adopted elsewhere, but instead to show how these structures were designed, implemented, and also how they evolved over a decade. Rather than focusing on the immediate creation or aftermath of an administrative structure, this chapter extends the focus and analysis, allowing the reader to see the complicated benefits and consequences, from an administrative perspective, of investing in systems that support contingent faculty labor. The field of composition and rhetoric, and the sub-specialty of writing program administration, does not have many histories of a single program that take this long-range view, a historical stance necessary to understand the lasting cultural effects of administrative decisions. The coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee in the Syracuse Writing Program did not solve the contingent faculty labor problem,

and its independence from the English Department did not result in a decade-long celebration. The administrative systems constructed in the Syracuse Writing Program worked to professionalize the writing instructors, giving them responsibilities that sometimes seemed out of line with their role as a part-time writing instructor. Though the systems and the instructors' responsibilities and opportunities changed over the ten-year period investigated in this study, there remained a culture in the Writing Program that valued the work of teaching, something that is discussed in the next chapter.

The Coordinating Group System at the Syracuse Writing Program, 1986-1996

The final report of the Syracuse University Ad Hoc Committee to Review Writing Instruction, known at the university as the "Gates Report," after the chair of the committee, English faculty member Robert Gates, can be described as almost a Declaration of Independence, arguing for a radical change in the philosophy and structure of undergraduate writing instruction at the university. It set out a Herculean task for the first director: to transform the antiquated ENG 101-102 curriculum, one based in the five-paragraph, thesis-driven Baker essay model and one that did not encourage pedagogical experimentation, into a four-year writing curriculum based in modern composition theory (Gates iii-iv; 3-4). The Gates Report recommended that the new Writing Program, due to "the complexity and scope of the new program" (to administer a four-year writing curriculum to all students in the College of Arts and Sciences and potentially the other schools (engineering, management, visual and performing arts, etc.) at Syracuse University), should be placed outside the direct administrative control of the English Department so that the new director of the Writing Program report directly to the Dean of Arts and Sciences (Gates 17). The Gates report recommended a national search for the new

director, a “high-powered scholar in rhetoric and composition theory, with ample publishing credentials, a national reputation, and the administrative skill and ambition to build what we propose into the finest coordinated program of writing instruction available anywhere” (17). The Gates report, which discusses the “paradigm shift” in composition theory, alluding to Maxine Hairston’s often-cited 1982 *College English* article, translates that Kuhn-inspired revolutionary rhetoric into its own proposal (9).

The Gates report focuses on the faculty-level administration in the new Writing Program (the new director would be assisted by associate directors, future full-time faculty hires, and staff); it said little of the role the part-time instructors or teaching assistants, who, until then, did all the teaching of required writing at the university, save a couple of full-time English department faculty members who taught a section on occasion (Gates 17-18; McQuade and Slevin 8). The report does argue that the underpaid labor of the part-time instructors is a serious problem, one without a “magic solution,” and gives broad recommendations for improving the part-time instructors’ pay, offices, and resources (Gates 18-19). The Gates report states that in the new Writing Program, faculty and part-time instructors should work together as “intellectual peers,” but does not describe any concrete ways that this collaboration could happen (19).

The English Department conducted a national search for the new Writing Program director, and in April 1986, hired Louise Wetherbee Phelps, who had previously worked at Cleveland State University and the University of Southern California (“Teacher’s Guide to the Writing Program at Syracuse” 14). Phelps came to Syracuse that fall, and with the assistance of Carol Lipson, Patricia Moody, and Margaret Himley, three full-time members of the English Department with interests in technical writing and writing pedagogy, she faced the challenge of simultaneously designing the curriculum and administrative structure of the new Writing

Program while administering the required writing courses for the 3,000 entering Syracuse University first-year students. It was a “year of transition,” a year of uncertainty and excitement for everyone: the faculty, the staff, the teaching assistants, and the part-time instructors (Soper).

The tension, hesitancy, and speculation that coursed through the 1986-1987 academic year is apparent in the minutes from an October 1986 Writing Program meeting, where part-time instructors in the program relayed their need for guidance in changing the first-year writing curriculum and their suspicion of top-down evaluation and ongoing professional development for experienced teachers (Soper). In response to the later concern, Lipson is quoted in the minutes as suggesting that professional development be considered more as “enhancement than development,” and through this hearing session and other discussions between Phelps, Himley, Lipson, and part-time instructors, the initial coordinating group structure was drawn up in October 1986 as part of a Writing Program Upper Division committee meeting. The preliminary general principle of the coordinating group structure was, according to the minutes of that full-time faculty committee meeting, to “involve PTIs [part-time instructors] in the process [of teacher evaluation], using a network approach” (Soper). A group of eight experienced part-time instructors were to be designated “coordinators” and paid to help pair the instructors in their group to observe each other’s classrooms and write up narratives about the classes they saw. The coordinator position was thus initially tied to evaluation as a way both to help split the labor involved in observing and assessing the teaching of over eighty part-time instructors and to give the part-time instructors a voice in the evaluation process (“Suggestions for PTI Evaluation”).

Very quickly after arriving at Syracuse in the fall, Phelps learned that she needed to submit the course descriptions for the new writing courses to the college curriculum committee by early in the spring 1987 semester. Though the four-course writing studio sequence was first

sketched out in the 1985 Gates report with the assistance of Writing Program faculty member Margaret Himley, Phelps altered some parts of it, introducing into the course descriptions the idea of a “spiral curriculum,” a concept she explained both visually and in writing. The spiral curriculum is based in the idea that as students experience different literacy and discursive challenges in their own university studies, the writing studio courses would provide them opportunities to critically reflect on and practice rhetorical skills that will help them meet those challenges (Phelps “Writing Program Course Proposals”). The catalogue descriptions, notably abstract and short due to the constraint of the number of characters allowed for each course description (not one was longer than two sentences) were passed by the Syracuse University Arts and Sciences faculty in late February 1987. Though Phelps, with the help of Himley and Lipson, was the driving force behind the philosophical foundation of the new required writing courses at Syracuse, she made it clear in her correspondence with the rest of the Writing Program instructors, teaching assistants, and staff that they, starting with a special task force in the summer of 1987, would be the ones to “‘write the curriculum’ more concretely (as syllabi, selection of texts, etc.)” (Phelps “New Curriculum”). For this task, they would draw on the much longer spiral curriculum documents, which were what informed the catalogue descriptions.

This delineation of roles within the Program is described by Phelps in her February 13, 1987 talk to the Program, where she explains the relationship between theory and its application to teaching. As the director of the Writing Program, she saw “creating a *theory-based curriculum*” as her principal responsibility. (Phelps “Studio Talk”, emphasis in original). She argues in this talk, one of many talks she gave to the Writing Program as the director, that theory is a *text*: “Quite literally, the theory of the program will be the texts in which it is represented: in oral discussions like this one, talks at conferences, written texts like the one I’ve given you.” All

texts are taken up and interpreted, and Phelps expected the part-time instructors and teaching assistants to do the same with the theories represented in the course descriptions. She also points out that writing the Program theory is a composing process, one that requires attention to context (specifically of Syracuse in 1987) and multiple drafts and revisions. In order to compose a theory of and for the Writing Program, Phelps underscores the importance of the teachers, as they are the ones who “taught the courses that the theory must redescribe and the students it must fit” (Phelps “Studio Talk”). She explains in her talk that in May of 1987, she will hand over the studio and spiral curriculum theory to the teachers as “a set of cues and constraints” to “come alive” through the part-time instructors and teaching assistants’ own pedagogical interpretation and experimentation (Phelps “Studio Talk”). This work began over the summer of 1987, when a subset of teachers was charged with the task of interpreting and revising the studio and spiral curriculum theory. By the end of the summer, the summer team produced a collection of teaching materials for their colleagues to use the following academic year, as the Program moved to institute the new writing curriculum for the entering freshman class at Syracuse.

Phelps gave the teachers in the Program tremendous intellectual freedom in both the design and implementation of the new curriculum. Though she understood her responsibility to be the first theory-maker in the Program, she says in her February 1987 talk to the Writing Program that “the theorist is not absolutely privileged as a teacher of her own theory,” arguing that the studio and spiral curriculum theory does not need to be realized through an exact replication of her own pedagogy. Instead, Phelps explains that just as an author cannot dictate his readers’ interpretations, a theory-maker cannot dictate nor predict how her theory is taken up, as “each time the text is interpreted in a different context, it has different possible and realized meanings that no theorist could have ever predicted since no one can anticipate all possible

recontextualizations of a text” (Phelps “Studio Talk”). Phelps did not expect nor want her interpretation of the spiral and studio curriculum to be the only way those principles about writing and rhetoric were used and introduced in the Syracuse classrooms; she did not advocate a common shared syllabus.

It is important to point out how different the rhetoric encased in these new writing studio course descriptions and Phelps’ memos and talks to the Writing Program is from the rhetoric of the former writing program at Syracuse, as described through both the external WPA evaluation conducted by Donald McQuade and James Slevin and the 1985 Gates Report (McQuade and Slevin; Gates et al). That program’s lockstep rigidity – every student wrote a Baker-model essay, every teacher was evaluated based on her marginal comments on student papers, and the sometimes oppressive administrative oversight actively discouraged teachers from pedagogical experimentation – seems light years away from the theory-making, invention, revision, and interpretation Phelps advocated. Less than two years before this February 1987 Studio Talk, in which Phelps invites the Program’s instructors to participate in curriculum development, the teachers in the Program were asked just to implement the module-based writing curriculum, which never moved or changed with shifting cues, constraints, or context. Now, the part-time instructors and the teaching assistants were told that they played a vital role in the Writing Program’s new curriculum: Phelps’ theories of the studio courses and the spiral curriculum could never be expressed, explained, or fine-tuned without them.

Certain part-time instructors were singled out as potential leaders for their fellow teachers who would serve in the newly-created coordinator position for the 1987-1988 academic year, the first year the new studio writing courses were taught to all entering freshmen. These coordinators were selected both through informal observation and through an evaluation of their teaching

materials and reflective statements gathered together in the teaching portfolios Phelps, Himley, and Lipson collected from each part-time instructor and teaching assistant teaching during the 1986-1987 academic year (Phelps, Himley, and Lipson "Teacher Evaluation"). Under the old program at Syracuse, instructors and teaching assistants were evaluated every year through the "file review," which focused on a teacher's grading and commentary on her students' papers (McQuade and Slevin). The English Department teaching assistants, worried that the portfolios would be used by the Writing Program administration to "screen" them according to how committed they seemed to the studio and spiral curriculum theory, wrote Phelps to complain about the teaching portfolio requirement (Franke "Memo"). It is important to note that the English department teaching assistants, in their home department in the Hall of Languages (the building adjacent to where the Writing Program was housed), were embroiled in the English department's full-time faculty's "culture war," which left them suspicious and anxious about what seemed to be, to some, an indoctrination of yet another ideology. David Franke, in an open memo to his fellow graduate teaching assistants in the English Department, wrote, "I think it is very important to note the central concern contained in the memo from TAs: the anxiety many feel when any sort of 'authorized pedagogy' is suggested" ("Memo") The belligerent tension in the Syracuse English Department, which the teaching assistants were subjected to through their courses and graduate work with some of the English Department faculty members, was described by Steven Mailloux in his 1998 book, *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics*. Mailloux came to Syracuse University in 1986, the same year as Phelps, to chair the English Department with the hopes that he might succeed in bridging the counterproductive divisions among the faculty members, which he attempted to do through

organizing the English Department under the organizing term of rhetoric. (Mailloux “Cultural Rhetoric”).

Phelps explained the coordinator role more thoroughly in her May 3, 1987 talk to the Writing Program staff. The ten coordinators’ job was to “act as mentors and consultants” for the members of their coordinating group, “to promote dialogue within the group and throughout the program, and to advise the directors” by forming an Advisory Council (Phelps “Talk to Writing Program Staff”; Phelps “Staffing Plan for Writing Program Faculty”). These ten coordinators, chosen through the portfolio evaluation and through the recommendations of the Writing Program’s faculty, staff, and teachers, were put in a crucial place, positioned both to relay messages and initiatives from the Writing Program administration down to the teachers and to convey ideas and concerns from the teachers up to the administration. Phelps explained the teacher coordinating groups as forums “for carrying out informal research, for innovation and critique, for solving practical problems, for mutual support and mentoring of new teachers.” It is within these coordinating groups that Phelps envisioned the teachers doing and discussing the work of interpreting the Program’s theories and curriculum. The coordinating group system that Phelps was proposing looked similar to the “working groups” established in the 1986-1987 year, which gathered together part-time instructors and teaching assistants to discuss issues ranging from what the new writing program should emphasize, the expected workload of a teaching assistant, in-class teaching strategies like group work or analyzing poetry for the purposes of creating writing assignments, and specific challenges of special university populations, like the nontraditional University College students and ESL students (Iodice “Group Report”; “ESL Working Group Report”; “Four Views from the Bridge”; “Poetry Module”; “University College Working Group”). The working group reports show how the Writing Program’s instructors were

beginning to challenge the old Baker-model ENG 101-102 curriculum with ideas from composition and rhetoric, especially writing process theory (Doty “Working Group Report”; Iodice “Group Report”; “Four Views from the Bridge”; Gordon “Group Report re: The Writing Process”).

On May 26, 1987, at the end of Phelps’ first full academic year at Syracuse University, a year of much thinking, planning, and discussion about both the nature of the new writing curriculum and the role the faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants would play in teaching it, Phelps and the members of the university’s Writing Cabinet completed the Writing Program Charter, which sets forth the purpose of the new stand-alone Writing Program: to design and administer a university-wide writing program. This collaboratively-written charter marks the separation between the English Department, which housed the old Freshman English program and controlled its budget, and the Writing Program, which now controlled its own budget, designed its own curriculum, and answered to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, not the English Department chair (“Writing Program Charter”). This charter, signed by Phelps, Mailloux, Samuel Gorovitz (Dean of Arts and Sciences), Ronald Cavanaugh (Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies at Syracuse), and Gershon Vincow (Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs), officially declares the Writing Program as an independent program, which gave the Writing Program administration much more authority to decide curriculum and staffing than if the Writing Program was still considered a part of the English Department. Breaking away from the English Department was a revolutionary act: not unexpected, as the independent status of the Writing Program was previously suggested in the Gates Report, but still an important moment for the university and the Writing Program in 1987. One crucial result of the Writing Program Charter is that it created the 60/40 split in the lines of the Writing Program faculty members

(60% in the Writing Program, 40% in the English Department), which meant the Writing Program could put forward a faculty member for tenure. Although the Writing Program Charter did not usher in immediate change for the part-time instructors and teaching assistants who worked in the Writing Program, its principles and the fact that it cemented the Writing Program's independent status at the university set the foundation for future structures which allowed the part-time instructors to play a much larger and visible role in the construction of the Writing Program than they would have been allowed if the Writing Program had not separated from the English Department.

One of the first visible roles some of the part-time instructors and teaching assistants had was their participation in the 1987 Summer Team. This group of seven – Faith Plvan, Nance Hahn, Rosemary Mink, Tom Perrotta, Russell Porter, Steve Thorley, and Bobbi Kirby-Werner – were charged with the task of creating the first curricular interpretations of Phelps' studio and spiral curriculum theories ("Studio I Working Papers"). The four sample Studio I syllabi were published in the Studio I Working Papers, a 52-page document distributed to the Writing Program's instructors and teaching assistants in the summer before the Fall 1987 semester. The Working Papers also included reflections from some part-time instructors who piloted early versions of Studio I in the 1986-1987 school year and suggestions for textbooks and outside readings from Phelps, Himley, and Jim Zebroski, a new full-time Writing Program faculty member who was teaching the graduate composition practicum course for the new teaching assistants in the fall. Himley, who led the Summer Team group, wrote in her introduction to the Working Papers that "this packet begins to illustrate concretely and imaginatively the possibilities for course design enabled by [the spiral curriculum theory]" ("Studio I Working Papers" 2). The Writing Program administration, working from the studio and spiral curriculum

theory described by Phelps the previous year, was not interested in having cookie-cutter courses, as that would negate the critical act of the teacher interpreting theory into her own curriculum and classroom. The sample syllabi were presented in the Working Papers not as prescriptions but rather as “illustrations” as to how the Writing Program part-time instructors and teaching assistants could “define what Studio I is” (“Studio I Working Papers” 3).

It is obvious that this sudden openness and freedom to design 15-week courses around abstract principles must have been exciting, terrifying, and confusing, confirmed by both Mary Salibrici’s and Nance Hahn’s reflections in the Studio I Working Papers about their Studio I pilot courses. Himley explains in her introduction that though the teachers in the Writing Program were allowed to interpret the spiral curriculum theory in their own way, there were certain commonalities that organically emerged: sequenced smaller units building on students’ experiences; reliance on both primary and secondary research; courses built around a central inquiry; and attention to students’ own composing processes (“Studio I Working Papers” 4). Still, asking teachers to design their own courses for the first time is a large developmental step, and the coordinating group system was put into place to support the teachers in this work for the 1987-1988 school year. Phelps describes the role of the coordinating groups for the upcoming year at the end of the Studio I Working Papers: these ten groups, each led by a Director-appointed coordinator and containing two “Writing Consultants” (whose are assigned to help teachers through tutoring, co-teaching, demonstration teaching, and mentoring), met every other week for an hour. The coordinating groups were designed to be forums to support the teachers as they navigated through the new studio curriculum (every teacher taught Studio I in the fall and Studio II in the spring) (43). In addition, though, the coordinating groups were also seen by the Program as sites for research and discussion, as sometimes, Phelps explains, the coordinating

groups would be asked to take up a specific question or problem (“Studio I Working Papers” 43).

The possibilities for the coordinating groups’ activities were far-ranging:

“help teachers solve practical problems of course design and management; try out and evaluate innovative teaching ideas; visit one another’s classes for observation or team work; discuss readings; debate theories; study cases (of individual students, assignments, class activities); write collaboratively; create curriculum plans; compare grading practices; provide feedback to Directors of the Program or initiate discussion of issues in the Program; and whatever else members decide will be useful to the group or to the Program” (“Studio I Working Papers 43-44”).

Much of the coordinating groups’ activities were grounded in the reading and discussion of current composition theory, and so the coordinating groups served as important sites for the part-time instructors’ and teaching assistants’ own individual professional development. However, the professional development happening within the coordinating groups did not just benefit the instructors or teaching assistants alone: the curricular and administrative work taken on by the coordinating groups rippled outward to affect, benefit, direct, and re-direct the Writing Program. In this sense, the coordinating group system played a crucial role in the development of the early Writing Program, as the Writing Program administration, led by Phelps, recognized that the teachers could do valuable and important work for the Program, work that would be impossible, both logistically and philosophically, for a few number of full-time faculty or staff, some who do not know the constraints of the Syracuse University writing classroom or students as intimately as the part-time instructors do, to complete on their own. In her Studio I Working Papers description of the coordinating groups, Phelps confirms this dual function of the coordinating groups: “We expect the coordinating groups to be a site for continuing staff development and a vital source of experimentation and critique in the growth of the Writing Program” (“Studio I Working Papers” 44). The Writing Program knew that in order to get this new curriculum off the ground, they needed the labor and expertise of the part-time instructors.

The Writing Program, in asking its teaching assistants and part-time instructors to help create the new curriculum and administrative structures (such as teacher evaluation) through the coordinating group system, had to justify asking its teachers to invest a considerable amount of their time and effort in the Program. In the working group reports from the 1986-1987 (before they were renamed and redefined as coordinating groups led by specific, administration-designated coordinators), several teaching assistants and part-time instructors pointed out the amount of time and labor that the Program was asking their teachers to put into discussions about Program-wide theory, curriculum, and administrative structures like teacher evaluation (Brown; Ahlers; "Four Views from the Bridge"). The members of the English 109-119 Working Group wrote to Phelps on December 12, 1986, "We recognize the value of the Working Groups and the appropriateness of developing a Writing Program that incorporates the ideas of its staff, and we are eager to participate. However, we are expecting forthcoming assurance that, as Part-Time Instructors, most of whom are already serving the University beyond the provisions of our contracts, we will receive appropriate recognition and compensation for this investment of our professional time and effort" (Brown et al). Beginning in the 1987-1988 school year, the first year of the new Studio I and Studio II curriculum, the requirement to attend coordinating group sessions every other week for an hour (or its rough equivalent) was included in the teaching assistant and part-time instructor contract. The coordinators, who invested a substantial amount of energy mentoring the teachers in their group, meeting with administrators, developing topics and choosing texts for the group to discuss and work on, and conducting classroom observations, were paid for their work by being assigned an "administrative section" (Phelps "Staffing Plan for Writing Program Faculty"). For example, coordinators hired on 3/2 teaching contracts would really teach a 2/1 load, lead a biweekly coordinating group, and serve on the Writing Program's

Advisory Council. The average per-section rate for a part-time instructor in the 1987-1988 school year was \$1944, and coordinators were paid a \$300 bonus on top of that for their administrative section (“1987-1988 Writing Program Budget for TA and PTI Sections”).

Phelps saw the professional development of the part-time instructors as key to the success of the newly-formed Writing Program and dedicated a large portion of the PTI section budget (over \$44,000) to it through the creation of the administrative coordinating sections (“1987-1988 Writing Program Budget for TA and PTI Sections.”) In the October 26, 1988 agenda for the Writing Cabinet (which contained university administrators and faculty members from both the Writing Program and the English Department), Phelps argued “a large number of separate problems can be understood in the context of a single task: the professionalization of the Writing Program Staff” (“Agenda October 26, 1987”). The Writing Program was, all at the same time, implementing a new first-year writing curriculum, creating a brand-new sophomore-year required writing course (Studio II), transitioning its tutoring staff to a new role as writing consultants, and developing a way to assess both the Program and its teachers. Because of the very limited resources of the full-time faculty (in the 1987-1988 school year, there were only six full-time faculty members in the Writing Program: Phelps, Himley, Lipson, Catherine Smith, Jim Zebroski, Jim Comas), much of the work fell onto the shoulders of the 60 part-time instructors and 50 teaching assistants in the Writing Program to teach the more than 300 sections of lower-division writing at the university for the year (“1987-1988 Writing Program Budget for TA and PTI Sections”). Campaigning for a staff comprised entirely of full-time faculty members, who purportedly would have extensive training in composition and rhetoric, was not economically realistic for the university or the Writing Program (“Agenda October 26, 1987”). In order to provide the part-time instructors and teaching assistants with the “intensive instruction and

supervision they needed to be expert” in teaching the new studio curriculum in the Writing Program, they needed to be given (and paid for) the time “to do the crucial professional development activities that fall outside teaching Studio courses” (“Agenda October 26, 1987”). The coordinating groups, though they did not serve as the only means for professional development in the first ten years of the Writing Program, were a primary site for the professionalizing of the part-time instructors and teaching assistants. Phelps did not argue for the professionalizing of the Writing Program teachers as a way to downplay the need for more full-time faculty; she contended that the Writing Program’s system of professional development for its teachers would only work with a more favorable ratio between the part-time instructors and the full-time faculty. The full-time faculty, Phelps noted, feel like they are “being split into 1000 pieces,” and in order to continue attracting and retaining full-time faculty in the Writing Program, the university administration, Phelps argues, must authorize more full-time faculty lines (“Agenda October 26, 1987”).

In the 1987-1988 academic year, all of the Writing Program part-time instructors, teaching assistants, writing consultants, and staff were integrated into the coordinating group system. The coordinating group system was not homogeneous: rather, different constituencies in the Writing Program were placed together in the individual coordinating groups. This commitment to a diversity of perspectives and heterogeneity stayed a primary feature of the coordinating group system throughout the first ten years of the Writing Program.

Each semester, the coordinator in charge of each group wrote a report to Phelps and the Writing Program administration that detailed the specific activities, discussions, and challenges within that group. In the 1987-1988 academic year, the Writing Program asked the coordinating groups to take on the task of “defining Studio I as a genre” for the purposes of both creating

working syllabi and assignments that express the objectives of Studio I and for developing course assignments and syllabi for the spring Studio II courses (Daly and Howell). In essence, the Writing Program administrators were asking the part-time instructors and teaching assistants in the coordinating groups to take what they had heard and what they had read the previous year about studio and spiral curriculum theory and develop a group understanding of the features of the Studio I course and what the Studio II course (which would be taught for in spring 1988) should look like (Jankiewicz “Report”; Hahn).

The task of defining the genre of the studios was difficult for many of the coordinating groups. The coordinating groups were given the Studio I Working Papers, developed that summer, and some of the Writing Program faculty members’ writings about the developmental theories informing the studio and spiral curriculum. The language in these documents was abstract, and the “constructing principles” in the Working Papers’ sample syllabi were hard to tease out for many instructors (Jankiewicz “Report”). Henry Jankiewicz, one of the coordinators, wrote in his coordinating group report, “I think the positions of the [Working Papers] is above the theoretical capabilities of much of the staff, myself included... no one seems to understand the constructing principles of the “set” [of syllabi in the Working Papers] enough to generate new members or items in the set” (Jankiewicz “Report”). Jankiewicz’s observation was repeated in several other coordinator reports, including the report of David Franke’s group, which contained several new teaching assistants. In that group, many argued that the work of curriculum development, of making concrete abstract principles was “a burden not properly placed on their shoulders” (Daly and Howell). Not everyone wanted the freedom or authority to interpret studio or spiral curriculum theory. Some, like the new teaching assistants in Franke’s group, needed their more practical concerns as beginning teachers addressed within the

coordinating group space; others, like the instructors in Jankiewicz's coordinating group, did not feel like they had the authority or the expertise to interpret theory into assignments and classroom activities. Another coordinating group, led by Sharon Kane, mentioned the loss of direction they felt from the Writing Program administration for doing the work of defining the genre of Studio I: though they believed that the coordinating group structure was helpful because it made them realize they were "all in the same boat," they hoped that "next semester our boat will come with oars" (Kane). Another coordinating group, led by Bobbi Kirby-Werner, felt the same way, claiming that "the only common denominator" that everyone shared was "uncertainty" (Hill).

The challenges of the 1987-1988 coordinating groups seemed to stem from two issues: 1. the groups' heterogeneity and the difficulty of balancing the different needs and constraints of the constituencies within each coordinating group, and 2. the combination of sudden freedom and permission to invent as teachers with little concrete direction to do so (Hill; Thorley). As shown through the 1987-1988 coordinator reports, although many of the coordinators were "on board" with the extensive changes in the Writing Program (benefiting from face-to-face time with the Writing Program faculty and administrators in the Writing Program Advisory Council), they had to meet resistance and critique within their groups in order to get positive work done in their meeting time. In the report from Bobbi Kirby-Werner's coordinating group, Mary Louise Hill, a writing consultant assigned to Kirby-Werner's group, noted that much of the energy of the group did not go towards defining the genre of Studio I but rather toward defining the purpose of the coordinating groups (Hill). Elizabeth Daly and Charles Howell, two Writing Program writing consultants who attended David Franke's coordinating group, wrote in their reports of Franke's 1987-1988 group that the new teaching assistants in his coordinating group felt "anxiety,

uncertainty, and frustration” when trying to negotiate what the studio curriculum meant to them with their very real, pragmatic needs as first-time teachers (Daly and Howell). In fact, because so much of the coordinating groups’ time was spent working on the studio curriculum, Daly and Howell reported that the new teaching assistants in his group had “widespread concern” early in the semester about “the loss of opportunity to discuss ongoing class issues, plans, and problems.” The new teaching assistants in Franke’s coordinating group made a valid point: they were still trying to figure out the ropes of teaching, and they needed space in their coordinating group to talk about their development as new teachers. This disparity between the needs of new teachers and veteran instructors was pointed out in the other coordinating group reports; Hill wrote that the Writing Program was asking a large, diverse group to all take on the role of teacher/researcher, and not everyone was ready to do that kind of work.

The early coordinating groups are interesting sites to observe the struggles of beginning teachers or teachers who are learning to implement a new, unfamiliar curriculum. The reports of the coordinating groups show that the teachers were caught in a layer-cake of tensions: wanting autonomy over their own curriculum and classroom but craving guidelines, confused over the overall purpose of the coordinating groups – to design bottom-up or to enact top-down principles? – and the conflicting needs of the teachers within the groups, some who wanted authority and responsibility and others who did not. The coordinating groups also worked as sites of theory-making and teacher/researcher discussions. Though some of the coordinating group reports focused on the difficulties of moving everyone toward a task that many felt unprepared to do, other reports offered beginning ideas and attempts to do the task Phelps asked them to do: define the genre of Studio I. In Ken Victor’s coordinating group, the instructors worked all semester to develop a list of common teaching practices and principles that informed their widely

disparate syllabi. Some of these shared activities included group work, peer revision, conferences, and informal and formal writing (Victor). After assembling that list, the group talked about the process of “experimentation” that they had engaged in that semester, realizing that “some techniques simply might not suit every teacher's temperament or style of teaching” but that there needed to be “common goals for Studio I and II” (Victor). Mary Salabrici’s coordinating group engaged in a similar taxonomy project as the Victor group, and wrote that part of the goal of Studio I was to “‘defamiliarize’ writing and reading” in an effort to make students think more critically about how and for what purposes they read and write (Salabrici). The coordinating group led by Helga Lindburg and Leslie Loeffel went even further in their theorizing, introducing the metaphors of “yarn spinning” and cloth weaving to describe a potential relationship between a Studio I “genre” and individually-interpreted Studio I courses and also the relationships among the four studio courses (Lindburg and Loeffel). Sprinkled throughout the coordinating group reports, some more blatant than others, is evidence of teachers engaging in the often frustrating and difficult work of interpreting theory in their own syllabi and courses, making the studio and spiral curriculum relevant to themselves and their students.

The work happening in the coordinating groups met multiple layers of objectives. First, the coordinating groups, constructed on the foundation of heterogeneity, helped build a teaching community within the Writing Program. Second, the coordinating groups did much of the work developing syllabi, assignments, and classroom activities that were embedded in the principles of the spiral and studio curriculum. These curricular documents created in the 1987-1988 academic year were fine-tuned over the next years and given to new teachers in the Writing Program as models to construct their own teaching materials. Third, the intensive, regular work of the coordinating groups allowed the Writing Program to argue to higher university administration for

improving the instructors' salaries, benefits, and working conditions, as it was becoming very clear that the teaching force in the Writing Program was professionalized and specialized.

This third goal had been always in the mind of the Writing Program administration; the deplorable treatment of the part-time instructors was cited as a major problem within the Gates Report and the 1984 Council of Writing Program Administrators external evaluation (Gates; McQuade and Slevin). In the fall 1987 semester, Phelps asked three of the Writing Program's part-time instructors, Rosemary Mink, Molly Voorheis, and Bobbi Kirby-Werner, to survey ten peer and regional institutions to determine how much non-tenured writing instructors were paid and how their salaries reflected extracurricular assignments and duties, such as curriculum development. As a result of this research, Mink wrote a report to Phelps in which she pointed out "part-time instructors here [at Syracuse] continue to receive salary and benefits packages that reflect, at other institutions, duties that consist solely of implementing departmental guidelines. It appears to me that we can make a good case for substantial change," given the fact that the part-time instructors were required to meet in coordinating groups on a regular basis, and that through the coordinating groups, as Phelps pointed out in her written guidelines to the Program, "every teacher is becoming a curriculum innovator" (Mink; Phelps "Thinking 'Studio'"). The teachers in the Writing Program were doing far more than just implementing a top-down curriculum; they were given great responsibility for the shape and form of the new studio writing curriculum.

Phelps turned that report from Mink, along with her own understanding and thinking about practical wisdom and the role of a writing program administrator, into an argument for increased salaries and benefits for the part-time instructors in her 1987-1988 annual report to Syracuse University Dean Samuel Gorovitz. She writes of the "strong voluntary participation" of the part-time instructors in the "*major curriculum changes*" that happened that year in the

Writing Program, reminding Gorovitz that such drastic change could not have been accomplished by the handful of full-time Writing Program faculty alone, and that the part-time instructors were doing the work “in the face of resentment” of their sub-par working conditions (Phelps “Annual Report: Writing Program 1987”). Phelps contends early in the Annual Report (in the original document, these sentences are in bold and written in all caps), “It is imperative that we recognize and treat these teachers as our faculty. The part-time instructors in particular must be given incentives to stay on and to contribute in many different teaching and administrative roles” (Phelps “Annual Report: Writing Program 1987”). Naming the part-time instructors “faculty” is a calculated rhetorical move, and it is an argument that Phelps weaves into her later scholarship (Phelps “Mobilizing Human Resources”). In this annual report, Phelps wanted Gorovitz to know how very critical the part-time instructors are to the success of the fledgling Writing Program.

An annual report, seemingly administrative in nature, is actually a highly rhetorical document, and by listing the Program’s many accomplishments in its first full year of studio courses alongside an argument for seeing the part-time instructors as faculty instead of disposable “adjuncts” demonstrates the direct link between the part-time instructors’ insights and work and the early success of the new Program. The annual report even proves the part-time instructors’ loyalty and commitment to the Program: when offered merit pay, the coordinators collectively refused, and one veteran part-time instructor who was rewarded a \$300 merit pay reward in the spring semester gave it back to invest into the Program (Phelps “Annual Report: Writing Program 1987”). Obviously, Phelps does not portray the whole picture in the annual report, leaving out the questioning and the confusion that marked many of the coordinating group reports, as the annual report is the one cumulative official document that the upper

administration relies on in order to form an assessment of the Program, which Phelps and the other faculty administrators have an interest in presenting in its best light.

In the 1987-1988 Annual Report and later annual reports, Phelps goes into further detail about the professional development opportunities created for the part-time instructors and the shift in morale among the instructors that had happened since the old Freshman English program disbanded in 1986. It is important to note that the coordinating groups were not the only site of professional development within the Writing Program in its first few years: part-time instructors and teaching assistants were given funding to attend and present at national conferences such as CCCC; outside speakers were brought in to speak to the instructors about composition theory and pedagogy; some part-time instructors worked with full-time faculty member Catherine Smith to develop pilot partnership courses between the Writing Program and other university colleges and divisions (management, classics, law, and engineering); part-time instructors worked on compiling and editing in-house curricular guides like the Working Papers and Writing Program newsletters; and instructors and teaching assistants helped to plan and put on in-house conferences, such as the Fall Teaching Conference and the Spring Conference (Phelps “Annual Report: Writing Program 1987”; Phelps “Annual Report 1988-1989”). However, it was the coordinating groups, at least for the first few years of the Writing Program, which served as a continuous, dedicated space for curricular and theoretical discussion and research among the Writing Program’s part-time instructors and teaching assistants. As argued in the 1989 Teacher Sourcebook, written and edited by a team of part-time instructors and teaching assistants in the Writing Program, “The coordinating groups have become a site for continuing staff development and a vital source of experimentation and critique in the growth of the Writing Program” (“1989 Teacher Sourcebook” 74).

The rhetorical positioning of the annual reports and other planning and internal evaluation documents Phelps and others in the Program wrote translated, slowly, into tangible improvements for the part-time instructors in the Writing Program. As early as 1986, her first semester at Syracuse, Phelps was arguing for full-time non-tenure-track instructorships, which would give the part-time instructors full university benefits and multiple-year contracts (Phelps “Hiring Proposal and Supporting Rationale”). Though the university refused eventually to permit renewable full-time instructor positions, the part-time instructors did succeed in developing a merit-based evaluation plan (Lipson “Annual Report 1988-1989”). In addition, the Program was able to add six salaried $\frac{3}{4}$ instructorships for the 1989-1990 school year, which were assigned to part-time instructors based on their merit evaluations from the previous year. These $\frac{3}{4}$ instructorships did not add extra teaching sections; rather, the part-time instructors in the positions were assigned administrative or research-related duties to help the Program (Phelps “Annual Report 1989-1990”; Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”; “Writing Program 1991-1992 PWI Staff List”). The Program also expanded its full-time administrative staff in its first few years: in 1989, the Writing Program secured university funding for a full 12-month assistant director position whose job was to coordinate the part-time instructors’ professional development, signaling the Program’s and the university’s commitment to the professionalizing of the part-time instructors (Lipson “Annual Report 1988-1989”). This position was filled by a former part-time instructor, not by an outside administrator, further signaling the Writing Program’s dedication to promoting its own instructors, trained and developed as Program leaders through the professional development opportunities in the Program.

Teaching books and materials for the Writing Program’s teachers were put into the Program’s annual budget, which were made available to teachers in the open resource room in

the Writing Program's main office. These materials – some purchased, some compiled by coordinating groups – were popular and often used by the part-time instructors (Plvan "Annual Report 1989-1990"). The Writing Program also brought in recognized outside speakers from the field to present to the entire faculty – full-time, part-time, and teaching assistants: in the 1989-1990 academic year, Jay Bolter, Jan Swearingen, Stephen North, and Shirley Brice Heath came to Syracuse (Phelps "Writing Program Annual Report 1989-1990"). The influx of composition and rhetoric scholarship from the resource room, the outside speakers, and the continuous conversations among the Writing Program's full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants which centered on the undergraduate writing curriculum and the extracurricular resources developed for the university's faculty and students (including a writing center and a writing-across-the-curriculum Writing Resources program) resulted in the creation of a teacher/researcher culture within the Writing Program. Part-time instructors and teaching assistants began to propose sessions at conferences such as CCCC, and the Writing Program, in the years before an onslaught of university budget cuts, paid for its instructors and teaching assistants to attend and present at CCCC (Phelps "Writing Program Annual Report 1989-1990"; Lipson Memo to Weaver 1990; Phelps "Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991").

It was becoming widely apparent to both the field, who heard and interacted with the Writing Program's part-time instructors and full-time faculty at national conferences, and the university administration, informed of the part-time instructors' role in constructing the new curriculum through the Writing Program's annual reports, planning documents, and other correspondence, that the part-time instructors were expert teachers with deepening knowledge of composition and rhetoric (Larson). In the spring of 1990, the Program signaled this shift in the positioning of the part-time instructors at the university by changing their title from "part-time

instructor” to “professional writing instructor” (Phelps Letter to Wallace 1990). Many were indeed professionals: pursuing their own research agendas individually and through coordinating groups, developing their own syllabi and teaching materials as an interpretation of the Writing Program’s principles and theories, and evaluating one another through the Teacher Evaluation Committee. The university also began to extend employee benefits to the instructors: in the spring of 1991, the instructors gained tuition benefits for their dependents (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”).

Coordinating Groups as a Dynamic System

The coordinating group system, though it was a consistent, central feature of the Writing Program, did not look or act the same over the first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program, from 1986 to 1996. The tasks taken up by the coordinating groups and how the groups were structured (who was in them, how often they met) changed as the needs of both the Writing Program and the part-time instructors shifted as the Program developed, evolved, and matured.

In the working groups of 1986-1987, the first iteration of the coordinating group system, the focus of the full-time faculty, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants in the working groups was placed primarily on curricular development, as the Program as a whole faced the challenge of deciding what would replace the obsolete Freshman English program. The instructors in these working groups met together about every week to talk about how they were integrating the emerging Program theories, which were explained by Phelps, Himley, and Lipson through talks and circulated memos, into the constraints of the old six-week module curriculum and special university populations, such as the nontraditional students of University College and

ESL students (see Doty; Iodice; “Four Views from the Bridge”; “ESL Working Group Report”; “University College Working Group”). Faculty members like Himley also conducted “demonstration sections” to show how current composition and rhetoric theory and the concepts behind the studio and spiral curriculum could be translated into pedagogy at Syracuse.

The first year of the coordinating group system, 1987-1988, continued the intensive work of curriculum development, as it was the first year that the new Studio I and Studio II curriculum was taught to the entire undergraduate student body (Studio I in the fall to entering freshmen; Studio II in the spring to sophomores.) The coordinating groups, led by part-time instructors and teaching assistants chosen to be coordinators through the first teacher portfolio evaluation system in the spring of 1987, were all assigned the task to “define the genre of Studio I” in the fall and to work on the groups’ Studio II curriculum in the spring (see Hahn; Jankiewicz; Kane; Kirby-Werner; Salibrici; Thorley; Victor). The coordinators met together regularly and also were part of the newly-formed Composition Council, where they helped advise the administration on curricular, instructor, and evaluation issues (Phelps “Talk to Writing Program Staff”). The next academic year, 1988-1989, new coordinators were appointed based on the previous spring’s teacher evaluation, and the Writing Program administration once again asked the coordinating groups to embark on a common project, the student profiling project, led by Himley and visiting professor Brian Huot. The purpose of the project was primarily curricular, like the task of defining the genre of Studio I, and asked the instructors to talk with each other and their students to determine Syracuse undergraduates’ perceptions of the required studio writing courses, their attitudes about writing in general, and their particular needs for writing instruction to prepare them for future academic and professional work (Himley “Student Profiling Project”).

In the 1988-1989 academic year, the third year of the Writing Program, Faith Plvan, the new Assistant Director (Plvan had worked in the old Freshman English program and was named the Writing Program's Staff Development Coordinator in 1987, a position that turned into the full-time Assistant Director of Professional Development position in 1989) organized the professional development opportunities for the instructors and teaching assistants, which included the coordinating groups but also providing resources in the Program's Resource Room, inviting outside speakers, and managing events like the Book Fair, Fall Teaching Conference, and monthly "Conversations about Composition" (Plvan "Annual Report, Fall 1988 – Spring 1989"; Phelps and Plvan). As shown in her annual report, even though the Program had the common student profiling project, not all coordinating groups or instructors participated in it. The new studio curriculum, introduced in fall 1986, was no longer brand-new to the instructors who had been with the Writing Program since Phelps arrived, and these veteran instructors, as they were called, no longer needed or wanted to join in the intensive work of common curriculum building. Rather, instructors began identifying specific topics that addressed some of the challenges they were meeting in the classroom or issues they wanted to explore, like the emerging cultural studies scholarship in composition and rhetoric or how technology could be incorporated into the writing classroom (Plvan "Annual Report, Fall 1988 – Spring 1989). This initiative to pursue research projects on the part of individual instructors or coordinating groups led to what Plvan called a "bottom up" kind of professional development, where instructors and coordinating groups organized meetings and activities that met their needs. Plvan also recognized the issues inherent in making the coordinator role a rotating one, allowing a new group of part-time instructors the opportunity to be Program leaders and mentors each year. Though this system gave more instructors leadership opportunities, which led to greater

investment in the Program by a larger number of instructors and also provided the instructors marketable leadership roles, it meant that the Program administration had to constantly train and support new coordinators each year (Plvan “Annual Report, Fall 1988 – Spring 1989). Plvan suggested, in May 1989, that coordinators meet more often with the Program administration to help them transition into their important leadership role, which included mentoring new teachers and evaluating their peer instructors.

The “bottom up” mentality of the coordinating groups continued in the 1989-1990 school year, with three coordinating groups deciding to turn their meetings into discussions around “special topics” – one on cultural studies, another on the use of narrative, and another on appropriate readings for the studio classes. The coordinating groups over the first four years of the Program stayed a consistent size, with ten or eleven groups averaging anywhere between eight and eleven teachers each (Plvan “Annual Report (September 1989 – April 1990)”). As the Program was maturing, with dozens of teachers settling into their roles as veteran instructors, there was less central direction from the administration about the specific content for the coordinating groups, which were still meeting every other week. Instead, the coordinators, increasingly confident in their leadership roles, began to construct their coordinating groups around tasks rather than general discussion about Writing Program policies and curriculum (Phelps and Plvan). Several part-time instructors voluntarily participated in specialized curriculum groups, which were led by faculty members and dedicated to hammering out curriculum ideas and details for the upper studio courses: WRT 205, 305, and 405 (Plvan “Annual Report (September 1989 – April 1990)”). In the next academic year, 1990-1991, experienced instructors started working one-on-one with full-time faculty members to develop individual research projects or take graduate courses in composition theory and pedagogy

(Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991). These instructors, some current coordinators and some who held the coordinator position in past years, were becoming increasingly professionalized. In the Writing Program, which at the time did not have a graduate program of its own, some of the instructors who volunteered for committees, took leadership roles, presented at national conferences, and enrolled in graduate classes were “like graduate students,” working closely with the few Writing Program faculty, who mentored and advised them. Some Writing Program instructors began to prepare and apply for PhD programs in composition and rhetoric (Lipson interview; Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991).

Even though the numbers of instructors in the Writing Program fluctuated – from 87 in the first year of the Program (1986-1987) to 53 in the 1991-1992 academic year (the large drop was largely due to widespread university budget cuts in the summer of 1990) – there was a natural rhythm in instructor hiring, so that almost every year, there was a cadre of new instructors to the Writing Program (Saldo). The program tried to mesh these new instructors’ need for mentoring with the veteran instructors’ desire to delve deeper into their own research and pedagogical inquiries, but it was not always possible to do both (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”). The new instructors and the teaching assistants especially needed intensive support and guidance to develop their teaching materials (new teaching assistants and instructors were not given a common full-semester syllabus, only a five-week “exploding” syllabus, which provided assignments and readings for the first five weeks but left the rest of the semester up to the individual instructor to invent.) The coordinating groups seemed to best serve the veteran, confident, and experienced instructors, giving them a weekly space to share ideas and talk about their teaching. The spread-out hierarchy of the coordinating groups, called a

“trickle-down” authority by the 1992 WPA external evaluation of the Writing Program, left inexperienced instructors and teaching assistants largely alone in translating curricular theory into everyday pedagogical practice (Cayton, Robinson, and Smith 9)¹⁵. The coordinating groups ran into further problems, the external evaluators pointed out, when they lacked common texts and assignments to talk about in their groups: every instructors’ syllabus was structured differently, using different texts, which left the groups without concrete, tangible assignments and readings to talk about, and searching for the abstract concepts and principles that connected their teaching materials (12-13).

One of the significant tensions in the coordinating group system pointed out by this external evaluation is the role of the coordinator as both mentor and evaluator. The coordinators were supposed to both be a “master teacher,” providing the instructors and teaching assistants in their coordinating groups practical teaching support and advice, and a quasi-administrator, observing their coordinating group members’ classes and writing up classroom observations that would be used to evaluate each instructor and teaching assistant. Added to that dual role was the perceived lack of real authority over the members in the coordinating groups, especially the teaching assistants, who were appointed to their positions not by the Writing Program administration but by the separate English Department (16). The coordinators, therefore, were given large responsibility for maintaining the rigor and consistency of the Writing Program curriculum and for cultivating the teaching community which the Writing Program faculty and administration felt was necessary for teaching the studio curriculum. However, they often did not want to exercise administrative power to tell instructors what they needed to do (or should not

¹⁵ This 1992 external evaluation was a focus of extensive preparation for the members of the Syracuse Writing Program. Part-time instructors, full-time faculty, administrators, and teaching assistants prepared a considerable number of documents for the Program’s self-study, one piece of the evaluation. The 1992 external evaluators’ report was contentious: the feedback from the three evaluators was contradictory at times, and some conclusions were drawn from speaking to only one or two representative members of Writing Program constituencies.

do) in their classrooms (16). The part-time instructors placed into coordinator roles sometimes felt adverse towards taking on the administrative and evaluative power inherent in the coordinator position. The coordinating group system was in part developed as a way to administrate a large writing program that had only a few faculty administrators – a designed solution – but it was a complex system that didn't work perfectly. It relied, as the external WPA evaluators pointed out in 1992, sometimes too heavily on the instructors, who, although many had an invested interest in the Program, were still regarded by the university as part-time, contingent faculty labor (17).

Another way the coordinating group system functioned as a dynamic structure was in the ways teaching materials were created and circulated through the groups. The early working groups and coordinating groups, from 1986 through 1990, focused on creating curriculum. The first task, the development of Studio I syllabi, was prompted by the sample syllabi constructed by faculty, coordinators, and instructors, which were included in the May 1987 “Studio I Working Papers” distributed to each instructor in the program. One of the pieces of the “Studio I Working Papers” was a description of a student profiling project, a series of writing tasks designed to help instructors understand their students’ strengths and weaknesses as writers. This project, piloted by Himley, was incorporated into instructors’ Studio 1 curriculum, featured in the 1987 summer issue of *Reflections*, and part of the coordinating group discussion through the 1988-1989 academic year (*Reflections* “Teacher Research”; Himley “Mini-Agenda: Understanding Studios.”) The circulation of curriculum can also be seen through the task set to the 1987-1988 coordinating groups, of defining the genre of Studio 1, also called “the Genre project.” The December 1988 issue of *Reflections*, edited by part-time writing instructor Charles Howell, evaluated the project and noted several shared teaching practices that emerged in the

Writing Program through the work of the coordinating groups (*Reflections* “The Genre Project” 1-3). Howell uses the reports of the coordinating groups to point out the shared characteristics of Studio 1 pedagogy: using frequent informal writing tasks as an aid to invention; redistributing authority in the classroom through peer editing and group work; evaluating student work through portfolio grading; and encouraging students to engage in reflexive habits (*Reflections* “The Genre Project” 3-9). These teaching practices were discussed in the coordinating groups, enacted in classrooms, and then evaluated again in the coordinating groups. This demonstrates a cycle of activity in the Writing Program: though individual teachers held autonomy over their classroom and their specific interpretations of the Studio 1 curriculum, there was, through the ongoing conversations in the coordinating groups, a shared sense of pedagogical identity in the Writing Program.

The coordinating group system in the Syracuse Writing Program is important to study as an administrative design solution, a structure that fulfills multiple objectives and answers the needs of a variety of stakeholders. For the full-time faculty, the coordinating group system relieved them from the burden of being the only ones who could translate the Program’s theory into curricular documents and who could supervise and mentor instructors. For the instructors, the coordinating group system gave them opportunities to learn more about composition and rhetoric, to act as leaders and mentors for their fellow instructors, and to have a voice in the Program’s curriculum and administrative structure. For the Writing Program as a whole, the coordinating group system infused the Program with the sense of a teaching and research community: instructors, teaching assistants, faculty, and staff together through the coordinating group system talked and wrote about teaching, rhetoric, assessment, and writing. It was not a perfect system: it was expensive and time-consuming, it was sometimes unwieldy, and it

depended on the goodwill and intrinsic initiative from the teachers, the coordinators, and the administrators for the coordinating groups to be sites of productive conversation. In the end, though, the coordinating group system was a critical structure that allowed the vision of a comprehensive writing program articulated in the Gates Report to move from a plan on paper to a program in reality.

The Teacher Evaluation Committee

In addition to the coordinating group system, one of the other most significant administrative structures in the early Writing Program (1986-1996), a structure that also required substantial investments of time and money by the Writing Program, was the Teacher Evaluation Committee. The Teacher Evaluation Committee (or TEC) was one of the Writing Program initiatives that grew bottom-up from the coordinating group system, an idea that was adopted and refined through a heterogeneous committee of Writing Program faculty, administration, instructors, and teaching assistants. The TEC, then, reflects one of the ways the coordinating group system helped shape the administrative structures in the Writing Program.

Teacher evaluation was one of the hotly debated and contested attributes of the old Freshman English program. The 1984 WPA external evaluation noted that part-time instructor evaluation seemed arbitrary, dismissive, and unfair to the instructors themselves, whose evaluations, called “file reviews,” mostly consisted of appraising the instructors’ marginal comments on student papers and of impressions by the Freshman English director and his staff garnered through classroom observations. The part-time instructors complained to the outside WPA evaluators that they did not know what exactly they were being evaluated on, and some

explained that their evaluations in the past were docked for things not central to their pedagogical effectiveness, like their personal dress or whether or not they erased the chalkboard (McQuade and Slevin). In the first year of the Writing Program, from 1986-1987, it was clear to Phelps, Lipson, and Himley, the full-time faculty members, that part-time instructor evaluation, especially given the new studio curriculum that encouraged invention and experimentation, needed to be defined and readdressed (Soper; Phelps, Himley, and Lipson).

The part-time instructors were suspicious of any top-down evaluation, and in the fall of 1986, Lipson held a meeting with the instructors, calling on them to “forget the past, forget the file review, forget the constraints” in regards to their teaching and evaluation (Soper). One of the problems with the past evaluation was that its primary purpose was obscured: were the assessments formative (with the primary aim of staff development) or summative (with the primary aim of making rehiring decisions) in nature? The conversation at this meeting aimed to “dispel some of [the instructors’] past paranoia” about evaluation and to begin working on a transparent evaluation process that would serve both the instructors and the Writing Program as an opportunity for formative development and, if necessary, provide the Writing Program with a more clear way to determine contracts and make rehiring decisions (Soper). Lipson handed out and explained a list of suggestions for part-time instructor evaluation developed by Phelps, Himley, and herself, which underlined the importance of “involving PTIs [part-time instructors] in the process” and outlined an evaluation procedure that included peer classroom evaluation, student evaluations, and reflective teaching portfolios in which each instructor would include their syllabi, sample graded student papers, and classroom assignments, commenting on how these documents reflected their pedagogical philosophies. Instead of just having the Writing Program director read and assess the portfolios (a monumental task, given the 87 part-time

instructors and over 50 teaching assistants teaching in the Program in the 1986-1987 school year), Phelps, Himley, and Lipson suggested that in the future, appointed part-time instructors could put forth contract renewal recommendations to the Writing Program administration (“Suggestions for PTI Evaluation”).

The Writing Program full-time faculty did not have full administrative control of the evaluation mechanisms for instructors and teaching assistants; one of the structures put into place through the 1985 Gates Report was a Writing Program Cabinet, a committee of full-time faculty (primarily from the English Department and the Writing Program) who assisted and advised Phelps, Himley, and Lipson. In January 1987, a subset of the Cabinet, the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee, which included full-time faculty members from the Writing Program and some English department members who had some administrative oversight of the English Department graduate students serving as teaching assistants in the Writing Program, recommended that the Writing Program adopt a teacher portfolio evaluation system in order to evaluate teachers for rehiring decisions for the 1987-1988 school year (Phelps, Himley, and Lipson). The Writing Program full-time faculty then outlined the specific items to be included in the teaching portfolios, which were due in early April 1987: a resume, a brief statement of teaching philosophy, a syllabus, and student course evaluations (Phelps, Himley, and Lipson). This memo written to the instructors and teaching assistants included sample reflective teaching statements the instructors could use as models. It is important to point out that this was the first time that the part-time instructors were asked to reflect holistically on their teaching practices and present their work to an outside audience in portfolio form; for many instructors in the old Freshman English program, they had never been asked to think about themselves as professionals who had an underlying purpose and philosophy for what they do in the classroom.

In their memo outlining the necessary teaching portfolio pieces, Phelps, Himley, and Lipson clarified the purpose of the evaluation, yet another point never clearly articulated by the old Freshman English program. The portfolios, they explained, would be used to identify three groups of teachers: those teachers who would be offered three-year contracts and/or the new coordinator positions, those who were experiencing problems in their teaching, and all other teachers (Phelps, Himley, and Lipson).

Phelps, Himley, and Lipson held two meetings in early March 1987 to hear instructor and teaching assistant concerns about the new evaluation process. The English Department teaching assistants were especially concerned about the time required to put together the portfolio and were suspicious as to the purpose of the evaluation. Thirty-seven English department graduate teaching assistants signed a memo asking for further clarification for the evaluation, citing their workload concerns, and accusing the Writing Program for soliciting the portfolios as a way to “screen” those teaching assistants who did not buy into the theories endorsed by the Program (Phelps “TAs Teaching in the Writing Program”; Franke Letter to Colleagues). The memo stated that proposal to require teaching assistants to create portfolios was “unacceptable,” reminding Phelps and the other faculty administrators that the English Department teaching assistants’ appointments “are not granted through the Writing Program, and they should not be held hostage to the Writing Program’s notion of acceptable teaching practices” and that the teaching assistants believed “this latest proposed requirement appears symptomatic of a recurrent tendency within the Writing Program to demand additional labor from teaching assistants without additional remuneration” (DiRenzo et al). The forceful rhetoric in this memo – using terms like “hostage” and “demand” – echoes in part the rhetorical style of the English Department full-time faculty, who used long memos to argue, sometimes in a hostile manner, their philosophies about

curricular and administrative changes, a style explained and analyzed by Stephen Mailloux, who was brought in to Syracuse as the new English chair in 1986, the same year Phelps came to direct the Writing Program (Mailloux *Reception Histories*). The decisiveness, antagonistic nature of the English Department, with feuding faculty who gathered graduate students into their own ideological camps, was one of the outside forces the Writing Program had to deal with in its first few years (Mauroft and Nowlin). What made the Writing Program's position difficult was its lack of authority in appointing teaching assistant lines (a problem reiterated by the Writing Program to higher university administration in subsequent annual reports) and, at the same time, its responsibility for training the teaching assistants and for maintaining a consistent studio curriculum for the undergraduate students in the teaching assistants' classrooms (Phelps "Annual Report: Writing Program 1987."). With both the teaching assistants and the part-time instructors, Phelps and other Writing Program administrators maintained that the primary purposes of the portfolio evaluations were for individual teachers' own professional development and to determine which instructors and teaching assistants would be appointed to leadership positions in the Program. The Writing Program full-time faculty and administrators were interested in encouraging the part-time instructors to take ownership of their teaching, and so the portfolios in part were designed to "develop habits of self-critical assessment" (Lipson "Portfolios"). On average, the Program lost and gained between fifteen and twenty instructors per year through normal attrition rates; the portfolio evaluations were in light of that normal cycle and not for the purposes of terminating contracts (Phelps "Staffing Plan for Writing Program Faculty"; Phelps "Talk to Writing Program Staff"; Temes "Summary Meeting on Evaluation").

Coupled with the conversations in the Writing Program surrounding instructor evaluation and professionalization was the issue of merit pay: the Program early on explored and discussed

both extending part-time instructors multiple-year contracts (between one and three years) and also an alternative to seniority-based salaries, where the instructors' per-section rates were based on years of experience teaching in the Program. The challenge was to develop a reasoned, transparent system through which to evaluate and reward instructors for good teaching (Phelps "Agenda October 26, 1987"). As part of this work to develop a merit pay structure, three part-time instructors conducted a survey of peer institutions in the fall of 1987 to determine if instructors at other universities are awarded merit pay for good teaching, and if they are, how those evaluation systems are structured (Mink; Phelps "Annual Report Writing Program 1987").

The revised teacher portfolio evaluation system, developed through the Writing Cabinet and the full-time Writing Program faculty, did do a much better job than the file review of the old Freshman English Program of explaining to the instructors and teaching assistants the exact components of their teaching that would be evaluated. This new system also gave the teachers space for critical self-reflection. However, the portfolios were a still much-discussed and debated topic in the coordinating groups and the Writing Program administrative meetings. In the fall 1989, Phelps, as the Writing Program Director, commissioned a special task force for teacher evaluation, advised by new Writing Program full-time faculty member Patricia Lambert Stock. This task force was chaired by part-time instructor George Rhinehart and consisted of Stock, Assistant Director Faith Plvan, part-time instructors Amanda Brown, Chris Kennedy, Donna Marsh, and Bobbi Kirby-Werner, and the newly-appointed Coordinator for Evaluation and Academic Support, Bron Patulski (Rhinehart et al; *The Syracuse University Writing Program Writing Words* Fall 1989). The task force, then, had significant instructor participation: five of the eight members were currently part-time instructors, and Patulski had taught as a part-time instructor in the Writing Program since Phelps came as the Director in 1986. The task force was

charged with studying assessment practices and developing a merit-based evaluation system (Stock “Report on Work-in-Progress”; The Syracuse University Writing Program *Writing Words* Fall 1989).

Assessments usually have layered purposes, and the task force wrestled with how a teacher evaluation system could be of use to the teachers and the Program on multiple levels: how the evaluation could be used by the teachers as a reflective professional development opportunity, by the Program as a snapshot of the kind of teaching that is happening in the studio courses, and by the administration as a way to determine future teaching contracts. The task force also worked to negotiate the theoretical implications of setting assessment standards and the practical needs of teachers and those who would conduct the evaluations (Stock “Report on Work-in-Progress”; Rhinehart et al). Through all their work, the task force was keenly aware that the evaluation needed to be flexible in order to accommodate a variety of teaching styles in the studio curriculum and also that the criteria for evaluation they set “are statements of values” (Rhinehart et al). The procedures and the criteria in the new evaluation system reflect what the task force believed the Program valued in teaching methods and curriculum.

The finished proposal of the task force, which included a four-step plan for evaluating the Program’s teachers, was approved to use for teacher evaluation in spring 1990. In essence, it was an expanded version of the portfolio evaluation system developed by the Writing Program Cabinet and the Writing Program full-time faculty members.

The first stage of the evaluation process asked teachers to assemble portfolios that highlighted their teaching from a number of different perspectives: through critical reflection statements, sample syllabi and course materials, a write-up from a classroom observation

conducted by the teacher's coordinator, and the instructor's student evaluations (Rhinehart et al). If the instructor wanted to, they could supplement these basic elements of the portfolio with other materials: student papers, articles or essays they had written, or letters of recommendation.

The portfolios, collected toward the end of the spring semester, were then read by the Teacher Evaluation Committee, the second stage of the evaluation. In order to do a true "criterion-referenced, holistic assessment," all members of the committee read all the portfolios, which numbered, depending on the year, between approximately 85 and 120 instructor and teaching assistant portfolios. The published evaluation plan lists the fifteen proposed questions the committee will ask as they read the portfolios, questions that point to the shared local values about what good teaching in the Syracuse Writing Program looks like (Rhinehart et al). The questions are far-ranging, looking both broadly and closely at a teacher's pedagogy, from asking how well a teacher's curriculum reflects the goals of the studio and spiral curriculum theory to how they teach rhetorical principles and inquiry in their courses (Rhinehart et al). After reading all the portfolios, the Teacher Evaluation Committee then ranked the portfolios into five categories: inadequate, weak, sound, strong, and excellent. In addition to assigning a rank to each instructor and teaching assistant portfolio, the Teacher Evaluation Committee wrote a detailed summative report that explained the reasoning behind the ranking, including references to each individual teacher's portfolio materials. The committee also used this holistic assessment to recommend instructors for leadership positions in the Program (Rhinehart et al).

The committee's rankings and recommendations then were forwarded to an administrative advisory group, the third stage in the assessment. The administrative advisory group, including the Writing Program Director, the full-time faculty Associate Directors, the Assistant Director, the Coordinator for Evaluation, and the Writing Program's Academic

Coordinator, reviewed the committee's findings (Rhinehart et al). Since these administrators might have sensitive or confidential information about instructors that could have impacted their evaluation by the committee, the administrative advisory group had the authority to alter the rankings. The administrative advisory group's main task was to take the committee's findings and create merit, contract, and hiring recommendations for the Director, done in consultation with the Teacher Evaluation Committee's rankings and reviews (Rhinehart et al).

The fourth and last stage of the teacher evaluation was communicating the merit, contract, and hiring recommendations to the instructors, including explaining to them the rationale behind the decisions (Rhinehart et al). Instructors were sent letters in the early summer that informed them of their status in the Program, subject to final budget approval.

Three important elements weave through the 1990 teacher evaluation plan. The first is transparency. All instructors were given access to the report, which outlined the four-step evaluation plan, before they submitted their first portfolios to the TEC in April 1990. Instructors were also afforded full disclosure of the reasoning behind their ranking by the committee and also given the opportunity to appeal their ranking. This transparency of both the conditions of evaluation and the exact procedure of assessment, down to the very questions the committee would be asking when reading through the portfolios, was completely absent in the old Freshman English file review system and, to some extent, the portfolio review system put into place in the 1986-1987 school year.

Another important element of the teacher evaluation plan is the move towards a holistic grading process. Teachers had the opportunity to present their teaching from a variety of perspectives: student evaluations, teaching materials, classroom observations, and their own

narrative critical reflection statements. The committee, in reading all the portfolios, had the opportunity not just to review these items but to talk to each other about each instructor's portfolio in order to construct a multifaceted portrait of that teacher's pedagogy and how it reflected the principles in the Writing Program curriculum. The portfolios were large and complex, not simple, singular snapshots.

A third element that ties together the evaluation process is the value placed on critical reflection. Critical reflection was one of the foremost practices emphasized in the Writing Program's spiral curriculum, and the reflective teaching statements that framed each portfolio illustrates how the Writing Program valued reflection as not just a skill their students needed to develop but one that was crucially important to effective, dynamic studio teaching. Reflection in the teacher evaluation process happened not just inside the portfolios: in the conversations on the committee, as committee members read, analyzed, and discussed each teacher's portfolio, the committee members had the opportunity to reflect more broadly on the kinds of teaching happening in the Program and through that, construct a picture of what good pedagogical practice is. That large-scale reflection was translated into the rankings and recommendations, and since many part-time instructors served on the Teacher Evaluation Committee over the years, the experience of reading teacher reflections and reflecting on them together as a group infused the Program with an underlying understanding of the central place and "community practice" of inquiry and critical reflection in teaching (Rhinehart et al).

The Syracuse Writing Program made a tremendous financial investment in the evaluation of instructors and the Teacher Evaluation Committee structure. In the fall of 1989, the Program secured funding for a full-time staff position of Coordinator for Evaluation and Academic Support (The Syracuse University Writing Program *Writing Words* Fall 1989). This position,

held by former part-time instructor Bron Patulski, was a salaried administrative position similar to the full-time Assistant Director position held by Faith Plvan. Patulski served both as an administrative representative on the Teacher Evaluation Committee and also on the Composition Planning Council, the Program's primary planning and administrative committee, with the other Writing Program administrators and a few part-time instructor, teaching assistant, and full-time faculty representatives (Plvan "Annual Report 1989-1990"). Also as part of her position, Patulski dealt with student complaints and mentored and observed both instructors and teaching assistants in the Program (Phelps "Annual Report 1990-1991"). In addition to paying a salary for this Coordinator for Evaluation position, the Writing Program also paid part-time instructors and teaching assistants stipends to serve on the Teacher Evaluation Committee, a commitment that involved dozens of hours, since all members of the committee had to read, discuss, rank, and write a summative commentary on each teacher's portfolio collected that year.

The investment in the Teacher Evaluation Committee benefited the Writing Program in a few ways. First, it provided both the teachers constructing portfolios and those teachers and administrators reading and ranking the portfolios a valuable professional development opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practices, to see their teaching in comparison to their peers, and to develop a tangible understanding of what the studio principles enacted looked like. Second, it streamlined the evaluation process for the Writing Program. Instead of asking the full-time faculty directors of the Writing Program to evaluate each instructor and teaching assistant, the Writing Program handed that responsibility over to the Teacher Evaluation Committee and the coordinators, who conducted the teaching evaluations as part of the portfolios. Third, through the Teacher Evaluation Committee, those instructors who chose to participate became even more implicated in the inner administration of the Writing Program, which translated into greater part-

time instructor investment in the Program, an investment and energy that was invaluable to the Program's development and was often only nominally compensated. It is important to note that the instructors were elected by their fellow instructors to serve on the Teacher Evaluation Committee, not appointed by the administration. That meant that those instructors unhappy with their rankings could get on the Teacher Evaluation Committee in the next year and give their input and affect the evaluation process. The Writing Program, during its first few years of rapid curricular and structural development, depended on the often uncompensated labor of instructors, teaching assistants, and faculty who worked on committees and projects for no reward other than the intrinsic idea that they were doing something interesting and important.

The portfolios were first read and ranked by the Teacher Evaluation Committee in April 1990. That summer, Syracuse University, due to decreased student enrollment and an economic recession, cut budgets by at least 20% (Phelps "Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991"). The budget cuts suddenly and severely affected the Writing Program, partly because the Program's budget had never fully been put on base (Lipson and Gerace). In addition to cutting back on the Program's internal publications, funding for instructors to go to conferences, and service and maintenance contracts for the Writing Program computers and copiers, the Writing Program also had to cut its instructional staff both because of the decreased budget and the decrease in student enrollment (Phelps "Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991; Lipson and Gerace; The Syracuse University Writing Program "Proposed Cost-Savings Measured for 1990-1991").

Faced with the necessity to cut several instructor positions, the Writing Program administration had to decide which instructors to let go. They decided to use the rankings from the Teacher Evaluation Committee, completed just months prior. All the instructors and teaching

assistants in the Program had been evaluated and ranked, so it was, the administration decided, the best way to decide who should stay and who should go (Stock “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”). Though the language in the April 1990 “Evaluating Professional Writing Instructors” charter, which set out the procedure for evaluating instructors through the Teacher Evaluation Committee, cast the rankings as a formative assessment (a way to determine which instructors should qualify for merit pay and leadership positions in the Program and which instructors needed further mentoring to improve their teaching), using the rankings to determine which instructors’ contracts to terminate changed the purpose of the rankings to a summative assessment.

Using the committee’s rankings in this way the first time the TEC was implemented had several effects on how the TEC was perceived in later years. On one hand, using the rankings to determine whose contracts were terminated justified and strengthened the Teacher Evaluation Committee. The instructors were ranked holistically in a multi-step procedure that Associate Director and full-time faculty member Stock called “a fair, rigorous, and systematic process” (Stock “Annual Report (1989-1990)”). As the administration pointed out, there was no other system for determining which instructors’ positions would be cut that was better or more transparent (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”; Stock “An Annual Report: The 1990-1991 Academic Year”). However, coupling the first TEC with the cuts in positions that accompanied the overall university budget and enrollment cuts led to a feeling of anxiety surrounding teacher evaluation, perhaps burying the goals of formative reflective assessment under the more summative merit-based rankings.

The university-wide budget cuts, coupled with the persistent problem of not having the Writing Program’s full instructional budget on base, led to an inability of the Writing Program to

always award merit pay to those teachers in the highest ranking tiers (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1990-1991”). This problem was compounded by the “tenure-up” phenomenon happening in the Writing Program: there were increasingly more veteran instructors than new instructors in the Writing Program, and the budget wasn’t designed to expand to accommodate a larger number of more highly paid part-time instructors. There was limited mobility for the part-time instructors. Though many of them invested considerable time and intellectual energy in their teaching, their coordinating groups, and initiatives like the TEC, the reality was that in the eyes of the university, the instructors were contingent faculty. Though the Writing Program continued to press for more $\frac{3}{4}$ instructorships and argue for establishing full-time instructorships, both resulting in better pay and benefits for the instructors, these initiatives could not fix the larger problem of an underpaid, under-resourced but highly knowledgeable contingent faculty.

In the 1994-1995 annual report, Phelps (who wrote the report in consultation with co-directors Lipson and Keith Gilyard) explains that for the first time, the Writing Program was seeing an “erosion” in their part-time instructor faculty. Armed with the disciplinary knowledge and leadership experience they gleaned from their work in the Writing Program, through systems like the coordinating groups and the TEC, part-time instructors left, moving on to other jobs or to area institutions to help develop, teach in, and lead their writing programs and initiatives (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1994-1995”). This decrease in the number of senior instructors led to both an imbalance between the numbers of instructors and inexperienced teaching assistants, who had a high turnover in the program, and a reduction in the leadership and teaching experience of the instructors (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1994-1995”). The report outlines these problems and their effects to the dean:

“As resources for studio sections have been reduced (through inadvertent effects, far more than the scheduled cuts), the devastating impact on the PWI instructional core has only gradually become evident. PWIs are not just bodies; they are individuals of varied and valuable expertise. The mistake that has been made is to equate minimum coverage of studio sections with maintenance of this competent core of expert instructors, who provide far more to the program than simply teaching studio sections....

With this erosion in numbers we also lose the intangible resources in PWI time, energy, and loyalty that are voluntarily invested far beyond the nominal pay. When new opportunities arise (e.g., writing across the curriculum, technological projects, consulting opportunities or new affiliations with other units) and in some cases new resources are made available, we have no teachers to assign to these functions. TA training and supervision suffers as well from a deficit of PWI coordinators and mentors” (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1994-1995”).

Illustrated here is the conflict between how the instructors were perceived by the Writing Program administration and how they were regarded by higher-level university administrators. To the Writing Program, each instructor signified a tremendous investment in time, money, and energy: each instructor was encouraged to use forums like the coordinating groups and the TEC to reflect on his or her teaching and solicit feedback from other teachers, faculty, and administrators. To the university, however, there was not much difference between a veteran instructor and a new teaching assistant covering a section of first-year writing. The Writing Program budget was organized by instructional section: the university counted and paid for, for example, 120 sections of Studio 1 at a fixed per-section rate, not 40 instructors (of possibly differing salaries) teaching three Studio 1 courses each. The organizing unit of the Writing Program budget was sections of courses, not instructors. Therefore, in order to pay for “extra” items like the coordinator positions, the Writing Program carefully enrolled students in the sections, maximizing the students in each section up to the 20-student cap, so that they created some empty sections out of those that were allotted and budgeted for. The money, then, that had

been budgeted for that section was used by the Writing Program to cover merit raises and stipends (Phelps “Writing Program Annual Report 1994-1995”; The Syracuse University Writing Program “Instructional Budget Worksheet for FY 1994/1995”, “Instructional Budget Analysis”, and “Summary: Writing Program Budget”).

The Writing Program’s strained budget – a budget that wasn’t flexible – affected the fate of the TEC. Though the TEC was a remarkable effort to holistically evaluate the Writing Program’s teachers and allow them the opportunity both to reflect on their teaching and talk about the shared values in the Program, the TEC became difficult to sustain, both in terms of how much it cost and how much time it took. The TEC read scores of portfolios each spring in order to turn out rankings and contract letters to the instructors that summer.

In the 1995-1996 academic year, then-chair of the Writing Program Keith Gilyard asked Donna Marsh, a former part-time instructor serving as the Program’s assessment coordinator, to develop a proposal to amend the TEC, given the changing needs of the part-time instructors in the Writing Program and tightening economic constraints (Marsh “Policy Debates”). The revised policy, published in April 1996, was developed after Marsh received input from Writing Program faculty, administrators, part-time instructors in both responses to earlier policy drafts and at a two-hour open listening session about the part-time instructor evaluation process. A change in the TEC was necessary not only for budget reasons, but because “growing tensions that emerged when peers became evaluators and competition between peers escalated” (Marsh “Policy Debates” 3). Even though the TEC was meant to serve as a foundation for the Writing Program’s teaching community, a place to talk about and reaffirm the Program’s values and theories, to some part-time instructors, it became both “dysfunctional,” a source of “tension and fear,” and contributing to a “severe morale problem” in the Writing Program (Marsh “Policy

Debates” 2, 4). Part-time instructors felt uncomfortable in their role as a peer evaluator, responsible for assessing their colleagues’ performance while often not fully trained nor compensated for that responsibility. In addition, many part-time instructors felt that the Writing Program administration played too large of a role in the assessment procedure, turning what was thought to be an evaluation by peers in to one that had the trappings of a peer evaluation system but was really scripted by the full-time administration (Marsh “Policy Debates” 4-6).

Part of the controversy surrounding the TEC was a misunderstanding of the original rationale behind the process. In her memo to the faculty in response to the charges against the current TEC system outlined in Marsh’s document, Phelps explains that the TEC was never meant to be a pure peer-review system. From the very beginning, the TEC was conceived as a way to get multiple perspectives (faculty, administration, part-time colleague) on a teacher’s pedagogy, to serve, using Mary Louise Pratt’s term, as a “contact zone” that incorporated peer review but was not limited to that homogeneous assessment (Phelps “Response to Teacher Assessment Proposal”). Also, only an administrator is charged with the appropriate managerial authority by the university to make a final evaluation determination (Phelps “Response to Teacher Assessment Proposal”). After clarifying the history of the TEC, however, Phelps advocates reinventing the TEC instead of repairing it: “Designs generally start by asking what are the needs and what are the constraints that the system has to meet, and certainly these have changed considerably since [the TEC] was put in place, before our teaching staff was cut in half and our operating budget decimated” (Phelps “Response to Teacher Assessment Proposal”). The context was different in 1996 than it was in 1989. The Writing Program was and continues to be a dynamic system, so the systems within it also needed to change.

Instead of creating a new evaluation system, however, the Writing Program decided to work within the old TEC. The revised procedure for evaluating instructors exempted veteran instructors (those with five years of teaching in the Writing Program) from submitting yearly portfolios: they only needed to submit portfolios for evaluation at the end of their one-to-three year teaching contract. In addition, the TEC membership was changed to be an all-peer group made up of part-time instructors: one serving as the Program's assessment coordinator (who does not rank the portfolios but rather facilitates the committee's work), four who are elected to two-year terms by their fellow instructors, and one appointed by the Writing Program administration. The work of drafting the summative evaluation letters, which included the teacher's ranking on a scale of 1 (exemplary teaching) to 6 (inadequate teaching) fell to one person, the assessment coordinator (The Syracuse University Writing Program "Evaluating Professional Writing Instructors"). The TEC's recommendations were then forwarded to the Administrative Advisory Group, as they were in the original TEC system, for final review, revision, and approval. In addition to changing the constituency of the TEC, the revised TEC procedure called for an "orientation and acculturation" process for the part-time instructors serving on the TEC to prepare them for the task of reading their peers' teaching portfolios and evaluating them. This included group readings and discussions about what the committee members were seeing across the portfolios, and how the differences in what they saw spoke to individual pedagogies and shared Program values (The Syracuse University Writing Program "Evaluating Professional Writing Instructors"). Even though this recursive discussion did take place in the original TEC, the revised plan emphasized its important reflective and critical purpose in the evaluation procedure.

Summary

Both the coordinating group system and the TEC evolved out of an administrative need: to produce syllabi and assignments that responded to the new studio curriculum, to mentor and supervise the Writing Program's many teachers, and to evaluate the teachers. What is significant, looking at both the coordinating group system and the TEC, is how the administrators in the Writing Program sought to find ways to include the part-time instructors and teaching assistants in the fabric of the Program. From the start, instead of instituting a clear, scripted, top-down writing program, the Syracuse directors and faculty decided to invite the part-time instructors and teaching assistants into the process of building an independent writing program. It was a design choice, an argument layered with claims about how contingent faculty should be treated, how students learn to write, how teachers become more nuanced practitioners, how theory and knowledge can be built within a community. As Louise Phelps and Faith Plvan pointed out in their reflective essay "The Social Architecture of the Writing Program," it was the administrative structures like the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee that organized the program, allowing it "to function effectively as a workplace, a teaching community, a site for research, and an institutional unit with major instructional and professional responsibilities."

The history of the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 through 1996 also tells a story of tension and disappointment. The revolutionary spirit that punctuated the newsletters, reports, and speeches in the first few years dwindled over the decade, replaced at times with critique and cynicism. The contingent faculty labor issue was not solved in the Writing Program. Every advance towards improving the working conditions of part-time instructors, such as the adoption of a merit-pay plan, the change in the instructors' title, or the promotion of instructors to a better-

paid, more prestigious, coordinator or assistant director position, was offset by budget cuts that evaporated merit pay funding, suspicions of being taken advantage of through uncompensated committee work, and the uncomfortable feeling of evaluating the work of peers. The efforts to professionalize writing instructors by giving them certain curricular and administrative authority in the Writing Program did not unilaterally work. Some instructors wanted the tasks the Writing Program eagerly handed out – compiling and editing teacher guides and newsletters, serving on the teacher evaluation committee, writing policy statements, consulting with other departments in writing-across-the-curriculum projects, and acting as mentors and leaders for their colleagues. Other instructors didn't want these tasks or couldn't take on the responsibilities due to their own personal and professional lives. Some saw their teaching in the Writing Program as simply a job, and they resisted the prevailing notion in the Writing Program that their job needed to be theorized, argued for, and defended on Program-wide or national platforms. The Program-wide efforts to professionalize the part-time writing instructors might have decreased the heterogeneity of the Program: those writing instructors who did not share in the Writing Program's culture – one defined and circulated through the ongoing writing and publishing activities of the Program – were not part of the decision-making leadership core, often because they did not want to be in those positions.

What is also interesting about the history of the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996 told in this chapter is that it is a study of administration in action. The directors of the program (who included, during this time span, Carol Lipson, Margaret Himley, Louise Phelps, Chuck Watson, and Keith Gilyard) had to negotiate between their desire to create administrative systems that would fulfill the needs of the instructors, Program, and university and the real pressures of time and money. The Writing Program couldn't halt its day-to-day work of teaching

students, hiring, firing, and evaluating instructors, and assessing the Program through annual reports and external evaluations. The Writing Program's administrative systems for its part-time instructors were created in action, and therefore they were sometimes short-sighted, off-base, or had unintended consequences, like the need to use the first results of the teacher evaluation committee to let go of several instructors in answer to the university's budget cuts. The benefit of studying these structures over ten years, though, is to see how they were also revised in action and how new faculty and instructors re-directed the Program (like through Keith Gilyard's Odyssey Project), and the effects those adjustments had on the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee.

Underlying all of this history is a conscientious choice on the part of the Writing Program's administration to invest in its writing instructors through professional development and evaluation structures. The prevailing concept of development pervades the history of the Writing Program: its founding spiral curriculum is based in the concept of development; the coordinating group system worked to develop syllabi and assignments; the reflective teaching portfolios were designed to foster teachers' pedagogical development; the Program's publications and in-house conferences sought to develop a common vocabulary, culture, and set of values surrounding the teaching of writing; and the leadership opportunities like the coordinator position were created, in part, to support the instructors' development as professionals in the field. Perhaps this concept is key to analyzing the Syracuse Writing Program's administrative history from 1986-1996: it is a complicated story of the development of a human system.

Chapter 4: Remembering the Writing Program

One morning this past winter, I was at my usual early-morning writing spot, the coffee shop about a mile away from my home. The snow kept coming down, down – par for course for January in Syracuse. I sat in a small booth near the fireplace, reading scanned copies of the Syracuse Writing Program’s annual reports.

As I walked across the room to refill my coffee, I spotted a familiar face. There, sitting at a table near the door, was the very person who wrote the 1987-1988 annual report I just read. I wanted to tap her on her shoulder, tell her about the time warp she’d just walked into, but I didn’t. It was a little much for me, already jazzed up on two cups of coffee.

Some historians tell the stories of people long gone, tying together a journal here with a newspaper account there to pull out the bigger picture. They often don’t know intimate details about the people they study: their haircut, the sound of their voice, the color of their winter coat, their Panera breakfast order.

My historical study is different. Not only am I researching a writing program that is less than thirty years old, but I also am studying in depth the structures of a writing program that I belong to and have worked at. It’s familiar and unfamiliar all at once: although I know many of the people I read about and whom I interviewed, I wasn’t here from 1986 to 1996. I was a kid, moving around the country with my family, learning how to ride my bike in Philly and how to run away from alligators in South Florida.

That morning at Panera drove this point home to me. What I deal with in this research is what Einstein wrestled with: the dimension of time. I work in the same halls, meet in the same

rooms, and work with many of the same people who helped create the Syracuse Writing Program as part-time instructors, teaching assistants, full-time faculty, and administrative staff. Yet time changed them, as it changes all of us, and what I get to see, which very few historians have the chance to see, is both perspectives. I read in the administrative documents I've scanned how people reacted to and understood the moves and events of the Writing Program from 1986-1996. Then, I converse with some of them through interviews and learn how they've remembered what happened back then. And through all of it, I have a constant connection to the Writing Program and the people in it, quietly informing how I understand it all.

* * *

The written artifacts of writing program administration – the planning documents, the annual reports, and memos – do not reflect the fullness and complexity of events, structures, and decisions of a writing program. Really, the only true way to experience what it was like to be part of a writing program at a particular time is to climb onboard a time-travelling machine and get there yourself, though even that's not a perfect plan, as you'd need then to account for your own subjective point of view and possible violations of the theory of relativity.

Histories are impartial, imperfect. The previous chapter describes the professional development and evaluation structures for part-time writing instructors at the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986-1996 from the point of view of administrative documents archived by the program and by its first director, Louise Wetherbee Phelps. The history in the previous chapter shows how a well-known writing program in the field of composition and rhetoric designed and implemented administrative structures to professionalize its large non-tenure-track writing instructor corps. This history also shows some of the costs of professionalization, including the

tensions that arise in a writing program when writing instructors are given the responsibility to participate in evaluation of their peers and when there is an expectation of professional investment. This chapter looks at those same professional development and evaluation structures, specifically the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee, from a different perspective, through retrospective interviews of people who worked in the Syracuse Writing Program during its first ten years, 1986-1996.

This chapter doesn't tell a different story, just a deeper, more complex one. Instead of pursuing a chronological understanding of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee (how they developed over time), I am following emergent themes that speak to how these structures were experienced by the members of the Syracuse Writing Program and what effects they had on the them, the program, and the larger university and professional community. I've tried to let their words and memories take center stage in this chapter, hoping to give readers a chance to sit in with my conversations with them.¹⁶

I interviewed twelve people who worked in the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996, asking them in open-ended interviews how they came to work in the Syracuse Writing Program, what their experiences were specifically related to the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee, and, if they did not still work at the Syracuse Writing Program, why they left. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The twelve people I

¹⁶ As I've edited the transcripts of my interviews, I've tried to strike a balance between making this chapter manageable for a reader to navigate and capturing the affect that comes from a conversation. When possible, I left people's comments, anecdotes, and memories unedited, but the interviews, as all human conversations, charted their own course at times. I signaled in this chapter when I jumped forward in the transcript, pulling together strands from the interviews that together made a cohesive idea.

interviewed for this project are Bron Adam¹⁷, Anne Fitzsimmons, Nance Hahn, Margaret Himley, Henry Jankiewicz, Bobbi Kirby-Werner, Carol Lipson, Donna Marsh O'Connor¹⁸, Faith Plvan, George Rhinehart, Molly Voorheis, and Jim Zebroski. They served (and some continue to serve) the Program in numerous capacities: part-time instructor, teaching assistant, writing consultant, full-time administrative staff member, full-time faculty, faculty director and administrator. I did not formally interview Louise Wetherbee Phelps, the first director of the Writing Program, as she served as my dissertation co-director. The conversations we've had over the years, coupled with many of her personally archived documents that I used to construct my document-based history of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee, served as rich, reflective insight of those structures and the Syracuse Writing Program, equal to scores of hours of interviews with her.

During the course of my interviews, I gained an appreciation of the Writing Program as a complex human system, shaped not just by theoretical imaginings of curriculum or organizational schemas but also by the constraints of institutional context and the impact of personal relationships and individual personalities. Writing program administrators need to have a keen awareness that the often hard-to-quantify personal and institutional contexts of a program can – and do – affect how it functions and whether or not its carefully planned curriculum, evaluation, and professional development succeeds. The 100+ members of the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996 – counting full-time faculty, part-time writing instructors, teaching assistants, full-time administrative staff, and support staff – had, as any organization of that size,

¹⁷ Bron Adam changed her name from Bron Patulski to Bron Adam during the course of the history of the Syracuse Writing Program. Therefore, the reflections given by Bron Adam in this chapter are connected to documents and activities attributed to Bron Patulski in the previous chapter.

¹⁸ Donna Marsh O'Connor changed her name from Donna Marsh to Donna Marsh O'Connor during the course of the history of the Syracuse Writing Program. Therefore, the reflections given by Donna Marsh O'Connor in this chapter are connected to the documents and activities attributed to Donna Marsh in the previous chapter.

its own set of personal and institutional conflicts. Some of these were present in the documents I read through to write the document-based history of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee; some were not written down, but I learned about them through the interviews. I did not choose to discuss the details of personal conflicts between members of the Program; if these conflicts affected, in my opinion, the outcome of the structures that I was investigating, I referred briefly to them, but I decided that rehashing 20-year-old debates did little to add to the understanding of the professional development and evaluation structures for part-time writing instructors in the Syracuse Writing Program. All human systems have their share of personal conflicts, big and small. Such is the nature of people working in groups.

This chapter, which looks at how the Writing Program's professional development and evaluation structures for part-time instructors were experienced by the members of the Program, is a history that delves into the more affective aspects of these administrative structures. I am interested in understanding how these structures were understood, taken up, and experienced by the Program's part-time instructors: how they impacted how the part-time instructors understood themselves as teachers, professionals, and members of the Syracuse Writing Program. Through exploring what each of these structures and, more holistically, what being a part of this historic stand-alone Writing Program during its first ten years *meant* to those who participated in them, I hope to highlight recurring themes and values that seem important to the work of writing program administrators.

Finally, the retrospective reflections presented here provide current writing program administrators and those who work with teachers an understanding of the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation. Professional development and evaluation systems are expensive administrative commitments, both in term of money and time spent by people

organizing them and participating in them. Sometimes, the effectiveness of a system is only measured with short-term goals in mind: did the evaluation plan identify the people who should be asked to take on leadership positions next year? Did the summer working group produce another edition of the teacher sourcebook for the incoming new instructors? Did the coordinating group support the new teaching assistants by helping them prepare classroom activities and assignments this semester? The long-term benefits of professional development are harder to immediately identify, but the retrospective interviews presented in this chapter begin to show how the professional development and evaluation systems at the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996 helped to cultivate a program-wide culture of teaching and inquiry. Through that culture, the writing instructors began to identify themselves as professionals, and some used the skills and insights they gained through the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee to pursue new careers.

From Here to There: The Transition from the Freshman English Program to the Stand-Alone Writing Program

In order to appreciate the experiences part-time faculty members had with the Writing Program's coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee, it is important to understand those two structures – central to the administrative operations of the Writing Program from 1986-1996 – in juxtaposition to what professional development and evaluation systems were available to the part-time instructors before the Writing Program was founded in 1986.

Many of those whom I interviewed worked at the university before 1986, and they either observed or taught in the Freshman English Program, the required Syracuse University first-year writing program administered through the English Department.

Carol Lipson, one of the original founding faculty members of the Writing Program, who was an assistant professor in the English Department in the early 1980s, remembered the Freshman English curriculum:

“It was designed in the 1960s. It followed principles that were advanced in the sixties, but they were basically building blocks: you had to learn grammar before you wrote sentences, and you had to pass writing sentences before you could write paragraphs, and you had to pass writing individual paragraphs, that kind of thing. They were modules. There was a nine-week module at the beginning, for people who weren’t in basic writing. You had to pass three essays, and then you could move on to the next module. Otherwise, you just stayed in some place-holding thing until you could do that...

“The grading was based on two things. One was grammar. If you made more than a certain number of grammar errors of a certain type, you failed. The other was organizational. These were all in-class. There was no preparation, no discussion. You were given a topic and you had to write. Once you passed the three essays, you could get to a module for the rest of the semester that was based on literature, writing about literature, analyzing literature. There was no revision allowed...

“[The director] wasn’t really interested in writing. It was just a service assignment the English Department gave him. He had a minimal staff – basically two graduate students neither whom finished their PhDs. They weren’t really interested in writing; it was a job for them. The staff was overwhelmed, so [the director] wasn’t interested in experimentation or any changes...

“It was advertised as a ‘teacher-proof curriculum.’ It was kind of mechanized. Everyone did pretty well the same thing. [The program] was pretty impoverished. I don’t know what it was like in the sixties, but by the time it got to the seventies, it was ossified.”

According to Lipson, the Freshman English Program at Syracuse University, which coordinated the required writing courses at the university until 1985, was a prescriptive program, its curriculum inflexible for both students and instructors. There was hinted in the formulaic curriculum a disregard for both the instructors and the students. The students were not trusted to write outside of class or invent their own topics, and the module format of the course promoted

an unsophisticated view of the writing process, where students first had to master the writing of individual sentences before they were able to “move on” to the more intellectual, higher-level work of analyzing poetry and fiction.

The lack of flexibility in the program was not only a result of an outdated understanding of composition and rhetoric research and writing process theory. A second reason why the Freshman English Program was so fixed was that it was understaffed, and it would have been nearly impossible for the one director and his two assistants to single-handedly supervise, mentor, and evaluate dozens of writing instructors who were implementing their own interpretations of curriculum. Finally, Lipson’s labeling of the Freshman English Program’s curriculum as “teacher-proof” points at an underlying disregard for the contingent faculty who taught in the program, a historical marginalization and disregard for non-tenure-track writing instructors that is discussed in Chapter 2, in the survey of contemporary literature in the discipline about contingent faculty labor in writing programs.

Bobbi Kirby-Werner, a teaching assistant in the Freshman English program who went on to work as a part-time writing instructor, described what the Freshman English program was like, in the eyes of someone who taught in it:

“The Freshman English program was so entrenched in the Baker style essay.¹⁹ That was the only way to teach. I came to recognize that as a survival decision. With a program as large and unwieldy as it was, with new TAs coming in all the time with very little real training, it had to be very formulaic...

“It was very neat package of stuff we needed to do, a progression of essays. There was a little latitude to select topics, but we were all doing the same. And to the extent we diverged from that, we were critiqued.”

¹⁹ The Baker style essay is a short academic argument essay that follows a specific five-paragraph structure: an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Kirby-Werner's recollection of the culture of the Freshman English Program is in line with Lipson's, and her explanation that teachers who deviated from the set curriculum were critiqued shows the consequences of a Program that was outdated theoretically, was underfunded and understaffed, and had a poor regard for the intellectual capabilities of its instructors. Instructors were discouraged from experimentation: moving outside the mold was time-consuming for the director and his assistants, because they had to approve the individually-constructed and revised syllabi and evaluate whether those syllabi met the objectives of the course. The module course, in Kirby-Werner's words, was "neat"; changing it was messy.

Nance Hahn, who started as working as a graduate teaching assistant through the English Department in 1986, remembered how she felt during her teaching assistant orientation, when she and other new teaching assistants were shown the curriculum and expectations of the Freshman English Program:

"Sitting in that training, I felt nauseated. Really. And at one point I got up and quietly walked out and thought to myself, 'I am not coming back.' Pat Moody²⁰ came rushing after me. She said, 'Where are you going? What are you doing?' I said 'I don't think I could do *this* to somebody.' And she said, 'Oh. Well, that's just the very reason you need to stay.'"

Hahn did not want to "do *this*" – present an inflexible model of writing to students, asking them to approach it as a discrete skills task instead of inviting them to participate in the craft, the rhetoric of writing. Her visceral reaction to her orientation was not isolated: Patricia Moody's conversation with her demonstrates the underlying resistance of some faculty and instructors toward the outdated curriculum. In fact, in the early 1980s, the faculty across the

²⁰ Patricia Moody was a full-time faculty member in the English Department. Moody taught many of the Honors sections of Freshman Writing and was a member of the search committee that hired Louise Wetherbee Phelps as the new Writing Program director in 1986.

Syracuse University campus began “bemoaning the writing skills of students and bouncing around ideas of writing across the curriculum” (Lipson.) Lipson, whose specialty includes technical writing, and Margaret Himley, hired in 1983 as a compositionist, were asked by the university administration to help evaluate the Freshman English Program, a year-long process. That task was a delicate one, explained Himley, since Brune claimed “a sort of moral tenure” as the Director of the Freshman English program and was loathe either stepping down or revising the curriculum. It wasn’t just the faculty at the university who wanted to modify and improve the Freshman English program: many English Department teaching assistants, taking courses in composition and rhetoric theory taught by Lipson, Himley, and English Department faculty member Pat Moody, were “hungry for a change” (Himley interview). “It was the heady days of process,” Himley explained, the early 1980s when the field of composition and rhetoric began exploding with scholarship. The movements of the field nationally were echoed in many of the conversations among graduate teaching assistants in the Syracuse English Department.

The recommendations of that task force – the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Writing Instruction, also known as the Gates Report – included hiring a new writing program director and implementing a new curriculum at Syracuse University based on contemporary composition and rhetoric scholarship. The university conducted a national search for the new director, and in the spring of 1986, hired Louise Wetherbee Phelps, who was at the University of Southern California, to be the new director of the Writing Program. The university also hired Stephen Mailloux to be the new chair of the deeply fractured English Department, which was divided into theoretical and ideological camps.²¹

²¹ After Mailloux left Syracuse University, he reflected on the “culture wars” in the Syracuse University English Department in his 1998 book *Reception Histories: Rhetoric, Pragmatism, and American Cultural Politics*.

Molly Voorheis, who started working as a part-time instructor in 1983, after she finished her master's degree in the English Department, remembered when Phelps and Mailloux were hired in 1986: "He and Louise respected each other. He had ideas about composition and rhetoric that really jived with hers. He was a good English chair for the Writing Program when it began." And, as Himley said, when both Phelps and Mailloux came to campus in the fall of 1986, "it all felt big and full of potential." The infusion of new leadership is often a time of hope and renewal, especially when there is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction in the organization. Also, Voorheis' appraisal of the friendly working relationship between Phelps and Mailloux is important to understand. The English Department faculty was cited in the Gates Report for its rampant disregard towards the Freshman English Program. It is significant, then, that during the early, formative development of the Writing Program, that Mailloux, the new chair and leader of the English Department, was interested in writing and rhetoric, as signified by his attempt to organize the English Department under the organizing term of rhetoric, which was discussed in the previous chapter.

The teaching assistants, instructors, English Department faculty, and other university faculty members were ready for a new kind of writing program. With the task force recommendations, which leaned heavily on an external review of the Freshman English program conducted by consultants from the Council of Writing Program Administrators, Phelps and her fellow faculty members had "a mandate from the university – not just the English Department" to change the face of writing instruction at Syracuse (Himley interview). The drive for creating a new curriculum came not from Phelps, Himley, Lipson, or the writing instructors alone: their desire to design a writing curriculum based on current composition research and theories was supported publically by the larger university faculty through the Faculty Senate's approval of the

task force's recommendations. This point is significant in the history of independent writing programs at American colleges and universities. Instead of a bottom-up departmental "divorce," where composition and rhetoric faculty choose and lobby for separation from a literature-centered English program, the Syracuse Writing Program received a top-down mandate. The new writing program at Syracuse was expected to do something different, and was given some leeway and space to accomplish that in its early history.

Setting the Stage for the New Curriculum

The teaching assistants, part-time writing instructors, and faculty members who were there in the 1986-1987 academic year, the first year of the Writing Program under the directorship of Phelps, had vivid memories of that year, both of the activities they did to help get the new curriculum off the ground and of their feelings about being in a newly developing independent writing program.

Voorheis described how she felt:

"When Louise came, it was like this big revolution. We felt lucky to have her. And we felt that things were really changing. From the outset, there was a real effort to support the expertise of the practitioner while also trying to establish this as an academic discipline. It couldn't just be a lot of wives of faculty members who teach just because it always worked that way. We were encouraged to do in-class research, to go to conferences..."

"There was also the practical recognition that no matter what the Writing Program thought about it or the university thought about it, writing was built on the backs of the part-time instructors. So rather than fighting it, there was an effort to say, 'What can we do for these people? How can we tap into some of the expertise that's there?' Also, they were recognizing that there were some people here who we didn't know what they were doing in their classrooms."

The sweeping, revolutionary rhetoric that characterized the Writing Program's early publications and activities, discussed in the previous chapter, is echoed in Voorheis' memories. Phelps' arrival was likened to a "big revolution," and the writing instructors were grateful to have new leadership that seemed from the get-go to be interested in the professional identities of the writing instructors, encouraging them to do research and go to conferences. Voorheis notes that this attention to the instructors was not merely ideological: there was a practical need to get the writing instructors on board with the new curriculum. Voorheis astutely points out that "writing was built on the backs of the part-time instructors." Instead of ignoring or "fighting" that fact, the Writing Program tried a new tactic: supporting the individual strengths of the instructors, strengths and expertise that could be culled and used for the Program's benefit. It is significant that the Writing Program's early encouragement of the instructors profited the Program's administration. The few faculty administrators (just Phelps, Lipson, and Himley in 1986-1987) relied on the part-time instructors to do a large part of the curricular work the Program was charged to do in the Gates Report.

Kirby-Werner remembered how she felt when she first heard Phelps speak on campus as the new Writing Program director:

"Immediately I knew that there was a new world afoot here. This woman was going to transform what we were doing."

Kirby-Werner's statement shows, however, that the writing instructors knew the transformation was coming, and they welcomed the "new world" coming through the Writing Program. The Program benefited from the energy that extended from the deep interest Kirby-Werner, Voorheis, and others shared in teaching a better, more innovative, dynamic, and sophisticated writing curriculum.

Donna Marsh O'Connor, a part-time instructor in the Writing Program, described what she remembered about the 1986-1987 school year:

“Louise came in and spoke this new language that tapped into the tacit understanding of how writing works, not just teaching writing but teaching teachers how to teach writing. I can’t compare it to any other situation in my work life.”

Though O'Connor credits Phelps for bringing in “this new language,” describing the theories of process, development, inquiry, and reflection that featured largely in the Writing Program’s Studio 1 and Studio 2 curricula, Phelps was the first to introduce these disciplinary concepts to the writing instructors and English Department graduate teaching assistants. Hahn explained that Phelps arriving on campus was really just the catalyst for the new Writing Program to take shape. There were many people in the English Department – Himley, Lipson, and Moody – along with several teaching assistants and part-time writing instructors who formed, as Hahn described, “the underground of real writing instruction”:

“You put all those things all together, and with Louise to say, ‘Yeah! Give me some more of that! Tell me more about that! Why do you do that? How do you do that?’ – it just felt like magic. And it also felt like an important calling at the time...”

“I’m looking at this as several strands coming together: new people into the master’s program, the ‘underground,’ the Gates Report, and Louise and Steve Mailloux. It was wonderful, exhilarating, and exciting, and we moved ahead pretty hard and fast. “

The “magic” Hahn describes can be explained as an effect of open authorization, not the effect of necessarily “new” or “exciting” language. It is important to remember that faculty members like Himley were already teaching writing process theory to English Department graduate students, who were then integrating those ideas into their teaching. But the independence of the Writing Program from the English Department, and the new environment

that took hold, one that encouraged teachers and made them feel like their work in the classroom was not just a job, but a “calling,” helped bring those ideas about writing and teaching into the forefront, where they were discussed, debated, and tested.

Phelps arrived on campus in August 1986, and soon after, she brought Himley, Lipson, and Moody to the Linklaen House in the nearby village of Cazenovia for a faculty retreat, where she explained her vision for a four-year undergraduate writing curriculum at Syracuse (Himley interview). Himley had drafted a new two-course writing studio curriculum before Phelps arrived, but Phelps adopted only some of Himley’s plans in her new courses. Phelps exerted her role as director in this way: though she took the advice of the other faculty members, the program she created was distinctly reflective of her ideas and understandings of development and rhetoric. After deciding at that retreat some of the basic theoretical “cues” of the new Writing Program, as part-time instructor Henry Jankiewicz described them, the faculty then had to assist the over 100-member teaching corps (including part-time instructors and teaching assistants) in implementing the new studio curriculum’s abstract concepts into concrete classroom practice.

One reason that the first year of the new Writing Program (1986-1987) was a challenge was that the required writing courses had already been administratively set up to follow the Freshman English module format. So, the new ideas for the writing courses had to be tested within the old module structures (Lipson interview). This was a problem because the recursive nature of the new curriculum, one that emphasized growth, revision, and reflection, was difficult to squeeze into six-week, discrete modules of instruction. In addition, the faculty, teaching assistants, and part-time instructors had to learn the new curriculum “on the job,” while they were teaching. Himley and others taught “demonstration sections” for the Writing Program that

piloted the new studio curriculum that were open to teachers to visit and discuss (Himley interview; Lipson interview). Knowing that many of the instructors were unfamiliar with the theories and practices of current composition pedagogy, the demonstration sections were designed as a way to introduce teachers to the principles underlying the new program.

Another challenge that the new Writing Program faced was the lack of a finished physical space to house the program. The Writing Program inherited the basement of HB Crouse Hall, where the Freshman English Program had been stationed, and was also given a wing of the second floor of that building, 239 HBC.²² This wing became the administrative headquarters of the new Writing Program and was where many of the first curriculum meetings were held with the Program's teachers.

Lipson remembered the early meetings in the fall 1986 semester in 239 HBC:

“There were no walls in this space. It had previously been a language lab, but they had moved all the furniture out, so it was just one great big space. Louise decided that we would all meet with the teachers here. Sometimes we would all meet together with a large group of teachers, sometimes we would split up into groups. We were all just sitting on the floor.”

Lipson explained that Phelps embraced the open space of both 239 HBC and the basement, which had been gutted for renovation. Phelps likened it to what she knew about science research groups from her husband, who is an engineer. Lipson explained that in science research groups, “scientists are talking about their research informally all the time because they

²² On the Syracuse University campus, HB Crouse Hall, a three-story brick building built in 1961, stands directly behind the Hall of Languages, a massive limestone building constructed in 1871 that houses the English, philosophy, and religion departments. The Hall of Languages was the first building built on the Syracuse University campus and is on the National Registry of Historic Places. I find significance in the rhetoric of place and architecture here: the Freshman English program (and later the Writing Program) was located outside the prestigious Hall of Languages, marking a clear ideological and physical separation between literature and composition, a stark difference between an English department consisting of mostly full-time faculty and a writing program comprised almost entirely of part-time instructors and teaching assistants.

were all together. Louise wanted to create a teaching community in the same way.” Phelps’ desire to model the space of the Writing Program like that of science research groups demonstrates her commitment to seeing the instructors as professionals, who, like scientists, are charged with the duty of figuring out solutions through experimentation. The talk emerging out of the groups was seen as productive; the new writing curriculum was not to be silently implemented in a rigid, lifeless, or prescriptive way.

The unusual physical space of the new Writing Program added to the revolutionary feeling that many in the Program felt as they threw out the old Freshman English Program curriculum and designed something new. There were “no walls” in the second floor of HB Crouse Hall literally, but there were also (on the surface) no walls figuratively. The instructors, as shown through the coordinating group reports analyzed in the previous chapter, questioned and tested the new Studio 1 and Studio 2 curriculum both in their classrooms and in their coordinating groups. Though certainly there were constraints, as the primary objectives and principles of the writing studio courses were defined by Phelps and the other faculty, the instructors did have the flexibility to interpret the curriculum individually in their classrooms. Himley described how she felt during in the fall of 1986:

“We all sat around on the floor in 239 HBC, developing curriculum on the fly. It was really fun, and we felt like we were changing the world.”

Himley’s observation of the “fun” of curricular innovation was shared by others, but what is also significant in her recollection of sitting on the floor of HB Crouse Hall was that she, and most likely those around her, felt like they “were changing the world.” Himley’s words point to the underlying sense of sincerity and seriousness those who were there brought to the task of curricular revision. The instructors and faculty in the Writing Program believed in the deep

importance of their work, as shown by the tireless energy many spent writing, thinking, and talking about the teaching of writing. This gravity attached to the work of the Writing Program has been construed at times, by both those within the program and those outside of it, like the external evaluators who assessed the Writing Program in 1992, as leading to insularity or self-importance (Himley interview).

A “Flattened Hierarchy”: The Coordinating Group System as a Site of Teacher Support, Instructor Leadership and Program Management

For the faculty and some of the teaching assistants and part-time writing instructors, placing composition and rhetoric theory at the centerpiece of the new Writing Program curriculum was exciting and commanded their full attention. Hahn remembered: “It kicked me into high gear in terms of reading and writing. I read everything I could get my hands on.” Jankiewicz recalled spending all of his free time reading theory, writing down teaching ideas, and volunteering to do projects and write reports for the Writing Program without any sort of monetary compensation. Kirby-Werner remembered being inspired to “think about teaching in a whole new way.” All of a sudden, many part-time writing instructors moved from feeling like underappreciated, underpaid adjunct labor teaching in a restrictive Freshman English curriculum to feeling like inventive, inquiring teaching professionals, even though this extra effort they exerted was often unasked for or uncompensated.

The dramatic opening of pedagogical freedom for the Program’s teachers came with some very real fears: both a fear on the part of the part-time instructors that they did not know enough about the discipline to teach it, and also a fear that what they were teaching didn’t correctly reflect the theoretical, abstract vision of the spiral writing curriculum that Phelps and

the other faculty held. Jankiewicz also noted that many of the instructors and the teaching assistants in the new Writing Program felt like the first year, 1986-1987, was a “free fall.” The instructors were given a lot of freedom, but it didn’t seem to many that they had a safety net as they tried to implement a brand-new curriculum, based on theories they had just recently learned about, in their own classrooms. The instructors, Jankiewicz explained, felt like novices thrust in an authority role. Phelps, Himley, and Lipson recognized this trepidation on the part of the part-time instructors and teaching assistants very early on.

Lipson remembered:

“We were meeting with the teachers. It was very clear that some of the part-time faculty were either resistant or lost about what to do, and also some TAs.”

Even though some of the instructors, who were former English Department teaching assistants, had been introduced to composition theory and pedagogy through their graduate practicum course, there is a very real difference between reading and discussing theory and implementing it in the classroom. Other instructors and teaching assistants, Lipson explained, were “resistant” to the new curriculum, considering it and its theories just another top-down directive, as shown through the reaction of teaching assistants to the new reflective portfolio requirement and the coordinating group reports discussed in the previous chapter. In order to address these feelings of disorientation, Lipson explained that the full-time faculty tried to meet with teachers to guide them through the day-to-day tasks of teaching.

Faith Plvan described the faculty decided to meet the writing instructors’ fear and need for support with a broad, program-wide professional development initiative for the part-time instructors and teaching assistants:

“My position then [the staff development coordinator] was a position Louise designed from scratch. She thought, ‘If I am going to redesign this program, and if we already know the curriculum is going to go through some radical changes, we owe it to these teachers to support them in ways in which we devote specific ongoing, permanent structures to that,’ and this position was towards that goal.”

Informal or one-time meetings with faculty were not enough to both design the Writing Program’s new curriculum and to help instructors teach it. From the beginning, it was obvious to Phelps, Lipson, and Himley that the instructors needed “ongoing, permanent” professional development structures: these structures were integral to the Writing Program’s curriculum and administration. Plvan’s appointment as the staff development coordinator shows another kind of professional development opportunity created by the Writing Program but not specifically researched in this study: the Writing Program, over its now 25-year history, has repeatedly created administrative staff positions for its instructors that both tap into their own talents, interests, and expertise and also serve the needs of the Writing Program, which did not have enough full-time faculty or staff to carry out the tasks inherent in a large university writing program.

Plvan explained that in the 1986-1987 academic year, in addition to opening up the studio demonstration sections to the Program’s teachers, the part-time instructors and teaching assistants were organized into “working groups,” each led by an instructor or teaching assistant who explored different aspects of the required writing courses at Syracuse. She showed me some of the documents from those working groups:

“Louise had opened up all parts of the program to PWI [professional writing instructor] and TA feedback for redesigning or designing for the first time all kinds of structures. The groups were very organic, very grassroots...”

Each group wrote reports. This group took up two articles and based all their sessions on those two articles. This group took up teacher evaluation. This group took up teaching strategies. This group discussed general issues raised about some of the changes in the Program. This one was about group work in classes. The poetry module. This one was on University College instructors. Initially, it was anything and everything. She gave people free-reign to say what, for instance, what your concerns were, what structures you were interested in, we want your input, how do you envision this, making it clear that she would make the final decisions about all of this.”

Plvan reiterates the power structure within the Writing Program. Although writing instructors, through the activities of the working groups and later, the coordinating groups, were invited to help in the redesigning of the curriculum in a “free-reign” sort of way, the final decisions about the undergraduate curriculum would be made by the Program’s directors, led primarily by Phelps in the first years of the Writing Program. The instructors’ input was solicited, but the Program was not run as an open, majority-rules democracy.

By the end of the 1986-1987 academic year, the Writing Program faculty (Phelps, Lipson, and Himley) had successfully moved the new studio courses through the university’s curriculum committee. Thus, the Writing Program was ready to abandon the old Freshman English module system and adopt a new two-course sequence, where the new Studio I writing course would be taught to all first-year students in the fall semester and the Studio II writing course would be taught to all second-year students in the spring semester. In order to support the Program’s teachers, who would be writing curriculum for these new courses, the Program decided to turn the working group structure into a more defined coordinating group structure.

Jim Zebroski, a faculty member who joined the Writing Program in the summer of 1987, explained:

“We were developing the undergraduate curriculum. We were replacing a Baker-essay, simplistic model with a far more complex model that was driven by research in the field. The coordinating groups were supposed to be places where people discussed that, discussed that shift in the curriculum. Early on in the development of coordinating groups, they were primarily arenas of innovation. There’s no doubt Louise got the ideas for the groups from post-Fordist practices in the workplace.”

Zebroski’s labels the coordinating group system as representative of “post-Fordist practices in the workplace.” Post-Fordism can be described in many ways, but generally, it is considered by economists and sociologists as a shift in the way corporations functioned beginning in the late twentieth century. Instead of concentrating on mass-marketing and mass-production through assembly lines, post-Fordist corporations have specialized products and workforces, relying more on outsourcing labor and highly-skilled and educated sub-contractors. Individualism and entrepreneurship is highly valued in post-Fordist workplaces; blue-collar work that was the backbone of factory-line production beginning in the early 20th century is devalued (Amin 17-18). Post-Fordism is a movement that celebrates the trained, educated professional.

It is interesting to compare Zebroski’s description of the coordinating group system with the debates over the unionization and/or professionalization of contingent writing instructors beginning in the mid-1980s, discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. Ash Amin, an economic geographer, explains that “flexible specialization” that is characteristic of post-Fordist corporations “promises to restore dignity and skills in the workplace, as well as establish new democratic industrial relations based on cooperation, mutual respect, dialogue and ‘studied trust’ between employers and employees” (Amin 21). Workers in a post-Fordist economy are not stratified into the labor and management categories inherent in a union relationship; Amin argues that in a post-Fordist workplace, a “less contentious ‘yeoman (artisan) democracy...replaces the Fordist model of democracy which was based on mass representation (e.g. corporatist

negotiation between unions, employer federations and the state) as a general standard for social interaction and political behavior” (Amin 21). Collective bargaining through unions, Amin claims, is a feature of older, Fordist management; the new post-Fordist model relies on “artisan,” specialized professionals. Zebroski’s analysis of the coordinating group system as a post-Fordist model does emphasize how the Writing Program treated teachers as reflective practitioners, professionals who had the right to interpret curriculum through their individual pedagogy. However, as Plvan pointed out, the instructors were not functioning in a democracy; even though dialogue was encouraged, the Writing Program’s curricular objectives were largely set by the full-time faculty and administration of the Program.

Each coordinating group in the Writing Program was led by an instructor or teaching assistant. The first coordinators were people identified by full-time faculty members Lipson, Himley, and Phelps as those teachers who showed an interest in the new Program and who would make good leaders and mentors for their colleagues (Kirby-Werner interview). Some of the new coordinators worked with Himley over the summer of 1987 to create the “Studio I Working Papers,” sample syllabi and assignments that the rest of the Program’s teachers could use to develop their own Studio I writing courses in the fall. Phelps secured funding for that group to go with her and Himley to a writing conference in North Carolina that summer.

Bron Adam, a part-time writing instructor in the Program at the time, was one of the instructors who went on that trip, and she remembered how that trip affected her:

“One of the things that shaped me was that I was involved with a group of people led by Margaret Himley who designed the first studio courses. I think there were six of us in that group...

“We drove down to North Carolina in a van and went to this really wacky conference. It was on the top of a mountain, and it was a dry county, so there wasn’t any

alcohol. We were all a little shocked to find that out. The people there were just in a different place. A lot of them were poets, artistic types...

“But I have to say that even though this wasn’t the best fit in terms of the content, there was a real wisdom in putting us all together in a van, driving down, having all this time together, talking about what we might do when we get back, the bonding that took place. Now that I have studied how cultures are shaped, it made a lot of sense...

“I’m not sure how intentional that was, but that was one of the outcomes. When we came back, we all had this experience together; we had gotten to know each other in a different way than you do when you run across each other. Teachers pass each other in the hall. There’s not a lot of time for people to sit and share ideas and share experiences. This did it. We were gone for four or five days. That just kick-started this sense in a group of us that we were really inventing something.”

Adam identifies what made that trip to North Carolina so productive: the instructors, who normally spent just a few moments during the week with each other, had uninterrupted time through which to talk and bond as a group. The retreat fostered a sense of community among those instructors, which then trickled down to other parts of the Writing Program. Teachers’ work, Adam points out, is usually solitary, acted out in individual classrooms. The trip to North Carolina gave these teachers an “experience together,” something quite unique for teachers who are used to working in isolation, just passing each other in the hall. The bonding that occurred on that trip contributed toward the formation of a shared culture in the Writing Program.

However, not all teachers in the Writing Program experienced the coordinating groups and the new writing curriculum the way many of the coordinators did.

As Adam remembered:

“Louise’s vision was always very abstract and very sophisticated. Some people were frustrated by that. I found it exciting. I guess I am both a detail person and a conceptual person. I could see what she was talking about. I think some people had a hard time with that, especially the people who were more grounded in the old program. It was such a different thing, to go from ‘they have to pass three out of five essays’ to the spiral

curriculum.”

The new, abstract curriculum privileged those instructors who liked reading theory and turning those theoretical concepts into practice. Not all instructors wanted this challenge: some liked the familiarity and safety of a prescribed curriculum; others didn't have the time nor the desire to spend hours reading and discussing composition theory. Another one of the roadblocks the early coordinating groups had to deal with was not just resistance from those who were 'grounded' in the old curriculum, but from graduate students in the English Department who were embroiled in the “theory wars,” bitter battles among English Department faculty members and graduate students. Many of the English graduate students, who as part of their teaching assistantship had to teach in the Writing Program, saw in the redesign of the required writing curriculum yet another theory to contest in both their coordinating group meetings and the writing classes that they taught.

Anne Fitzsimmons, who began teaching in the Writing Program as an English graduate teaching assistant in 1986, remembered the impact of the English Department's hostile atmosphere on the Writing Program and the teaching assistants who were teaching in the Writing Program and trying to navigate the new writing studio curriculum:

“There were graduate students from English who, according to the administration of the Writing Program, were turning their undergraduate required writing courses into theory courses. To a degree, that's still a tension in some graduate TA teaching. Their own scholarly interests are absolutely going to inform their teaching. It certainly did generate extraordinary amounts of tension here. Louise became the target of some really explicitly hostile verbal attacks...

“The whole thing was compounded because the English department was in total upheaval. Terrible battles – battles in the classroom, memo wars between faculty and their graduate student acolytes. The memos were twenty, thirty pages in length, and they stuffed them in everyone's mailboxes. There were so many camps: the Marxists versus

the creative writers, faculty versus faculty, graduate students versus graduate students, even faculty versus graduate students. They printed up newsletters that critiqued untenured faculty and distributed them across campus. It was a wild time. No one was safe...

“The issue of content in the writing classroom came with a different edge. The Writing Program now is much more confident in terms of our stance and our arguments about what it means to teach writing and what it means to get students to engage with the world. We didn’t have that stance; we didn’t have that vocabulary; we didn’t have that knowledge and confidence 25 years ago...

“You had all the freedom and excitement and the creativity of inventing a new program, but you’re also very vulnerable as a program because you do not yet have a clearly articulated set of goals and practices, and most of the people who are trying to speak to whatever burgeoning goals and practices are there are themselves the most vulnerable members of the academic community...

“It was like the Wild West. Duck for cover – that was my stance. It was threatening, and scary, and bullies flourished.”

Fitzsimmons analyzes of the impact of the English Department’s own internal debates on the fledgling identity of the Writing Program. The Writing Program, according to her recollection, was not as a safe place, but one under attack by its own graduate teaching assistants – “like the Wild West.” Her reaction to this charged, “threatening” atmosphere was not to assert her own emerging ideas about writing and teaching, but rather retreat and “duck for cover.” The Writing Program, as it was figuring out its own identity, had to constantly answer the memos and questions lobbed by the teaching assistants and outside faculty, defending itself even though it lacked both a vocabulary and the confidence to do so. The culture of the English Department also impacted how the graduate teaching assistants reacted to the Writing Program’s developing administrative structures and curriculum. The teaching assistants were conditioned in critique, and so critiqued the Writing Program’s decision. Jankiewicz, one of the first part-time instructor coordinators in the 1987-1988 academic year, remembered the impact some of the English

Department graduate student teaching assistants had on the coordinating groups. As he said, “the members of the Marxist Collective,” those graduate students and faculty who subscribed to an understanding of the world based on Marxist theory, “aimed to undermine and disrupt the work of the coordinators” (Jankiewicz interview). He recalled having a couple graduate teaching assistants in his coordinating group who would question and critique the work of the coordinating group, which was largely centered on developing the studio writing course curricula and talking about teaching issues in the classroom. “There was great tension,” Jankiewicz remembered, and many times, it was the coordinator, who was a part-time writing instructor and often did not have a very secure understanding of the theory that supported the new Writing Program’s pedagogical vision, who had to answer to the volleys of critique launched by the English Department teaching assistants. Putting the Writing Program on the defensive could be considered a beneficial thing for the Program’s identity: it was forced from the beginning to use theory and rhetoric to support its pedagogical framework and administrative expectations, like Phelps did in her response to the English Department teaching assistants who argued against the reflective portfolio requirement in 1987, as explained in the previous chapter.

For the first few years of the new Writing Program, the coordinating groups faced the complex challenge of writing curriculum without concrete models. From the outset, Phelps felt very strongly that there would be no “common syllabus” for the teachers of the Program: instead, guided by theories presented by the Writing Program’s faculty and their own pedagogical experiments in the classroom, the teachers themselves would develop syllabi and assignments that fit both the goals of the course and their own strengths as teachers. This is in line with Phelps’ portrayal of the instructors as professionals, not as workers who merely implement a set curriculum. It was hard work and was met with resistance by the teachers.

O'Connor, another one of the first coordinators in the Writing Program, recalled her experience with the coordinating groups in the early years of the Writing Program:

“One of the interesting experiences I noticed was the way that part-time faculty often resisted some of the practices or ‘restrictions’ as they called it, like the requirements [going to the coordinating group once a week; creating teaching portfolios.] But those of us who were doing the work of coordinating, providing the professional development experiences, and really taking the advantage of the opportunity to write and reflect on our practices – we saw it a bit differently. I thought that the energy that came from the resistance to some of the structures was the best thing about the program. That energy allowed us to grow, when it wasn’t seen as problematic, when it was used for something...

“I was a coordinator for a really long time. Sometimes, when you are going through it, it’s like, ‘Man, every week!’ But for me they [the coordinating group meetings] were always really vital conversations about teaching. They helped to solidify some of the things you were doing...

“One of the most important things I thought in terms of this program functioning was the valuing of problems. No one had the perfect class, but each course would present these intellectual problems that gave us material to work on and then go to the next stage. It’s an aggregate of understanding; it doesn’t happen in one particular week. For me I thought they were absolutely invaluable...

“In the coordinating groups, mistakes were what we were interested in, not successes. It was about the productive mistake.”

O'Connor highlights two important aspects of the coordinating groups. The first is the teachers’ own resistance to the new curriculum. O'Connor disagrees with the idea that resistance is corrosive or damaging; in her opinion, it didn’t have to be if it was used in a productive way. No human organization grows without critique, and the questions the instructors raised, she argues, were valuable and allowed the Program to evolve. O'Connor also describes the importance of mistakes in the process of development, both the development of teachers and writing programs. Giving teachers and coordinating groups freedom was risky, and that risk brought problems, but as O'Connor points out, those problems “gave us material to work on and

then go on to the next stage.” The teaching (and the administrative structures) didn’t have to be perfect in order to be valuable.

Adam described how she remembered the value of coordinating groups in the first years of the Writing Program:

“At the beginning most of us were excited about it. Here was this place where we could talk about what we were doing, where we could share. Teaching is a lonely thing. Teachers want to talk about what they’re doing. Not in a whiny way – sometimes to let off steam – but more than that, to get some perspective and some different ideas. For me, then, the coordinating groups were great...

“Some people didn’t like them, didn’t like having to go every week. Over time, people got a little less enthused about them. They probably lived out their use over time. We tried different things – ones with topics, different formats...

“At the very beginning, because we were all creating these courses together, there was a reason for us to talk: nobody knew what they were doing. And that was OK. And that’s another thing that was so interesting about this situation. Most cases, in a university setting, there’s a ‘fake it ‘til you make it’ attitude. But we were in a situation where nobody knew, so it was OK. It was OK to say that this flopped, that I don’t know if I’m doing this right, that I don’t understand this. That made for a couple of years of *real* generativity, a real willingness to experiment and take risks. I think that’s short-lived in any kind of new program.”

Here Adam again speaks to the isolated nature of teaching, arguing that the coordinating groups alleviated some of this seclusion. She explains that in the first few years, when everyone – instructors and faculty alike – was a novice with the new curriculum, people were able to let their guard down and report both their successes and failures in the coordinating groups. This openness (so different, she points out, to the prevailing “fake it ‘til you make it attitude” she encounters in her current work in the university faculty development office) could not last forever, as some instructors became comfortable with the new studio curriculum and new instructors, unfamiliar with the Program and its pedagogical values, came in. The early success

of the coordinating groups, it seems through Adam's recollection, was partly due to this short-lived homogeneity, even though they were seemingly heterogeneously comprised (with instructors, teaching assistants, administrative staff, and full-time faculty all participating in the groups.)

Coordinating groups weren't just a site of teacher talk and conversations about daily teaching and classroom issues. They were also a site for broad-scale communication in the Writing Program, both top-down and bottom-up. Since the Writing Program's teachers were almost all part-time instructors and teaching assistants, not everyone was on campus at the same time, so the coordinating groups and the coordinators – who received two course releases per year for their work – served as a constant link between the Program's administration and teachers.

Another early coordinator, George Rhinehart, remembered that administrative function of the coordinator position:

“My feeling was always my job, yes, was to coordinate, but also to be a liaison in *both* directions. And a lot of my colleagues I don't think felt that way. They felt like it was a liaison in one direction. I felt like it had to be in both directions. Someone is paying me to do this, and there must be something in it for them, and what was in it for the Program was they get a certain level of communication and consistency in the teaching...

“Later on, some coordinators felt like it was their job to advocate or protect the part-time instructors. I never felt that way. That doesn't mean I wasn't looking out for them, but I felt that somebody put me in this position and that somebody has got to have my loyalty, and that loyalty goes in both directions...”

“I was the person who fussed enough about the coordinating group system to get it changed. When it started out, the coordinator had a leadership role, but it eventually devolved into everyone sits around and there is no one leader, even though one person is actually paid to be it. Everyone said whatever they wanted, and never had it challenged. It felt to me for years that the coordinating group system was just a self-perpetuating, self-

congratulatory system, and I just didn't see the point in that.”

Rhinehart's use of the term “loyalty” is significant because it points to the underlying tension in the coordinator role. Part of the difficulty in the coordinator role was its “limbo” state: a part-time instructor infused by the Program with a leadership role and administrative responsibility. Even though the make-up of the coordinating groups and other administrative structures in the Writing Program seemed to make the argument that everyone – instructors, staff, and faculty – were on the same “team,” the Writing Program, as mentioned before, did not operate as a collective democracy. Instructors, even when promoted to the semi-administrative role of coordinator, felt a strong sense of loyalty to one another. The drive to “protect” each other, as Rhinehart describes, can be traced to the sense of vulnerability contingent faculty feel, even when they are being professionalized, like in the Writing Program.

Voorheis recalled why she often resisted being a coordinator in the Writing Program:

“There were sometimes, especially when it was weekly, that it felt very forced. What to talk about each week became a burden. I didn't want to have that burden, and I didn't want to be the representative of 239, which it kind of morphed into. Like you were on the other side.”

Again, Voorheis echoes Rhinehart's diction by saying the coordinators felt like they “were on the other side.” Even though the part-time faculty at Syracuse University were not unionized at the time, there existed, as discussed in the literature on contingent faculty labor analyzed in Chapter 2, a quiet separation between the non-tenure-track writing instructors and the full-time research faculty. As much as the instructors and faculty worked together, talked together, and even went on retreats together, their professional identities separated them.

Lipson pointed out how hard the coordinator job was for some part-time instructors put in that position:

“It was a difficult role. We had situations where syllabi were okayed or things weren’t noticed by coordinators, and then something came up as a problem. Some of the coordinators weren’t giving it all their attention...”

“You really have to be willing to take a leadership position and take a tough stance, and some are not willing or able to do that.”

Taking a leadership position, as Lipson described, meant that the coordinators had to separate themselves from their peers, which was uncomfortable for many instructors. Although Lipson attributes some of the problem situations (such as an instructor’s problematic syllabus passed by a coordinator) as coordinators not “giving it all their attention,” it can also be argued that these oversights could have been the result of coordinators not wanting to critique their peers.

Zebroski explained that the coordinators became “kind of caught” between the conversations of the faculty and administration and those of the instructors. He also described the role the full-time faculty was expected to play in the coordinating groups:

“We didn’t get any release time for coordinating groups. We just did it on top of load...”

“We were there to observe and keep quiet and support the coordinator. Sometimes I didn’t do that – when I put pressure on the coordinator, which probably wasn’t fair, but then I didn’t think it was fair that we had to the job without getting it on load. Theoretically, the role of the faculty was to present the research and theory that was relevant when particular problems came up...”

“The groups were primarily made up of people who were new to teaching and people who were not comp/rhet people. They were about ‘what-do-I-do-tomorrow,’ not what we were presenting.”

Zebroski draws attention to the resentment the full-time faculty felt toward being required to attend (but not lead) coordinating groups. The faculty did not get release time to participate, and had to walk a fine line, giving the coordinator the space to lead but also help the group by introducing and interpreting relevant theory. Zebroski also explains the tension between the coordinating groups' frequent desire for hands-on, practical teaching advice and the faculty member's interest in theory. This tension points to the underlying problem of the coordinating groups, that each person's needs and interests were different, and they couldn't all be met through the groups.

The coordinating groups, Hahn argues, also took on a "monitoring" identity. Zebroski agreed, "From the start, they had a policing role." Voorheis described how this sentiment surfaced in the Writing Program:

"I do remember one day going down to our mailboxes, in the corner room in the basement. Somebody printed off a bunch of things that said, 'Do you really need to be coordinated?' So there was a little resistance..."

"Coordinating groups in theory seems like a good thing, but there got to be suspicion about who was being selected as coordinators and how coordinating groups were mandated in our contract. For some people, teaching other places, it became inconvenient: coming in on this one day for one hour to come to a weekly coordinating group. The infrastructure of managing coordinating group included sending you an email when you missed – getting documented in your file or supposedly getting documented in your file..."

"There was also the politics of who were the coordinators: were they part of 239 or part of us? What was happening in that weekly coordinator meeting?"

The terms Hahn, Zebroski, and Voorheis use – "monitoring," "policing," and "documented," – all have a suspicious connotation. Elevating some instructors to the administrative coordinator roles left many instructors wary, prompting them to ask the question,

“Do you really need to be coordinated?” Voorheis also mentions the “politics” of the coordinators; they seemed, to the other instructors in the Program, to be privy to privileged conversations that could negatively affect an instructor’s employment in the Program. However, the fact that this critique was out in the open, even on papers stuffed in the instructors’ mailboxes, shows that the policing and monitoring, even if it did seem widespread, did not shut down critique and resistance to it.

Plvan, who has the perspective of someone who started in the Freshman English program as a tutor and instructor and then became a full-time staff administrator in the Writing Program, holding the position of Assistant Director, explains the dynamic between the Program’s administration and its teachers:

“It’s not surprising, really. I think it came from a traditional and artificial, to some extent, a labor/management framework. I think Louise tried really hard to break that down...

“I think another variable is the fact that the administration in this writing program is larger than you usually see. You don’t usually see this many staff. I think that establishes the administration as something more powerful than it really is in all the negative ways that power gets taken up, despite the fact that many of the staff positions, mine in particular, have features of them that are specifically designed to draw on PWI²³ expertise or to support PWI expertise or to give PWIs resources...

“Every organization that I’ve either observed or worked in has a similar dynamic: you have a boss. Louise always used the term ‘flattened hierarchy’: she really worked against that boss mentality.”

Plvan defends Writing Program’s administration and makes an important point: that the Writing Program has always had a large number of administrative staff positions which were

²³ In 1990, the Writing Program petitioned to change the title of its part-time instructors (sometimes referred to as PTIs) to professional writing instructors (sometimes, as here, referred to as PWIs.) This change in title was another example of the Writing Program working at many levels to increase the visibility and professional identity of its non-tenure-track writing instructors.

designed to promote instructors, giving them full-time positions at the university. Creating these positions was one way the faculty administrators advocated for the instructors.

Hahn, who became the Program's second Assistant Director in the 1990-1991 academic year, an administrative staff position like Plvan's, remembered how she experienced that divide between the Writing Program's teachers and administration:

"I remember when I took that second assistant director post. I walked into the mailroom, and everyone got quiet. And I thought, 'You idiots! Come on! What are you thinking?'"

It seems, through Hahn's experience, that the reaction against the Writing Program's administration was like Plvan described: a historical divide. Even when a known and respected colleague moves to an administrative position, as Hahn was, the instructor community's reaction is negative, representative of an ingrained sense of what that label – administration – means.

Some saw the rhetoric of the Writing Program's "flattened hierarchy" as a façade. Himley recalled a visit to the Syracuse Writing Program by scholar Lil Brannon, who was interested in the tensions the coordinators faced, who were charged with the administrative responsibilities of leading, mentoring, evaluating, and observing their colleagues assigned to their coordinating groups. Himley, who described the coordinating position in retrospect as "mid-managers," remembered Brannon asking some of the coordinators point-blank: "Why would you participate in your own exploitation?" (Himley interview). Brannon's critique resonated with some of the instructors and coordinators, who, after the first few years of fast-paced innovation, felt burned out (Zebroski interview). The first ten years of the Syracuse Writing Program (1986-1996) coincided with many debates in the field about ethical labor practices for non-tenure-track faculty members, and although many in the Program saw the

coordinator position as a validation of the part-time instructors' practitioner knowledge and leadership abilities, others saw it as a way for a large program, strapped for full-time faculty, figuring out a way to manage itself in a cost-effective way.

Voorheis remembered the many conversations surrounding professionalization in the late 1980s, but explained that she saw the coordinating groups as “kind of a double standard: We're professionalizing, but then we're also taking attendance in coordinating groups.” The attendance-taking felt like punching time cards – a monitoring tactic. Voorheis' observation points to the fact that the coordinating group structure seems to have been a design solution to fit multiple objectives, some which at times appeared in opposition to each other: creating a new curriculum, providing a space for teachers to talk and create a teaching community, managing a large program that had very few full-time faculty, and providing instructors with leadership opportunities that drew on their strengths as practitioners.

The Evolution of the Coordinating Group System

After the first few years of the new Writing Program studio curriculum, the Program's part-time instructors became more confident with what they were doing in the classroom. They became a solid group of veteran instructors, and rotated through the coordinator position and other leadership positions offered through the Writing Program. Though there were always new part-time instructors hired almost every year and a group of new teaching assistants coming into the English Department each year who needed more intense support to develop as Writing Program teachers, the professional development needs of the majority of the Program's teachers changed. This shift put pressure on the coordinating group structure established in the 1987-1988

academic year. Coordinating groups became more aligned with topic-based inquiries (thinking about a particular course, reading theory, discussing about teacher evaluation.) In the early 1990s, instructors were given the option to do a professional development project instead of participating in a weekly coordinating group. The individual projects were supposed to be presented and feed back into the program – things like piloting a textbook or creating a series of teaching assignments –but as Plvan pointed out, “That turned out to only be semi-successful. It was simply too many people doing too many things in a way that we could usefully capture.” Having instructors do unique, separate projects was too complex for the Writing Program’s administrative infrastructure: it was easier to have everyone participate in a coordinating group, even if those coordinating groups were doing different things.

The change in the coordinating groups’ efficacy to the Writing Program’s instructors and administration was not surprising, Plvan explained:

“We got feedback that some people weren’t finding the coordinating groups as useful as they had initially been. Some people think that all the changes the coordinating groups went through were a corrective. I never thought of it like that as much as I thought it mirrored the growth and maturity of the program. At a time when people were designing things, and excitement was high, and to some extent anxiety was high in the beginning, you needed those kinds of structures to pull things together. As the Program matured, its need for different kinds of professional development structures matured as well.”

Plvan’s observation points at the dual purpose of the early coordinating groups: to develop the brand-new curriculum and quell the anxieties of the instructors who were expected to teach that unfamiliar curriculum. Her argument, that the decreasing effectiveness of the coordinating groups had to do with the growth and maturity of the Writing Program and the instructors, not a sudden futility of the coordinating group model, makes sense.

Himley also described the change she saw in the coordinating groups and the other administrative structures in the Program's first ten years, yet her recollection is different from Plvan's: "It went from being spread out and revolutionary to a structured, rigid, more hierarchal system." Himley contends that the coordinating group structure itself (and the administration of the Writing Program) actually changed from a more innovative, horizontal system to one that was more vertical, one that maintained a top-down power structure in the Writing Program. Jankiewicz noticed something similar, and pointed out that once the curricular objectives of the two required writing studio courses – WRT 105 and WRT 205 – became more regularized, which happened in the mid-1990s, the inventive environment of the coordinating groups turned into "a bureaucratic administrative structure" and the courses became "more codified" (Jankiewicz interview).

Looking back at the change, Hahn explained that the evolution of the coordinating groups and the Program into a more structured system isn't surprising:

"It's not a bad thing. I don't see that as the death of anything. Unless you build something that has built-in the ability to change and grow and reinvent itself, forget it – it's dead already..."

"What is key is to know what people need and to have an ethos that people need something."

Hahn's argument here, the necessity of having "an ethos that people need something," is important to highlight, because it speaks to the ethical responsibility of writing programs to provide professional development for their instructors. Hahn, in retrospect, isn't interested in deciding whether the coordinating group system was "good" or "bad;" the most significant thing about it was that it was there. Its presence at the core of the Writing Program's administration – and the Program's willingness to adapt and change it over time – demonstrated a deep

commitment to providing appropriate professional development support for the part-time writing instructors in the Program.

Rhinehart explained a similar retrospective understanding of the flexible principles underlying the coordinating group system:

“I was also teaching at Cortland, and a new director came in the same year that Louise came in. So it was 1986, and we had a new director at both places. That director came in and said, ‘Here’s a new curriculum, I just pulled it out of my back pocket. This is exactly what you’re going to do, now get to work.’ Louise came in and said, ‘I’m going to put some people in a position of authority, I want to hear what you think. Do whatever you want to do, and come back and tell me how it’s going.’ And I thought, that director knows what she’s doing, and Louise is out of her mind.

“A year into that, two years into that – what that director started didn’t go anywhere. It just stayed that way for years. Nobody was interested. There was no input. It never developed. It was static in the beginning and stayed static. What Louise did was miraculous. It was like watching things grow. It was amazing. So I realized I didn’t know what I was talking about. I had that all wrong.

“But you can only keep that level of energy for a short time. It is going to stabilize at some point. We aren’t going to constantly reinvent things. We do try to push a little bit. We’re trying to get the excitement back.”

Rhinehart’s juxtaposition of the “static” program at Cortland (30 miles south of Syracuse) and the early activities in the Writing Program, which “was like watching things grow,” makes a illuminating argument for writing program administrators who are designing professional development structures for their contingent faculty. The Writing Program administration, in effect, handed the keys over to the instructors, putting them “in a position of authority.” As Rhinehart remembered, the instructors at Syracuse, who were used to the prescriptive curriculum in the Freshman English Program, thought that Phelps was “out of her mind.” Time proved otherwise to Rhinehart: the freedom and authority handed over to the instructors resulted in a

“miraculous” first few years, when innovation was happening all across the Writing Program. Rhinehart does temper this observation, though, with another point: that high level of creative energy is difficult to sustain. Innovation happens through a cycle, and just like fields need to lay fallow, human organizations need periods of rest. Rhinehart sees the attempt to falsely stir the pot, to get people excited about teaching for the sake of the excitement, as misguided. The early years of the coordinating groups were exciting because there was a real task at hand: to create a new curriculum from scratch, happening at very fruitful and exciting time in the discipline. Unless there is a genuine, necessary goal that calls for extraordinary levels of activity, the “push” to swing back into frantic creation and re-creation rings false.

Developing Evaluation Structures for the Writing Program’s Professionalizing Teachers

Between 1986 and 1996, the coordinating group system (initially the working groups) was the primary administrative structure for developing the new studio curriculum and monitoring the teaching that was happening in the Writing Program. One of the core principles that informed the coordinating group system was the explicit understanding that the Program’s instructors were professional, knowledgeable practitioners who should be provided with appropriate professional development experiences to enrich their teaching practices. That understanding of the instructors as professionals, not merely “adjuncts,” as many in the university administration regarded them, soon extended to how the Program evaluated the teachers.

In the old Freshman English Program, the instructors were evaluated on their performance as teachers through what Himley and others I interviewed described as “the file review.” The director of the Freshman English Program, Randall Brune, and his staff scrutinized

the comments a teacher wrote on their student papers and looked at the teacher's grade range to see if it was meeting the Freshman English Program's expectations (Voorheis). Teaching assistants and part-time instructors were also observed in the classroom by Brune or his staff, and Himley remembered some instructors who were critiqued for "what they were wearing or whether or not they erased the blackboard." Teachers were not notified of the outcome of their yearly evaluation, and only knew if they met the mark if they received a letter renewing their contract for the next year. This kind of teacher evaluation was surface-level and was not representative of the idea of teaching as a nuanced, reflective, individual craft.

Rhinehart, who began teaching in the Freshman English Program in the late 1970s as a graduate teaching assistant, remembered this lack of transparency and explanation of teacher evaluation in the old Freshman English Program:

"In 1980, I was a PTI, and I wasn't rehired. I had been a TA for two years and a PTI for a couple years. I just got a letter that said, 'Sorry, we're not going to hire you this year.' No explanation, nothing. I thought, 'What? Do my socks not match or something?' No explanation whatsoever. So I was out of work for a year. That's when I started working at other places and did some substitute teaching...

"And the following year, they sent me a letter that said they'd like to hire me again. At that point I already had an offer from Cortland and one from OCC, so I was working at three places at once. I wasn't going to let go of any of it...

"They let me go for no reason whatsoever. Randall Brune looked at things and said, 'We don't need this person.' No explanation, no nothing. And when I came back there was still no explanation."

Rhinehart's sudden firing and equally sudden re-hiring in the Freshman English Program was done with "no explanation, no nothing," symptomatic of the lack of communication between the Freshman English Program and the teachers teaching in it. Also, Rhinehart's experience above reflects the curricular structure of the Freshman English Program, with its modules and its

self-advertised “teacher-proof curriculum,” which made it so the program’s teachers, like Rhinehart, could be easily let go, hired, and interchanged. The new Writing Program, however, based its curriculum on the inventive, interpretative work of its teachers. The instructors, teaching assistants, and faculty together wrote and developed the program. They could not be so easily let go or hired.

There were many reasons the Writing Program wanted to change the evaluation process from a file review system to one that incorporated teaching portfolios and teacher reflections. First, the full-time faculty, beginning with the first three full-time faculty members in the Writing Program – Himley, Lipson, and Phelps – were committed to improving the instructors’ economic situation, and one way to get the university to compensate the instructors more was to prove, through the portfolios, the teachers’ expertise and successes in the classroom (Himley interview). Second, the Writing Program’s administration was attracted to the idea of a committee approach to teacher evaluation because it could be a way to systematize the evaluation process and take the burden of evaluating over one hundred teaching assistants and part-time instructors off the backs of the few full-time faculty and staff (Himley interview; Zebroski interview).

Lipson remembered how the full-time faculty was in charge of all instructor and teaching assistant evaluation in the first couple years of the Writing Program:

“We didn’t have an evaluation system at first. Instead, we read all the evaluations. I read them all and passed the best and the worst along to Louise. I wrote reports about what I thought was coming out of this. There were so many. It was clear that we needed an organized understanding of the evaluation, one that the part-time instructors could understand.”

The burden of evaluating the 100+ instructors and teaching assistants was large, and Lipson’s recollection shows that the Writing Program, in its design of an evaluation system for

the instructors, needed something that was “organized” and also that seemed relevant to the instructors. The instructors themselves also argued for a teacher evaluation system based on both the creation of portfolios and peer review. Kirby-Werner explained how some of the instructors developed the idea for the teacher evaluation committee:

“Very early on, Louise secured a whole raft of money for us to attend CCCC. For me, that was life-changing. I remember our very first conference in Atlanta. It was my first exposure to the *profession*. I went to every single session. I couldn’t get enough of it...

“It was there at CCCC that I first encountered the part-time faculty organization. I began to think about issues that I didn’t recognize were issues before. I caught this bug, and with Louise as a champion, it was a hot bed for things to start happening...

“I came back home, and somewhere along the line, whether it was from Louise or a combination of our conversations and conversations at CCCC, there developed this notion that if you are really professional, you evaluate yourselves. That’s what the tenure system does. You are evaluated by peers. Louise was really championing this professionalization, and it just made sense that Louise should then explore the possibility of us evaluating ourselves.”

Kirby-Werner’s perspective here is important: she shows how other professional development opportunities offered to the instructors through the Writing Program, such as the chance to travel to the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta, led to change and development in the Program, such as the idea for a peer-reviewed evaluation system. According to Kirby-Werner, this conference, where the instructors who went met other part-time faculty discussing part-time faculty working conditions and the idea of instructor professionalization, was responsible for the push behind the creation of the Writing Program’s teacher evaluation committee. The Atlanta CCCC conference was held in 1987, and this was the conference in which the 1986 Wyoming Resolution, discussed in Chapter 2, was unanimously endorsed at the CCCC annual business meeting. Contingent faculty issues, therefore, were

widely discussed and debated at this particular conference, a serendipitous timing for the Writing Program instructors who attended.

Voorheis explained how a more codified and transparent teacher evaluation committee also addressed the issues that many instructors were having with the responsibility of creating the new Writing Program curriculum. Also, many had a sense that there was an “inner circle” of part-time instructors in the Program:

“There were instructors who were picked to be on the TEC or invited to do pilot sections. People asked, ‘How did they get to do that? How come I’m not? How far away am I from that inner circle?’ The TEC was in part a reaction to that. We tried to democratize it and make it more clear: ‘If I do this and my classes look like that, I’ll be fine.’ ...

“The idea that everything was new was to some people totally freeing and to others it was totally terrifying: ‘Will you tell me at the end of the semester that what I was trying to do wasn’t right?’”

Though the teacher evaluation committee was in part designed to make the expectations of the Writing Program’s administration more clear, it didn’t completely address the feelings of anxiety and suspicion that were rampant in the early years of the Program, Voorheis explains. The end-of-year evaluation did not meet the needs of some instructors, who needed more frequent, formative evaluation to help them adjust to the new Writing Program curriculum.

In the 1989-1990 academic year, one of the Writing Program’s coordinating groups was organized into a task force around the issue of teacher evaluation, and Writing Program faculty member Patricia Lambert Stock, a new assistant professor in the Program, acted as the group’s faculty mentor. Over the course of the year, the group, which consisted of instructors, teaching

assistants, and administrators, researched teacher evaluation practices at community colleges and universities and also read scholarship about portfolio assessment (Kirby-Werner interview).

Kirby-Werner explained the year-long process of writing the plan for evaluating the program's teachers through portfolio assessment:

“We drafted the charter, and we spent all year perfecting this document. We handed it off to Louise and Carol to run it by Arts and Sciences administrators. We implemented the teacher evaluation practice within the academic year....

“It was frightening in some respects. There was a lot at stake because there wasn't always the trust. There was this notion of a 'secret file,' people were hired or not for mysterious reasons. There was a lot of suspicion and what we wanted to do was open up the process and recognize that we are just as capable as anyone to evaluate each other because we teach these classes.”

Kirby-Werner's recollection of how the task force functioned is an interesting window on how the Writing Program handed administrative authority over to the instructors. Although the task force's charter for teacher evaluation was vetted and ultimately had to be approved by the faculty administrators, the instructors had a great deal of influence over the plan for evaluation. The task force's procedure for developing the evaluation plan also mirrors the process of inquiry: the instructors researched evaluation practices at other universities and studied assessment theory to write the plan. The process was also collaborative and recursive; no one person wrote the charter, and the charter was collectively fine-tuned and revised.

Kirby-Werner also explained that a large impetus behind the creation of the new evaluation system was to address the feelings of distrust and “suspicion” in the Program about who received leadership positions and who was (or was not) hired, feelings that Voorheis also pointed to.

The Work of the Teacher Evaluation Committee as Professional Development

The members of the teacher evaluation committee read and ranked every teaching portfolio, which sometimes were hundreds of pages in length. The Writing Program made an effort to rotate people on and off the committee so that it would, as closely as possible, represent true peer review. The ranking recommendations of the committee went on to the Writing Program's administration, who used the rankings to assign merit pay, to identify instructors who needed additional help and mentoring in their teaching, and to appoint instructors to coordinator and other leadership positions in the Program.

Rhinehart, who was the chair of the task force on teacher evaluation, described the work of the committee:

“I remember us sitting in here, at a long table, and just spending a long time going through these portfolios. And it was interesting because we did it at the same time and we would actually talk about what we were reading. And that part of it was really interesting. And I remember there being some really surprising things that we were seeing, some things we didn't expect to see.”

Each member of the teacher evaluation committee, in an effort to norm their rankings of the portfolios, read every teaching portfolios. Rhinehart described one of the benefits of this labor-intensive process: because the members were all reading the same portfolios at the same time, they could discuss what they were reading in-depth, analyzing the practices and themes that emerged through the portfolios. The work of the committee, then, was not just evaluation; it was research and discovery: as Rhinehart said, they found “some really surprising things...some things we didn't expect to see.” Those observations helped the members of the committee develop a more nuanced understanding of the teaching happening within the Writing Program.

Thus, the teaching evaluation committee was a site of intense professional development for the teachers in the Writing Program, both for those who served on the committee and read their peers' portfolios and for everyone who created the reflective teaching portfolios.

Adam, who held the position of teacher evaluation coordinator, a full-time administrative position created by the Writing Program to oversee the work of the teacher evaluation committee, remembered the effect of the committee's work on her and the Writing Program:

“I believed in it and I still do. If you're going to professionalize people, you have to have some sort of way of looking at what they can produce in the way of reflecting and recording their teaching. I think about it differently than I did then, though. Then I thought more about the product, about the portfolio they put together. Some of them were stunning. It was so amazing to read the portfolios of my colleagues. Most of them were great writers, were interesting and creative people. I just loved it. But for some people, it seemed like it was just people getting ranked and put into piles, and they weren't in the good pile. So it didn't serve the developmental function. And I'm not sure we presented it that way either, now that I think about it.

“What I know now, after spending a lot of time trying to help people value reflective practice, that the real value there was for the faculty members to have to sit down and write a teaching statement, look at their student evaluations, write something about what they saw there, look at their syllabi. The collecting of all those documents and the reading them and putting them together, trying to contextualize them: that's professional development. Anybody can go in and go through a bunch of classes, and assign some papers, and make some comments, and send them back, and do some grades, and then go away...

“For the people who could do it, to spend that time getting to know themselves as teachers and to see where they still needed to grow. Clearly for me, I learned a lot about myself as a teacher. The whole teacher evaluation thing, while it became politically problematic, it did serve to professionalize us. It served to create a language in which we could talk about our teaching that had some common features so we weren't using different languages to talk about teaching...

“That experience for me was the beginning of my thinking about how people become good teachers.”

Adam's account of the teacher evaluation committee is important in several ways. First, looking back, she notes that the product the teachers produced – the hundred-page-long teaching portfolios – was far less important than the process of putting those portfolios together. Her argument here echoes the claims forwarded by Murray, Elbow, Perl, and other major composition theorists during the writing process movement. She emphasizes that it is “the collecting of all those documents and the reading them and putting them together, trying to contextualize them” that constituted the real professional development opportunity the teacher evaluation committee presented; it was the activity, not the actual documents that mattered. The activity, according to Adam, did many things for the Writing Program, including building a teaching culture through shared language; the Writing Program became its own distinct discourse community, holding common values about teaching and writing. Adam also emphasizes how the teacher evaluation committee helped “professionalize” the instructors, and her repeated use of this term shows how central the concept of professionalization was in the Writing Program, reiterating that same focus on professionalization contained in the disciplinary scholarship and statements at the time.

Adam also mentions how the teacher evaluation committee was “politically problematic”: some instructors saw value in the process, but others felt like it was “just people getting ranked and put into piles,” perhaps as arbitrary as the evaluation system of the Freshman English Program, or a way to sort out those who supported the new curriculum and those who resisted it. Adam, though, seemed to find it valuable: she argues that through that process, she learned “a lot” about herself as a teacher. Looking back during the interview, she also notes that it was that experience, working on the teacher evaluation committee, that got her interested in “how people became good teachers,” an interest that eventually led her out of the Writing Program and into a

full-time administrative position at the university coordinating and supporting full-time faculty development. Adam's career move shows another positive effect of the professional development opportunities offered to the Writing Program's instructors. The leadership roles and activities gave instructors experience and new perspectives that sometimes opened doors to new careers.

The instructors and teaching assistants on the teacher evaluation committee spent two weeks at the end of the spring semester to read all the teaching portfolios, which usually were hundreds of pages in length, and together rank them into different categories. The first year of the teacher evaluation committee, all teachers in the Writing Program submitted teaching portfolios; after that year, only those at the end of their one, two, or three-year contract turned in portfolios to be evaluated. Still, even with only a percentage of the instructors turning in portfolios each year, it took a tremendous amount of time to read, discuss, and rank the portfolios. What is interesting is that those on the committee volunteered for the job and were not very well compensated for their time. Jankiewicz pointed out that this wasn't surprising, since in the early years of the Writing Program, many instructors and teaching assistants became so personally invested in the work of the Program – or were worried how they would be received by others if they didn't demonstrate an investment – that they “volunteered to do things for no pay” (Jankiewicz interview). Rhinehart remembered that same sense in the Program, an expectation among the part-time faculty that they would give freely of their time for the good of the Writing Program:

“At one point we were trying to get new members on the committee. We had one guy who asked us how much it paid. I remember telling him that if that was the question he asked, we didn't want him on the committee. Which is funny, because in retrospect, if

you're a PWI now, that's what the expectation is, you're going to get paid for everything.²⁴ We didn't get paid a penny for any of that stuff...

“When I think back on it, I ask myself, ‘What the hell were you doing?’ I think there was a sense in the Program that you wanted to seem valued. There was enough change going on that you didn't want to seem on the outside.

“We all did that. It was hours of stuff to do without any remuneration at all, because at the time, it seemed like the right thing to do.”

The voluntary work of the instructors to serve on the Writing Program's committees and work on special projects was probably a combination of several factors. One is the exhilarating “high” many people remembered as a feature of the Program's early years, a desire to read and discuss new ideas in composition theory and pedagogy. Another factor was the sense (true or not) that there was an “expectation” that the instructors would give freely of their time and energy to the newly-created Writing Program, as they were invited to participate in the Program's construction through their interpretation of the new curriculum. They belonged to the Program; many instructors in the early years did not see their teaching responsibilities as typical “piecework” common of adjunct positions. Also, in the new, unknown Writing Program, some instructors did not want to risk seeming uninterested or not fully engaged in the work of Program development.

Though many teachers in the Program were invested in the work of the teacher evaluation committee, others were not. Sometimes this was because their responsibilities were split between teaching in the Writing Program and at other area institutions, and they resented spending so much of their time writing their portfolios and reflections. Other times, teachers

²⁴ Currently, professional writing instructors at Syracuse University are part of a campus-wide adjunct union, and they get paid a stipend to attend one professional development event each semester.

resisted the evaluation system because they felt it imposed too much supervision and control over their teaching.

O'Connor, who served on the teacher evaluation committee and also eventually oversaw the work of the committee, described this opposition:

“Teachers are really protective over their own practices and their own intellectual space behind closed doors and that relationship between teacher and student. I also thought it was really important to understand that when evaluation gets too intrusive in the classroom, it undermines the teacher’s relationship with the students in a whole host of ways; it becomes present in the room as a barrier to learning...

“When I first took over as assessment coordinator, I thought that the energy from the teachers in the Program who hated the process and who were really suspicious of the work of the teacher evaluation committee, that that energy should be respected, because there was something really important in that energy of resistance. Teachers were saying, ‘No – give me my space.’...

“I wanted that committee to function as a formative as well as summative review. We understood across the program what seemed to be the gaps and we shored those up rather than holding individual teachers accountable. Also, before we give a teacher a bad review, that there was ample opportunity to see that again in relation to programmatic values of the ‘productive problem,’ that teachers had the opportunity to see that as a good thing. In part, it was building trust. I often thought it was useful to recruit those teachers who hated the process the most, so they could see from the inside what the process was about...

“For me it was an incredible intellectual event, but there were bad feelings. It created some bad feelings thought one of the problems was calling it peer review when there was so much at stake for even the PWIs who were doing the review. But I do think it was a good thing. Frankly, what we would say was, ‘Look, you may not love it, but would you rather have it *this* way?’”

O'Connor emphasizes that, just like the suspicion that accompanied the coordinating group system, distrust was a constant feature of the teacher evaluation committee: resentment over the sometimes intrusive process of classroom evaluation; suspicion over who served on the committee; “bad feelings” about the entire idea of high-stakes peer review. She maintains,

though, in retrospect, that the committee was a “good thing.” She remembers making the argument against the resistance to peer evaluation by asking if there was a better way. Her question points to the underlying truth of human systems: they are never perfect.

Fitzsimmons, who served on the committee for many years, also remembered the work of the committee:

“The TEC conversations internally were often fraught with tension, people re-experiencing their own trauma for getting a ranking they didn’t like. People had very different ideas about what constituted good, appropriate, quality teaching. A lot of personal stuff brought into the mix. It was harrowing.”

Fitzsimmons talks about the “trauma” of getting a bad ranking. It was one thing for a teacher to be evaluated negatively by her superiors; it is entirely more uncomfortable and risky to be evaluated by her peers. Fitzsimmons also argues that the conversations in the teacher evaluation committee were never objective or harmonious: the members of the committee had their own understandings of what good teaching looked like, and their personal relationships with the people they were evaluating came into the mix of conversation.

The first test of the teacher evaluation committee happened immediately after the teachers’ portfolio were read, reviewed, and ranked for the first time at the end of the spring 1990 semester. In the summer of 1990, the Writing Program learned that due to university-wide budget cuts and a drop in enrollment, they had to let go eleven instructors (Lipson interview). The Writing Program administration turned to the teacher evaluation committee’s rankings to make the decision of who to let go.

Carol Lipson explained the reaction at the university to using the committee's rankings to make this decision:

“They decided to go strictly with the evaluation rankings. It was, except for Patti Stock, a group of part-timers who had judged the portfolios. There was a lot of bad blood about that. Two of the people who were cut were wives of English Department faculty who had done a lot of teaching but they didn't adapt as well as other people did to the new curriculum...They were judging 'suitability' to the new curriculum.

“There was a mess. Threats of lawsuits. People going around complaining that we were getting rid of 'beloved teachers.' The accusation was that it was based on an ideology test.”

Kirby-Werner, who was on that first teacher evaluation committee, described the response in the Writing Program:

“There was a purge. A lot of people weren't rehired, and a lot of it had to do with not getting with the new Writing Program, not embracing anything that Louise was trying to bring. When people were not rehired, it had to do with an unwillingness to rethink what they were doing as teachers...

“It was uncomfortable. It was a challenge to communicate the results of the review...

“But if you are going to make cuts, and if you are going to make them according to some standard other than seniority, then absolutely this is way to go. We scrutinized everybody's teaching, and we gave teachers a voice. Reading their reflective statements – it was really clear when we read what they said about their teaching, it was very revealing of a match or not between the teacher and their philosophies of teaching and the Program. It wasn't a critique necessarily; it was an observation of a reality. How can you be happy in a program that espouses these values when you're way over here? It's only a paycheck that would be justification for staying.”

Rhinehart, who was on the committee with Kirby-Werner, remembered the committee's reaction to the cuts:

“We had a list of people who we had concerns about. And so if we ranked everyone in the entire Program, these are the people who didn’t do well. And then the budget cuts happened. Those of us who saw that coming said, ‘Oh crap, what we just did, not intending to do that, is going to be used to let people go.’ On the other hand, there’s this little voice in your head that says, well, if we have to let people go, wouldn’t you rather have it happen this way than the flip of a coin?...

“That did not feel good at all. One of the people we let go was my best friend in the Program. I remember Faith²⁵ coming to me and telling me, ‘I think we’re going to have to let her go. How are you going to feel about that?’ And I don’t remember what I said, but the bottom line is, well, we wrote that list. I don’t like that it is being used this way, but it is, and I don’t have a better method.”

The use of the committee’s rankings to make hiring decisions validated the importance of the committee’s work, but it also compounded the insecurities many teachers felt with the new curriculum. Lipson remembered how “messy” the situation was; one of the instructors let go threatened to sue the Writing Program, and another was a good friend of Rhinehart’s. The instructors who received the lowest rankings were, as Lipson argued, the ones who were slowest to adapt to the new curriculum, and as Kirby-Werner claimed, their teaching statements seemed to clearly tell the evaluation committee that their philosophies of teaching did not “match” the philosophy of the Program. Kirby-Werner’s critique that lower-ranked instructors were not “getting along with the new Writing Program” contradicts some of the rhetoric used by the Writing Program’s administration in its early years, that teachers had the freedom and flexibility to enact the concepts of the new curriculum in their own, individual way. The differences the teacher evaluation committee saw between an individual teacher’s pedagogy and the theoretical principles of the new curriculum could have been merely surface-level, more a result of a teacher’s personality and classroom presence than their pedagogical philosophy.

²⁵ Faith Plvan

The Writing Program, once it was made aware of the university budget cuts, could have decided not to follow the rankings of the teacher evaluation committee, but that would have undermined the committee's work. As Rhinehart argued, if the rankings were not used to decide who must be let go, what better method was there available? Communicating those rankings, especially after the committee realized that they would be used to end instructor contracts, was "uncomfortable" according to Kirby-Werner. This difficulty points to the challenge of peer evaluation: the instructors who served on the teacher evaluation committee were not just asked to observe teaching practices and discuss them. They were asked to take on administrative responsibilities, and those responsibilities aren't always easy or fun.

The cuts based on the teacher evaluation committee's ratings led to an undercurrent of "paranoia" in the Writing Program among the teaching assistants and instructors (Himley interview). Himley pointed out how odd this was: "Instructors had job security like crazy, but were panicked all the time." Rhinehart agreed:

"From my perspective, being a coordinator and now as an administrator, that that paranoia doesn't make any sense. We bend over backwards to mentor and to really protect people. We've been so protective of that group of people that they don't even realize that they've been protected. We just don't let people go. We just don't do that – show me an example of when we've done that. The knee-jerk reaction just doesn't happen. Sometimes it would behoove us to step up and say that a person isn't working out."

Rhinehart resists the idea that instructors had to be suspicious or worried for their jobs: as part of the Writing Program administrative staff now, he sees the Writing Program as "protective," even in extreme cases, when it is obvious an instructor isn't the best fit for the Program. It seems that the one-time use of the teacher evaluation committee to decide which instructors' contracts to terminate in 1990 exaggerated the influence of the committee's

recommendations. Rhinehart believes that other than the impact of the university-wide budget cuts (which the Program had no control over), instructors' jobs were relatively secure; a not-so-great evaluation would not jeopardize their positions.

For some teachers, the Program's expectation that they constantly write up reflections on their teaching and create portfolios to be evaluated got burdensome after a few years. Also, it seemed like a tremendous amount of work for what, in the end, was little substantive reward.

Voorheis remembered that attitude among the Program's teachers:

“We're doing all this work to distinguish between a 5 and a 1, and the reality is, whether you get a 5, 4, 3, 2, or a 1, you're going to get hired again next year. Why are we doing this?”

Himley concurred and explained:

“It became a little ridiculous. It was a difference between sometimes a \$100 and a \$300 raise. What it became was a veneer of professionalism.”

Having such trivial distinctions between the ranks – and with the absence of any real danger (according to Rhinehart) of people losing their jobs – did make the teacher evaluation committee's work seem hollow. The result might have been, as Voorheis and Himley argue, insignificant, but perhaps it was the process of contextualizing and reflecting on pedagogy, as Adam mentions earlier, that was the real reason to do the work.

Over time, the teacher's written reflections on their portfolios also became more scripted, following a similar convention. Jankiewicz and Lipson co-authored a report that analyzed these portfolio reflections for the Writing Program's sixth-year external review, and Jankiewicz remembered: “They all became the same.” Lipson explained:

“Our teachers come from the English world. They very quickly figured out how to ‘work’ the genre. It became what we called the ‘Bakhtinian hero narrative’: I had trouble, but now I see the light and I know I need to change such-and-such and everything will be fine. And it just became meaningless after a while.”

The instructors in the Writing Program were teachers of writing, and they knew how to wield rhetoric. The instructors compiling their portfolios and writing their reflective statements knew who their audience was, and in the culture of the Writing Program, which, as O’Connor noted earlier, valued the “productive problem,” an ideal teaching reflective statement revealed a problem, discussed it, and explained how the instructor overcame the issue. Some of these narratives were genuine, but as Lipson pointed out, the statements became more and more rote and thus “meaningless” for both the instructors and the committee.

Eventually, it was a combination of the ballooning cost of the teacher evaluation committee (which included the full-time staff position of Assistant Director for Teacher Evaluation, plus stipends for those serving on the teacher evaluation committee), the growing corps of veteran instructors who did not see as much value in the time it took to create the portfolios and then to read, rank, and write a evaluation letter about each portfolio each year, and a new director of the Writing Program who wanted to focus on other aspects of the Program that led to the streamlining and then disbanding of the teacher evaluation committee in the late 1990s.

Lipson remembered:

“The dean hit the roof about how much money we were paying. He said there’s no other program or department that costs this much. We had to simplify the process. It was too labor-intensive.”

The impetus for the change in the Writing Program’s teacher evaluation process, then, did not just come from within the Program; as part of a larger university system, the Writing

Program had to justify its budget to upper administrators, who eventually did not see the short-term benefit of ongoing, “labor-intensive” and costly evaluation of the non-tenure-track writing instructors.

Plvan described the change in the teacher evaluation committee:

“We simply cut down on the number of instructors who were involved in it. We also introduced a merit system. There was a part of the process where teachers still read the portfolios, but fewer teachers did that. Then the results were passed on to an administrative advisory group, and those people made merit decisions, and then that was passed on to the director, who ultimately made the decisions about everything. The process was better defined as to what part the teachers were playing in the process and what part the administration played in the process. That helped us corral it a little more.”

In order to simplify the system, the Writing Program took administrative power and responsibility out of the hands of the instructors and placed the burden of the evaluation on the administrative staff. This was beneficial because it, as Plvan noted, helped the Writing Program communicate what role the teachers played in their peers’ evaluation (which was, as discussed earlier, the point of conflict among the instructors), and what tasks (like making merit decisions) were reserved for the administration. This change in the teacher evaluation committee transformed the process from a more horizontal, democratic one to one that reflected the hierarchal structure of bureaucracies, where decisions are made and approved through a stated chain of command.

Fitzsimmons pointed out:

“We couldn’t afford it. Honestly, I benefited immensely from it, but I don’t think enough people who served on the committee benefited from it in that way, sadly. But even if they did, it’s still not cost-efficient. I don’t think the short or long-term benefits were worth that output on the part of the department. Maybe I’m just speaking from a jaded administrator’s perspective. I think that the good things that come out of that kind of work can be re-created in other arenas.”

Fitzsimmons' observation demonstrates the reality of human organizations. The theory form the foundation of a system, like the ideas of teaching as a craft, pedagogy as reflective inquiry, and professionalization through peer evaluation, might be intrinsically valuable. However, organizations can't function on theory alone: there comes a point when dollars make the difference. The scope of the teacher evaluation committee outgrew its budget, and although instructors like Fitzsimmons "benefited immensely from it," the Writing Program could not continue justifying offering this particular professionalizing opportunity to its instructors. The Writing Program needed to design more cost-effective ways, systems that fit the current context, to support, prepare, and evaluate its teachers.

The teacher evaluation committee was obviously a site of much debate in the Writing Program. However, many whom I interviewed explained that even though it wasn't a perfect system – the time, the cost, and the complicatedness of making part-time teachers responsible to their peers' evaluation, which sometimes extended to whether or not someone got rehired – they remembered the committee having a real positive individual effect on their teaching.

Kirby-Werner explained what the teacher evaluation committee meant to her as a teacher:

"I learned about teaching in a more meaningful and deeper way that through anything else I did, just by looking at what my colleagues had done and having the conversations around all of what was documented in the portfolios. For me, it had fringe benefits all over the place."

These "fringe benefits" that Kirby-Werner discusses are the effects that often aren't assessed in short-range or budgetary terms. These fringe benefits of the teacher evaluation committee include a growing culture within the Writing Program that valued teaching and individual instructors' development as reflective, inquiring teachers and professionals. These nebulous, gradually-emerging things are difficult to quantify and thus to justify to budget

committees and administrative officials. But the development of community and identity are the direct result of a long-term commitment to professional development opportunities like the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee.

Fitzsimmons also describes how the teacher evaluation committee impacted her growth as a teacher:

“I knew what good teaching and informed reflection was from seeing my peers. I was not doing that. I don’t think I was a disaster. I was earnest and hardworking, but I wasn’t taking full advantage of the resources available to me. I was distracted. For me, it was a gig. I took it seriously, but I wasn’t doing what a number of my other colleagues were doing: really thinking through what all of this means...

“One of the things that got me a lot more serious about my teaching was getting a *really bad* TEC evaluation. If the scale was 1 to 6, I got a 5, 6 being the lowest.

“It was pretty devastating. But you know what? It was probably the best thing that ever happened to me in terms of my professional career, because I stopped skating. I absolutely took seriously the feedback on my teaching and my teaching materials, and I began to collaborate with a couple of peers whose teaching I really respected. I turned to them: I looked at their materials, came to them with ideas and asked for input, suggestions for how to design something coherent – a unit, an assignment...

“I’m sure I was ashamed. I’m sure the devastation was just being ashamed. I recognized that I could do better, and I was not doing what I could do. I started working a hell of a lot harder on course designs, my assignments, heuristics. I started paying better attention to the conversations. I also started working more collaboratively with my peers. I used to stop in people’s offices. That’s what I remember learning to do. I learned to ask my peers, ‘I want to teach my students blank. Do you have an idea?’ And if they didn’t have an idea, we would start brainstorming.

“It was back in the 90s, after that horrible review, I started to do those things that our program has long encouraged and prided itself on. That was the start of my transformation as a teacher.”

Would Fitzsimmons have transformed her pedagogical identity without “that horrible review”? It’s impossible to rewrite history and determine the answer to that question. What’s

significant, though, is that Fitzsimmons benefited from her experiences with the teacher evaluation committee, but those benefits happened years after she received her low marks. The “devastating” evaluation wasn’t the end of a story; it was the beginning of one. Fitzsimmons’ evaluation kick-started a genuine commitment to becoming a better teacher. Fitzsimmons’ story is important because it demonstrates that some measurable effects of professional development do not surface for years after the fact.

The Creation of a Community

The conversations with the people I interviewed often strayed from talking specifically about the teacher evaluation committee and the coordinating group system, veering off to remember what the Writing Program as a whole, human system meant for them during those ten years of their lives.

Writing programs, like any other academic department or organization, are human systems. Though they are designed to do a certain set of tasks, the people in those organizations are changed and influenced by their relationships with one another and by the twists and turns of their individual lives. In the Syracuse Writing Program, which had over a hundred part-time instructors, full-time faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and staff members, a lot of life happened. People got married, got divorced, had babies, moved away, changed careers, dealt with sickness, tragedies, and death, and all these events affected them and in turn, affected the Program.

The members of the Writing Program were primarily women, and this demographic fact, coupled with a historic feminization of the field of composition and rhetoric, deeply influenced the Program. Himley explained:

“The Writing Program was a gendered program. At Syracuse, the English Department was turning to all theory, and the Writing Program became the site of women’s work: curriculum, caring teachers. The Writing Program was defined in opposition to the English Department, and we felt the need to prove ourselves. That probably still haunts this program.”

Himley’s characterization of the Writing Program as a “gendered” program can be interpreted in a few ways. First, Himley relies on the larger disciplinary argument discussed in Chapter 2 of the “feminization” of the field of composition and rhetoric, a subject matter historically taught by women and possessing features socially attributed to women: care for students and interest in pedagogy. Himley, a former faculty member in the English Department, also defines the Writing Program against the English Department, the traditional, problematic masculine-literature/feminine-composition divide that is cited by some scholars who argue for independent writing programs, also discussed in Chapter 2. Himley, a faculty member, felt a need to “prove” themselves, and the turn of the Writing Program to theory, both the theory that informed the curriculum and the research and theory that was widely read and discussed in the Program’s coordinating groups, publications, and in-house conferences, can be seen as an assertion of the Program against the English Department.

Voorheis remembered some of the conflicts that came up in Program and how that affected the atmosphere of the Program:

“There was an undertone of personality in the Writing Program. Some talked about how we were the ‘group of hens.’ There were some people who just felt like they weren’t liked by others. The infusion of new blood in the Program was slow...

“Some people worried that they wouldn’t get rehired. So the turmoil was very stressful to many people. When people who seemed to be central were suddenly on the ‘bad list,’ we wondered, ‘What is going on?’ That was very troubling to people. It was like the 8th grade girls’ club.”

Voorheis uses the phrase “an undertone of personality” to describe a clique culture in the Writing Program. Voorheis is specifically referring to tensions between the full-time faculty, who disagreed over their roles, responsibilities, and rights as administrators in the Program. Voorheis attributes some of the conflict to the fact that most of the full-time faculty and instructors in the Writing Program were women, echoing Himley’s observation of the Program as theoretically “gendered,” and uses terms like “group of hens” and “8th grade girls’ club” to dismiss these conflicts as petty. The tension that arose from these personality differences, though, did impact the Program: Voorheis notes that the “turmoil was very stressful” to many people. Interpersonal conflicts are uncomfortable and wear on workplace productivity, and the insular nature of the Writing Program, in addition to its need to prove itself to the English Department and the wider university, seems to have added to the stress and tension in the Writing Program at times.

Kirby-Werner explains how the women Writing Program faculty members made an effort to reach out and network with other women at the university, and described how that influenced the work of the Writing Program for the part-time instructors, who were also mostly women:

“Louise had developed some relationships with the female deans who came to the university. Some of them had that unique perspective that a woman in academia develops. You have an uphill battle to establish yourself. And that has always been true for the part-time faculty and professional writing instructors. Louise was very strategic in thinking about ways to communicate our value not only to each other but to promote this recognition more broadly about what we were all about, that the Writing Program was making its mark.”

Syracuse University in the 1980s and 1990s had a male-dominated administration. As Kirby-Werner describes, Phelps and the other women full-time faculty members of the Writing Program (Lipson, Himley, Stock, Smith) worked not only to establish themselves in the larger

university administration, knowing that their networking could positively benefit the Writing Program.

The fact that the founding three faculty members of the Writing Program – Phelps, Lipson, and Himley – were all women was significant, and many women part-time instructors saw those three and subsequent women full-time faculty members who joined the Writing Program as professional mentors. Adam explained:

“And I think spending time watching them as women, somewhat older than I, who were so accomplished, and who had families and somehow put it all together, who were so engaged in their work. It was very important for me. At that point, my children were young and I was feeling like, ‘How do I go to the gym meet and all this jazz and still be a professional woman?’...

“It was really helpful to be with these women of different ages who were trying to do the same thing, or who were at a different stage than I was who offered a vision that yes, this is possible. You can do it. You have to make choices, and you won’t do it all the way you’d like. But it is very possible to be a woman academic...

“It was at a time when there weren’t very women at the university. The other model presented was to be a woman academic without having children. But I hadn’t made that choice...”

“It really made a difference. It showed me a lot of different paths and a lot of different assets. People controlled their schedules, not in abusive ways, but I saw that it was possible. And I realized that’s how you do this. Someone had a baby, and they brought the baby to work, brought the baby to meetings. We did a lot of things that weren’t done then.”

For Adam, the women full-time faculty members served as mentors, and the Writing Program was designed to accommodate working women and mothers. This kind of workplace flexibility was ahead of its time; as Adam points out, “We did a lot of things that weren’t done then.” The flexibility in the Writing Program for its instructors was appealing and appreciated and probably contributed to some instructors’ investment in the Program’s activities.

Others who I interviewed stressed the importance of the Writing Program's inventive spirit and large teaching community, especially those members of the Program who were young teachers or who were new to teaching at a university. Fitzsimmons described this:

“One of the things that was transformative to me as a teacher was to have such ready access to such fun, creative, spirited, confident people....

“I knew when I was a young, not very good teacher, who the good teachers were. I might not have known how to benefit from them, but I knew who they were. There were people up and down the hall who weren't necessarily in leadership positions who I turned to. I was on the TEC for many, many years. I saw people's teaching materials all the time. I learned immensely by getting the chance to read their reflections. I knew who to go talk to because I saw their teaching materials, and I admired what they were doing.”

Young, inexperienced teachers like Fitzsimmons were not isolated in the Writing Program; the administrative systems like the coordinating group structure and the teacher evaluation committee worked to connect new and veteran teachers together, fostering mentoring relationships. Having “ready access” to colleagues was critical for teachers like Fitzsimmons: it gave them instant support and camaraderie, two things not always inherent in teaching, which is often a solitary task.

Kirby-Werner recalled her development as a teacher through her work as a coordinator and a member of the teacher evaluation task force:

“This whole period was an enormous period of growth for me, recognizing strengths in me as a teacher, a professional, and a leader. It was easy for me to do things very well in the background. I didn't see myself in the spotlight. I shunned it. I didn't have a whole lot of self-confidence, but that all changed.”

Kirby-Werner describes another hard-to-quantify benefit of the Writing Program's professional development opportunities for its instructors. Through her work as a coordinator

and on the teacher evaluation task force, Kirby-Werner discovered her own talents and strengths, developing “self-confidence” in her identity as a teacher and a professional (Kirby-Werner interview). Again, these changes didn’t happen overnight; they are the congregate result of ongoing professional development within a teaching community.

The community of the Writing Program was formed both around structures like the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee and also through practices like writing, reflection, and inquiry. Zebroski explained:

“Catherine Smith [one of the first faculty members in the Writing Program] called this ‘the writingist writing program’ she has ever been in. And I think that summarized it well. We were writing all the time, which was a good thing. The first years I feel that although I was frazzled, I feel we accomplished a lot. It was a huge amount of work...

“Louise introduced us all to inquiry as a formal way to doing the teaching of writing.”

The Writing Program’s shared practices of inquiry and reflection through writing also formed the culture of the Writing Program. Inquiry and reflection were the foundation of the Program’s coordinating groups, teacher evaluation committee, and pedagogy. Smith’s labeling of the Writing Program as “the writingist writing program” she knows has been cited by others as a point of pride, though it can also be construed as a critique. Himley noted that although the emphasis on continual reflection and writing helped people think through their teaching and the Writing Program’s curriculum, the constant introspective writing in the Program led “to a sense of grandiosity that became a problem. Some of what we wrote was incomprehensible to an outside reader, and it didn’t work to persuade anyone but ourselves” (Himley interview). Himley describes a consequence of inward-focused conversation: the ideas developed in the Writing Program sometimes did not translate outside of HB Crouse Hall; they were “incomprehensible.”

Through this immense amount of writing and inwardly-focused work the members of the Writing Program did together, a real communal attitude flourished. Adam described it:

“There was no one who was an elitist, no one who put on airs. There was a sense that we were all in this together. Someone who was in a different position in the program might have a totally different perception on this. I certainly never felt like I was superior to other people or that I was inferior to other people. I felt like we were all trying to create this curriculum together. Some of that were the personal interactions. Louise would have events at her house and invite us. We did socializing that was very egalitarian; TAs were included...

“The other piece of it was that there was no one there who was an expert... We spent a lot of time together and we were isolated from others. That may have helped too.”

Adam explains the Writing Program’s isolation as beneficial in some aspects. In the independent Writing Program, separated from the traditional hierarchal relationships that characterize the academy and English departments in particular (tenure-track/non-tenure track; literature/composition; research/pedagogy), the Writing Program was free to create a more democratic culture, where instructors called faculty members by their first names (a practice, Adam says, is absent in other academic units.) The more open culture of the Writing Program was also fueled by the fact that “there was no one there who was an expert”: it was, for the first few years, at least, a brand-new curriculum and brand-new independent Writing Program for everyone (Adam). The Writing Program’s administration was not, however, completely egalitarian. The full-time faculty and full-time staff administrators had the power to hire and fire instructors and to set curricular agendas. People’s opinions were heard, but they were not always acted upon.

By 1996, the Writing Program was becoming a well-defined and successful unit in the university: it was in the middle of developing its PhD program in composition and cultural

rhetoric, expanding the ranks of its full-time faculty, engaging with the wider university community on projects like the Odyssey Project, a longitudinal study of student writing, and Writing Resources, collaborations between the Writing Program and other university departments. The part-time faculty members, becoming an increasingly veteran group of teachers, rotated through leadership positions as coordinators and as members of the Program's committees and task forces. Many part-time instructors also presented at national conferences, took graduate classes with the Writing Program faculty, co-authored book chapters and internal assessment documents with the faculty, and served as national advocates for adjunct labor. The Writing Program and its teachers were a success story in the field, which was at the same time becoming more proactive and outspoken about ethical part-time faculty labor practices. As Hahn explained: "Our story, the chronicle of us, was very popular in the discipline at the time" (Hahn interview).

This success happened through and with the part-time instructors, as a result of structures dedicated to part-time faculty professional development and evaluation like the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee. These administrative systems were grounded in principles that accommodated change and encouraged members to contribute and participate. The Writing Program's emphasis on transparency, flexibility, and an ethos towards ethical treatment of all its members guided the Program's development and were crucial to the Program's growth.

It wasn't a perfect system. No human system is. But something powerful happened at the Syracuse Writing Program during its first ten years, and that something left an indelible mark on those who were there. The history of the Syracuse Writing Program told through these twelve retrospective interviews also makes the argument that some results of professional development

– the construction of a community and a culture, the development of self-identity, the gradual growth of skills and pedagogical sophistication – cannot be measured immediately. When determining the efficacy or worth of expensive administrative structures, writing program administrators must chart their effects longitudinally and find ways to measure and argue for their quieter, less-quantifiable outcomes.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: An Argument about Teacher Development and Writing Program Administration

This study challenges the perception that the sole purpose of professional development and evaluation for contingent faculty in a writing program is to prepare those teachers to teach an established curriculum and to assess their effectiveness of it. Instead, the history of the Syracuse Writing Program presented here argues for a model of writing program administration that views professional development, support, and evaluation of its teachers as foundational, integral parts of the writing program's activities. Although this historical study focuses on professional development, support, and evaluation structures for non-tenure-track, contingent faculty members, it is not only contingent faculty who need ongoing preparation and support in their teaching: teaching is a reflective practice, and all teachers (graduate teaching assistants, full-time faculty, elementary and secondary teachers) benefit from continual opportunities to assess their growth and acquire new ideas that impact their pedagogy. Professional development and evaluation of teachers cannot be an afterthought: effective, reflective support for teachers must be built into the base structure of a writing program's administration, as it is an essential part of the inventive engine, the fertilizer that allows a writing program to grow.

This view of writing program administration – one that emphasizes the primary role teacher preparation, support, and evaluation has to the basic functions of the writing program – keeps the focus on the people who work in the program, not the administrative structures that direct a writing program's activities. In making this statement, I am agreeing with Ellen Strenski's 1995 argument that "Any writing program is really nothing but the people we hire, retrain, and retain" (97). With that in mind, it is important to also remember that the people of a writing program change over time, and as people come and people go, the strengths and needs of

the program shift. In this chapter, I describe the nature of the history constructed in this study, explain some of the major changes in the Syracuse Writing Program since 1996 that have impacted its administrative structures for professional development and evaluation, and show how this history offers the field an important longitudinal study about the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation on a writing program and the teachers in it.

What Is a Writing Program?

This study offers two complementary ways for understanding the administrative structures dedicated to the part-time writing instructors' professional development and evaluation at the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996. The first perspective, explored in Chapter 3, uses archived administrative and programmatic documents to construct a narrative that explains what happened with these structures those first ten years. The hundreds of documents I scanned and organized included memos, planning documents, program newsletters, coordinator group reports, meeting agendas, teacher guidebooks, annual reports, and letters to and from deans and faculty members. The documents did not share a single author; together they formed a multi-voiced story that at times showed conflict, disagreement, and dialogue among the members of the Syracuse Writing Program about how to best create professional development and evaluation systems that would serve the needs of the part-time instructors and the Program as a whole. For me, even though the story the documents presented was complex, this history helped to develop a blueprint for the Writing Program's administrative structure from 1986 to 1996. The documents uncovered the "bones" of the Writing Program: the written-down, archived, and remembered plans.

The second perspective I used to understand the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee used twelve retrospective interviews from former and current members of the Syracuse Writing Program who worked in the program during my study's time period, from 1986 to 1996. Their stories and memories of the Writing Program brought the archived documents to life, at times challenging the narrative presented by the administrative documents. The interviews showed me how the coordinating groups, the teacher evaluation committee, and other parts of the Syracuse Writing Program were *experienced* by its members. This attention to the effect of a writing program's administrative structures on its teachers is not always fully explored by those who research writing programs. Often, the scholarship on writing program administration looks at writing programs from an administrator's perspective, explaining from a composition and rhetoric scholar's disciplinary point of view why certain structures are beneficial for teachers and students. These arguments, which claim that it is an ethical responsibility of writing program administrators and university writing programs to provide part-time teachers adequate pay, benefits and training are, in my opinion, true and sincere.²⁶ However, as I listened to the members of the Writing Program speak to their experiences at Syracuse, I gained a powerful insight in the human dimension of writing program administration that I believe is important, both for understanding a more complete history of the Writing Program and for developing future arguments for professional development and evaluation opportunities for part-time university faculty.

²⁶ See Allene Cooper et al's 1999 chapter, "What Happens When Discourse Communities Collide? Portfolio Assessment and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty"; Janangelo and Hansen's 1995 collection *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Administering Writing Programs*; McAllister and Selfe's 2002 essay, "Writing Program Administration and Instructional Computing."; Kristine Hansen's 1995 chapter, "Face to Face with Part-Timers: Ethics and the Professionalization of Writing"; and Phelps' 1999 chapter, "Mobilizing Human Resources to (Re)Form a Writing Program.")

My interpretation of the Syracuse Writing Program's first ten years is influenced by sociologist Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory, presented in his 2005 book, *Reassembling the Social*. Latour's actor-network-theory is a way of approaching sociology that is markedly different than traditional sociology methodologies, which rely on more scientific processes. Actor-network-theory looks at what Latour calls the "tracing of associations" within a society. This method of approaching sociology ends with the society instead of beginning with it, seeing the collective built from networks of associations and personal relationships. He writes:

"The laws of the social world may exist, but they occupy a very different position from what the tradition had first thought. They are not behind the scene, above our heads and before the action, but after the action, below the participants and smack in the foreground. They don't cover, nor encompass, nor gather, nor explain; they circulate, they format, they standardize, they coordinate, they have to be explained. There is no society, or, rather, society is not the name of the whole terrain...For sociology the era of exploration may start again, provided we keep reminding ourselves of this motto: *don't fill in the blanks.*" (246)

In actor-network-theory, there are no invisible, monolithic "forces" that make people act in a certain way. The "blanks" Latour speaks about are those individual, locally-constructed, organically developed relationships and networks created between people. These human networks are always being arranged and re-arranged, and so there is no such thing as a stable society. Because of this constant dynamism, in order to understand a society, a researcher needs to focus in and look at the small-scale, local connections and relationships between the people in the collective. Latour argues that the way to capture these networks is through comprehensive description. Contemporary sociologists and others studying human systems, Latour contends, move too quickly to evaluating and making conclusions about complex people and systems (141-156). Only by slowing down and "following the traces" will a researcher begin to understand a human society (8).

I see the Syracuse Writing Program as a complex human society, involving university administrators, program administrators, administrative staff, part-time instructors, teaching assistants, full-time faculty members, and students who all have different needs and expectations for the Writing Program. In my interviews, from which I constructed the history of the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee presented in Chapter 4, I tried to follow Latour's lead and figure out how the Writing Program was constructed from the individual networks and relationships among those in the program. I tried to leave the stories and memories I heard during my interviews intact in that chapter, hoping the reader could follow the traces suggested in those thoughts so a more human understanding of the effects of administrative systems could be realized. The document-based history in Chapter 3 shows how, through administrative processes and procedures, the Syracuse Writing Program created spaces in which the part-time instructors met, learned, and worked, but the interview-based history in Chapter 4 describes what happened within those spaces, how people thought about and experienced those structures.

A writing program isn't just a hallway of offices, a writing center, a computer cluster, a network of classrooms across campus, a director, a directory of instructors, or a college catalogue course description. A writing program is a human society, one that changes and stretches with every interaction among its various members. To understand a writing program's history, written documents are helpful, but it is also critical to describe and explain the relationships, connections, and individual experiences of its members, the intangible things not often written in annual reports or memos. By listening to these individual members, describing what they know, it is possible to follow Latour's lead and keep the Writing Program as flat as

possible, instead of trying to make sense of it by only peering through documents, which function as multiple layers of a complex system.

As a current graduate student in the Syracuse University Writing Program, I tried also in my research to remember Latour's observation that the "the social is but a moment in the long history of assemblages": that a society's definition and identity is always in flux (Latour 247). The current Syracuse Writing Program gives hints about its 1986 identity, but it is not the same collective system as it was 25 years ago. HB Crouse Hall, the building the Writing Program is housed in, acts almost as a hermit crab shell, a home to string of subsequent tenants. The norms, values, and relationships that I know and am part of are not exactly the same as those that were formed and experienced in the first years of the independent writing program. The archived documents and interviews I used in this study gave me a glimpse about what the Syracuse Writing Program was like in the 1986-1996 moment, a history that can be told but not recreated.

The Evolution of a Writing Program

This study of the Syracuse Writing Program is sliced two ways: I restricted my research to a ten-year span of the Writing Program's history, from 1986 to 1996, and within those years, I focused on the professional development and evaluation practices created for the program's part-time writing instructors. The construction of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee were not the only achievements of the Writing Program in those first ten years; the Syracuse Writing Program also developed a new two-course undergraduate writing curriculum, expanded its upper-division writing elective courses, collaborated with departments across campus on writing and technology initiatives, and started a university writing center. The part-time instructors were instrumental in helping the Program, limited by a small number of

full-time faculty members, make these advances in writing instruction at Syracuse University. In addition, as shown in this study, the efforts of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee wove through the current of the Writing Program, affecting all its work in both explicit and not-so-obvious ways.

Much has changed in the Syracuse University Writing Program since its founding twenty-five years ago. Ending the Writing Program's story in this study at 1996 seems to me like ending the story of the United States with Daniel Shay's farmer militias storming the Springfield, Massachusetts courthouses. A lot changed in the US since then: replacing the weak Articles of Confederation with the stronger Constitution, emerging as an industrial leader and world power, and trying to reconcile abuses and discriminations at home and abroad through battles, protests, and the rhetoric of diplomacy. The Writing Program's story is far less dramatic, but still, it is a story of an institution, an institution influenced by time, economics, politics, people, plans, and visions. Just as it is important to look at what the Syracuse Writing Program *did* in its first ten years, it is also necessary, from an administrator's perspective, to see what all that became.

It was the intention of the Syracuse Writing Program from its inception in 1986 to grow into a program with a large enough faculty to support a graduate PhD program (Phelps "Outline of Graduate Program in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric"). In 1997, the PhD program in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric enrolled its first cohort. The introduction of these new graduate student teaching assistants whose home department was the Writing Program instead of the English Department created a new dynamic the Writing Program. Many of the incoming PhD students were already experienced writing teachers, and their research and understanding of the field of composition and rhetoric influenced their pedagogy. Some of those who I spoke with mentioned that some part-time instructors in the program felt like the new CCR students were

replacing them: the CCR students, as part of their graduate development, were given upper-division teaching assignments and administrative roles that were previously held by the part-time writing instructors (Lipson interview). However, many others I interviewed noted how much their own ideas about teaching and writing were influenced by the incoming CCR students, and these part-time instructors felt the program benefited tremendously from this new contingent of graduate students with specialties in composition and rhetoric (Adam; Fitzsimmons; Voorheis; Hahn interview).

The growth of the Syracuse Writing Program from a more horizontally-structured writing program that emphasized the teaching of undergraduate required writing courses to a more vertically-structured writing program with both undergraduate and graduate courses mirrored a larger trend in the field of composition and rhetoric to expand the discipline's presence and scope in the academy. From the mid-1990s onward, scholars such as John Trimbur, Ellen Cushman, Barry Maid, and Peggy O'Neill have argued for the independence of writing programs from English departments and the redefinition in the academy of composition and rhetoric as a distinct research field, one that can support its own undergraduate majors and graduate programs. Those programs that are independent from English Departments, like the Syracuse Writing Program, all look very different from each other, and most of them, unlike the Syracuse Writing Program, are solely focused on teaching undergraduate required writing courses. Graduate programs in composition and rhetoric, writing studies, and technical and professional writing do exist within larger English departments; the Syracuse Writing Program is unique (but not alone) in its place as an independent writing program with its own PhD program.

The Syracuse Writing Program added an undergraduate writing minor program in 2003, and in 2009, the Writing Program's proposal for its new undergraduate writing and rhetoric

major was approved, and the program graduated its first class of writing and rhetoric majors. The expansion of the Syracuse Writing Program's offerings from solely undergraduate required writing courses (Studio I and Studio II courses, plus a few upper-division writing electives) to a comprehensive department-like program with undergraduate major and graduate PhD offerings changed the character of the Writing Program, both for those within the program and those on the outside. Instead of focusing a large part of their effort on part-time instructor training, professional development, and evaluation, English Department teaching assistant training, and studio curriculum development, the Writing Program's faculty and administration were pulled in many directions, needing to construct courses, curricula, internships, and service opportunities suited for their own undergraduate major and graduate students (Lipson interview; Himley interview; Plvan interview).

The growth in the number of full-time faculty, though not as extensive as was hoped or planned by the Writing Program's directors, also channeled the Program's energy in a variety of directions due to the research specialties of the incoming faculty: community literacy projects, digital writing and new media, global literacy, African-American rhetorics (The Syracuse University Writing Program "Composition and Cultural Rhetoric"). This emerging departmental specialization was coupled with grant opportunities and plans from the larger university administration that pushed the Writing Program to develop a university-wide writing center with a large online component, service-learning opportunities in many different courses, and diversity initiatives in both its required and upper-division courses. By 2011, it was no longer appropriate or possible for the Writing Program to devote as many resources as they had in 1986 to part-time instructor professional development and evaluation. The Writing Program's new allocation of attention to its vertical undergraduate and graduate writing curriculum is in line with the field's

move away from strictly pedagogical issues to more theoretical research agendas, as shown through the field's national journals and conferences, a phenomenon pointed out by historians of the field (Lloyd-Jones "Who We Were"; Susan Miller; Crowley). This is not to say that the Syracuse Writing Program or the field of composition and rhetoric are no longer interested in part-time labor issues, required undergraduate writing pedagogy, or teacher development or evaluation. Rather, the Writing Program and the discipline are becoming more and more layered and complex, and with limited resources, such as the small full-time faculty and administration in the Syracuse Writing Program, it is increasingly challenging to devote enough attention to all parts and activities of the system.

Another monumental change in the Syracuse Writing Program since 1996 was the unionization of the part-time and adjunct instructors at Syracuse University in May 2008. Some of the part-time instructors in the Writing Program helped lead the campaign for unionization on campus, which had been previously defeated a few years prior. The unionization was an "all or nothing" deal: all part-time instructors and adjuncts on campus, except for very few part-time instructors on teaching full-time course loads, automatically became part of the Adjuncts United union, which is an affiliate of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the AFT (Adjuncts United).

The Adjuncts United union at Syracuse University immediately changed how the Writing Program handled part-time instructor evaluation and professional development. In a union, there is a non-negotiable separation between labor and management: the workers (the part-time faculty) have a contracted agreement with the management (the university and departmental administration) that specifies their pay, benefits, responsibilities, and the standards for evaluation. The Syracuse University Adjuncts United contract is a broad contract, covering all

eligible part-time and adjunct faculty in the university's 12 schools and colleges and 62 departments. The Adjuncts United contract has succeeded in addressing many unethical labor practices at Syracuse University, improving the pay and benefits of many part-time faculty members across the campus so that all part-time faculty are paid a minimum per-credit hour salary, have access to university group benefits, and have protected grievance and bargaining avenues. An all-encompassing union like this one simplifies the relationships between individual departments and their part-time faculty, placing contract and labor negotiations at the upper university administrative level, but a "one size fits all" union does not have the flexibility to attend to or adapt to the local needs and relationships of specific units at the university (Plvan interview; Rhinehart).

The union changed how the Writing Program structured its professional development and evaluation for part-time writing instructors. Part of the Writing Program's justification for raising its part-time instructor's salaries and negotiating for their benefits in the late 1980s and early 1990s was that the instructors were professionals, highly trained writing teachers who, as per their Writing Program contract, participated in weekly coordinating groups as ongoing professional development. Even as the coordinating group structure morphed and changed in the 1990s and 2000s, the part-time writing instructors and teaching assistants in the Writing Program were required to attend a certain number of professional development seminars or meetings each semester (Plvan interview). The Writing Program took this requirement seriously, dedicating extensive administrative support for creating and sponsoring workshops and mini-seminars to address part-time faculty needs and interests (Plvan interview; Lipson interview). After the part-time and adjunct instructors passed the Adjuncts United contract in May 2008, the Writing Program had to remove its professional development requirement from its part-time writing

instructor contracts due to difficulties with fitting the professional development requirement into the language of the all-university union (McKenna). Because the Writing Program administration still felt strongly that its part-time writing instructors deserved professional development, they continued to offer workshops and seminars on topics related to teaching, technology, and Writing Program curricular changes, reimbursing part-time instructors \$50 for attending one of these professional development activities each semester. The instructors could choose to attend more than one a semester, but they would only receive the stipend once per semester (Plvan interview). The instructor stipends came out of the Writing Program's own budget; the stipends are a sign of the Program's continual commitment to professional development for part-time writing instructors (Plvan interview).

Attendance at these seminars and workshops dropped off dramatically, which then resulted in a reduction in the number of activities offered each semester. Faith Plvan, the Assistant Director of the Writing Program in charge of professional development, commented that the decline in interest among the part-time instructors in the Writing Program's professional development opportunities is probably rooted in both the drop of the professional development requirement in the instructors' contract and in a cultural shift in the Writing Program, with veteran writing instructors not wanting or needing as much guidance or communication and new instructors finding their own avenues to teaching mentors (Plvan interview). George Rhinehart, the Writing Program's Assistant Director for Writing Technologies, noted that the Writing Program is "fighting an uphill battle" with the professional development and pointed out that "the fact is, we have a pretty veteran group of teachers, and we should offer what people need," which probably is not the same as what they needed in 1986 (Rhinehart). Rhinehart also argued that the change from requiring instructors to attend professional development to offering small

stipends is good because “it doesn’t falsify the level of engagement in professional development”: people go because they want to and are interested, not because they have to (Rhinehart).

The move from requiring professional development to recommending it changed the culture of the Writing Program, according to some part-time instructors I talked to. Though these instructors also pointed to other changes in the Writing Program – an increase in the number of full-time faculty, the strong presence of the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric PhD program, the solid corps of veteran instructors, and the growing number of instructors who weren’t part of the Writing Program in its first foundational years – it is the loss of regular time for teachers to come together and talk about their teaching that is felt most deeply. Faculty member Carol Lipson described the union contract as “the death knell to the coordinating group system” (Lipson interview). Donna Marsh O’Connor spoke about the effect of the end of the coordinating groups: “Without coordinating groups, I feel like I’m on my own. I can go and talk to people in these discrete moments, but there’s none of the testing of ideas that occurs when teachers get together. I find this great vacuum now. Yes, there’s no meeting that I have to go to each week, but on the other hand, there’s very little sharing of teacher work” (O’Connor).

O’Connor’s reaction can be interpreted on two different levels. On one hand, it is a longing for an almost-magical, productive time in the past, when teachers were first introduced to theories of composition, rhetoric, and cultural studies, which were taken up as revolutionary-like ideas. The coordinating groups solidified the instructors’ understanding of the field of composition and rhetoric, supported their growing identities as knowledgeable practitioner professionals, and helped the whole Program develop a language and set of values surrounding writing and teaching. On the other hand, O’Connor’s reaction points to an underlying desire of

teachers to be a member of a professional community. Having seen the power of this kind of community on her and her colleagues' teaching, O'Connor now notices its absence (O'Connor).

The argument that Adjuncts United union contact single-handedly changed the culture of the teaching community at the Syracuse Writing Program does not account for all the dynamic variables in the entire system. Some instructors in the Writing Program led the university-wide campaign for the new union, and even after the union was implemented, still argue that it was a positive change for not just non-tenure-track instructors in other academic units but in the Writing Program as well. Jeanette Jeneault, an instructor in the Writing Program and the current president of Adjuncts United on the Syracuse University campus, listed in an interview the tangible benefits of the union contract for the teachers in the Writing Program. One of the most important features of the contract, she argued, was a clear and transparent workplace grievance system for the instructors, an administrative framework for handling grievances that was supported by contractual procedure. This formal arrangement gives instructors security, she claimed. Their benefits, working conditions, and protection against harassment were guaranteed in print, not subject to changing personal relationships or administrators who rotated in and out of positions of authority (Jeneault). The Writing Program's teaching community before the union contract was grounded in personal relationships between instructors, coordinators, and faculty, and the union contract, Jeneault argues, gives instructors a negotiated framework to circumvent relationships that could become problematic. In a sense, the union contract evens the playing field for the instructors: there is no "in-crowd" mentality; all instructors have the chance to participate in the Writing Program's activities at the same level (Jeneault).

The university part-time faculty union also changed how the Syracuse Writing Program handled its evaluation of part-time instructors. Even after the large-scale teacher evaluation

committee was disbanded in the late 1990s due to its tremendous financial and labor costs, part-time instructors still played a role in their own evaluation processes. Part of the coordinators' administrative assignment was to conduct classroom observations for the instructors and teaching assistants in their groups. The coordinators would then use these observations to talk with teachers about their pedagogy and to recommend to the Writing Program administration merit pay and teaching contract changes (Plvan interview; Rhinehart).

With the Adjuncts Union contract, as with any union, there is now a sharp distinction between the roles of labor and management, and management – the administrative staff of the Writing Program in this situation – is in charge of evaluation. Professional *peer* evaluation, teachers evaluating teachers, what the teacher evaluation committee was based on in its inception in 1989, is not possible through the contract, and neither is the tiered merit system developed by the Writing Program (Plvan interview; Rhinehart). Some instructors were surprised by how the union contract changed the Writing Program's evaluation system. Rhinehart explained, "I sat in some meetings after the union was put into place, in which we had PWIs, who are smart people, say, 'Can't we continue to have a peer voice in evaluation?' And we said, 'No. The union says we can't. The contract with the university says we can't. The union changed some stuff that we can't change, and we're bound by the letter of that law'" (Rhinehart).

It is not that the union contract destroyed a perfect peer evaluation system. Writing Program full-time faculty member Margaret Himley explained that over time, the coordinators' peer evaluations of the instructors in their groups eventually lost their credibility: "Everyone got a positive evaluation. Everyone was 'great'" (Himley interview). Anne Fitzsimmons, an instructor who became an administrator in the Writing Program in charge of teaching assistant training, pointed out that after the teacher evaluation committee was cut, the Writing Program

allowed instructors to choose who they wanted to observe their teaching, and many instructors asked their friends to evaluate them. As Fitzsimmons pointed out, “There’s a big difference between having a committee evaluate your work and having your officemate evaluate your class. The teacher evaluation committee wasn’t arbitrary. It was genuine, meaningful evaluation. The committee had a chance to see not just one class in isolation but 25, 30 portfolios together. You *knew* what a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 was” (Fitzsimmons). The abridged peer evaluation plan introduced in the 2000s, Fitzsimmons argued, “was totally meaningless. Everybody got ‘strongly agree,’ ‘strongly agree,’ ‘strongly agree.’” By the 2000s, the Writing Program’s peer evaluation system, as described by Himley, Fitzsimmons, and others in the interviews I conducted, wasn’t functioning well. The part-time faculty union contract forced a change in teacher evaluation that probably was necessary, but the change that occurred – the end of peer evaluation – was probably not what the instructors and the Writing Program administration envisioned as the solution.

Today, the Syracuse University Writing Program, with its undergraduate major, minor, and graduate PhD program, functions more as a vertical academic department than a horizontal program that functions as a service unit to the university. The professional development and evaluation structures for the program’s part-time writing instructors do not garner the same degree of attention or funding because the administrative scope and demographics of the Writing Program have grown. The Adjuncts United contract at Syracuse University has also changed these structures and, in turn, the relationships between the part-time instructors and the Writing Program administrative staff.

“Human Resources”: Part-time Instructors in a Writing Program

The purpose of this study of the Syracuse Writing Program was not to offer the Syracuse Writing Program’s professional development and evaluation structures for its part-time writing instructors as perfect models to be replicated in other university writing programs. Louise Wetherbee Phelps, the founding director of the Writing Program, saw these structures and other systems developed in the Writing Program as embodying *kairos*: design solutions created to fit a complex matrix of needs, resources, and opportunities at a given moment. The Syracuse Writing Program in 1986 occupied a unique place in the landscape of higher education, a stand-alone writing program at a private research university, vested with the power of a university mandate to change writing instruction at the university. Few writing programs have the same kind of administrative freedom to test curricular ideas or shape part-time instructor positions in experimental, progressive ways.

Still, although the structures can’t be immediately transplanted across campuses, there are principles that informed how the Syracuse Writing Program relied upon and treated its part-time faculty that can serve as guideposts for writing program and university administrators at other institutions.

One of the major accomplishments through the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee was the Writing Program’s ability to tap into the varied experiences and expertise that its part-time instructors brought to the program, to see its part-time instructors as resources. On paper, the Writing Program looked as if it only had three full-time faculty members during the 1986-1987 academic year who could contribute to developing the Writing Program’s new undergraduate curriculum. In fact, though, because the part-time

instructors and teaching assistants were asked in to participate in curricular experimentation in their coordinating groups, the Writing Program was able to draw on the ideas of over 100 thoughtful, experienced teachers. That experimentation was encouraged in the Writing Program's new studio curriculum, which offered pedagogical cues instead of common, standardized syllabi, and then was supported through the coordinating group system.

The part-time instructors brought a unique set of characteristics to the emerging Writing Program. Unlike the full-time faculty, whose tenure lines at the university depend on demonstrating their teaching, research, and service excellence, requiring them to make an intellectual impact both locally at the university and nationally in their field, the part-time instructors were able to focus and dedicate their time locally to the craft of teaching. The part-time instructors, free from the burdens of publication and university service, came from a variety of teaching and professional backgrounds, lending different perspectives to how they imagined their classrooms and how they constructed their writing curricula. That heterogeneity in the part-time instructor ranks was interpreted by the Writing Program's administration as a strength: it led to productive conversations within the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee about what writing was for and what good teaching looked like. As Nance Hahn pointed out, "The real genius of the Writing Program was the recognition that there was that base, the expertise of the instructors. Louise was amazing in her desire to not just professionalize but to authorize those people to speak. It became an unstoppable force through the authorization of the people who were already here" (Hahn interview). This is not to say that the part-time instructors spoke with a common voice. In-crowd mentalities took hold, angst set in, and some instructors resisted the more popular teaching methods and strategies, enduring criticism from their peers in

the coordinating groups and the teacher evaluation committee (Voorheis; Lipson interview; O'Connor).

But through both the exhilaration of creating something new and the tension of conflict and disagreement, intellectual energy was at work in the Syracuse Writing Program. That energy is apparent in the administrative documents I've collected: the exciting rhetoric of director's journals, the stirring arguments in the annual reports to the deans. It was also referenced time and time again in the interviews I conducted: the first ten years were called "productive," "magical," "pioneering" (Kirby-Werner interview; Hahn interview; Zebroski interview). The intellectual energy also was pushed by a larger trend in American higher education at the same time to invest in undergraduate education. The Writing Program's administrative structures, supporting the teachers who were responsible for the required undergraduate writing courses, were "riding that tide" (Adam). The success of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee of creating a strong group of professional writing instructors supported this movement in higher education focused on undergraduate education, championed by Ernest Boyer and others.

The Syracuse Writing Program was able to harness the energy of its part-time instructors by relying on them instead of just managing them. Sometimes, as Writing Program faculty member Jim Zebroski pointed out, the Writing Program relied too heavily on the part-time instructors for leadership, evaluation, and curricular development, as he said, "the program was built on the backs of the part-time instructors." Still, though, the Writing Program's administration took a unique rhetorical position with its instructors, one of conversation instead of solely top-down curricular and evaluation mandates. The Writing Program *listened*: they paid

attention to the talents the instructors brought with them and took note of what the instructors said they wanted and needed.

That listening was manifest in the weekly coordinating group meetings and coordinator group reports, through which the faculty and staff administrators in the Program could hear how the instructors and students were struggling with in the new discipline-based spiral writing curriculum. Listening was also a central rhetorical feature of the teacher evaluation committee. The Writing Program first listened to conversations in the field's journals and conferences about the professionalization of the discipline and its teachers, responding by suggesting a professional peer evaluation system for its part-time instructors. Then, a heterogeneous group of instructors, teaching assistants, faculty, and staff read scholarship on evaluation and engaged in conversation about how best to construct a peer evaluation system for the Writing Program. The committee's work itself depended on listening: the listening that comes from personal reflection and creation of a teaching portfolio, the listening that happens through the reading of the portfolios and the ranking discussions, and the listening in the conversations between the teacher evaluation committee and the Writing Program's administration about contract renewals and leadership position recommendations.

It's possible to see how the Writing Program grew in part through conscientious decisions to be quiet, patient, flexible, and open to sudden opportunities, unexpected ideas, and multiple perspectives. The history of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee in the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996 told here is a layered, multi-voiced story, but what made the system hum is the complementary work of action and reflection, theory and practice, and talk and listening.

Teaching Teachers of Writing

As useful as this study is, as an in-depth investigation into the construction and evolution of administrative structures in a well-known, independent writing program in the field of composition and rhetoric, its impact is more than historical. Writing teacher education – how teachers of writing, including teachers at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, are trained and supported – is an important research topic and practice in both English education and composition and rhetoric scholarship. Research in how writing teachers are best prepared for their work in the classroom and how their teaching can be fairly and effectively evaluated is also important given current policy debates on local, state, and federal levels about maintaining teacher quality in public education in an effort to raise student’s test scores and make U.S. public education competitive in the global marketplace.

It’s helpful to establish a historical framework for current disciplinary discussions of the preparation and professional development of teachers of writing. In 1982, four years before the Syracuse Writing Program began as a stand-alone writing program at Syracuse University, the Conference on College Composition and Communication issued a position statement on teacher training and support, the CCCC Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing. The statement argues that teachers of writing “at all levels,” including both college writing teachers and elementary and secondary writing teachers, need adequate training and ongoing professional development to do their jobs well (“CCCC Position Statement”). The position statement gives guidelines about the topics and activities that should be part of writing teacher preparation, such as opportunities for the teachers to write themselves, read and respond to their writing and the writing of others, assess student writing, and study research in the field of composition and rhetoric. The model of teacher training

advocated in the position statement moves beyond a practicum model that emphasizes day-to-day teacher problem-solving. Instead, it calls for disciplinary-based teacher development, and the position statement is clearly influenced by the contemporary (early 1980s) movements in the field of rhetoric of composition, as it emphasizes the centrality of writing process and writing-to-learn pedagogical theory and composition research influenced by applied linguistics and cognitive psychology (“CCCC Position Statement”). Although the position statement lays out a broad, research-based agenda for teacher preparation and professional development, it does not offer explicit arguments or suggestions for what should constitute ongoing teacher training and preparation: the position statement focuses primarily on preparing *new* teachers of writing, not supporting *experienced* teachers.

This 1982 CCCC position statement makes two interesting moves for current scholars in composition and rhetoric working in writing teacher education. First, it highlights the central place of writing teacher education and support in the field of composition and rhetoric. Second, it articulates a fundamental connection between the concerns of writing program administrators – those who most often oversee the training and development of college writing teachers – and the concerns of English education faculty, secondary schools, and state education departments, who are responsible for the preparation and support of elementary and secondary teachers of writing. (“CCCC Position Statement”). Enacting a disciplinary-grounded model of writing teacher education, one that asks teachers to understand how research in composition pedagogy, theory, and assessment informs the work they do in the classroom, is the work of both scholars and administrators in composition and rhetoric and scholars and administrators in English education (“CCCC Position Statement”). It is interesting to point out how the 1982 CCCC position statement both establishes the work of writing teacher education as a basic, foundational concern

for the national disciplinary organization and confirms the fundamental relationship between CCCC (focused primarily on college writing instruction) and NCTE (attending mostly to K-12 writing instruction) because of the current perception in the field of composition and rhetoric of the fragmented nature of the scholarship and work of writing teacher education.

This connection between NCTE and CCCC is explored in the June 2011 issue of *College Composition and Communication*, which features a symposium that, inspired by the 100th anniversary of the founding of NCTE, looks at the relationship between the two national organizations. Two of the articles in the symposium focus on the work of the Composition-English Education Connections SIG (special interest group) at CCCC, which was first established in 1999. The first essay featured, co-written Janet Aslup, Elizabeth Brockman, Jonathan Bush, and Mark Letcher (all former and current leaders of the SIG on Composition-English Education Connections), explains how this SIG helps to define a forum for groups of people interested in the training and support of writing teachers who normally would not cross paths, as those involved in writing teacher education usually identify with either NCTE (if they work primarily with elementary and secondary education teachers) or CCCC (if they are charged with preparing college writing teachers.) The authors argue that this SIG on Composition-English Education Connections is a crucial space for those invested in writing teacher education. Although the SIG meets just once a year, at the annual CCCC convention, the SIG is established enough to create a community of scholars invested in writing teacher education, and the face-to-face meetings allow for dialogue about writing teacher preparation and support, dialogue, the authors argue, that is necessary to the development of critical, shared ideas about writing teacher education (Aslup et al 677). The authors list some of the presentations made at recent Composition-English Education Connections SIG meetings, contending that even though some

of the titles suggest that the work of writing teacher educators is institutionally localized, the questions raised by these presentations are connected to broader conversations in the field and beyond. The authors write, “These questions and the kinds of answers that SIG presentations provide are inherently linked to larger research and policy efforts, and they are far more complex and central to the field than ‘what works’ in the classroom” (Aslup et al 672). Writing teacher education does not only deal with lore, using Stephen North’s term. It is practical and contextual, but it is also important to note that how teachers are prepared and supported in their teaching of writing affects the decisions of writing program administrators and the creation and implementation of learning standards in secondary schools and colleges.

E. Shelley Reid makes a similar argument about the importance of influencing larger national debates on writing education and teacher preparation through continued scholarship in writing teacher education through her essay, also contained within the June 2011 *CCC* Symposium on the NCTE/CCCC relationship. Reid claims that as a professional organization, CCCC has turned away from the practical issues of training teachers to teach writing, relegating what she terms “writing pedagogy education” to the margins of the field or a “sub-field” of the discipline (Reid 687-688). She agrees with Aslup et al., stating that the work of SIGs, like the SIG she helped to establish in 2002 on the Education and Mentoring of TAs and Instructors in Composition, can be places that spur the development of research, scholarship, and practice in the training of writing teachers through productive collaboration between members of NCTE and CCCC. However, Reid points out that yearly meetings or even special committees commissioned by CCCC are not enough to do the work of weaving together local experiences of writing pedagogy education into a coherent, useful, and theorized whole about the preparation of teachers of writing. Reid calls on writing program administrators and those who train writing

teachers to stop seeing themselves as “local practitioners;” rather, she argues, they are part of a national, scholarly organization whose aim is to “articulate a larger vision” about writing pedagogy education (Reid 692-693). Reid argues that writing teacher education will continue to remain a localized, marginalized part of the discipline unless CCCC follows the lead of NCTE and forms a standing task force that investigates writing teacher education through the creation of research grants, national studies, and online clearinghouses (Reid 698). Placing the questions of how best to train and support teachers of writing – questions raised by Patricia Lambert Stock in her 2010 essay about NCTE’s initiatives to prepare teachers of writing – into the center of the field of composition and rhetoric, Reid claims, could revitalize disciplinary conversations and catapult scholars of composition and rhetoric into national policy debates about writing curriculum, writing assessment, and teacher evaluation (Reid 692).

A common issue with many current studies and conversations about writing teacher education, as both Reid and Aslup et al explain, is the isolation of individual programs and the localized constraints of institution-specific and policies, which, combined with a lack of a national network that connects K-12 and university-level writing pedagogy practitioners, makes it difficult to make any kind of general but meaningful statement about writing pedagogy education. Even though both Aslup et al and Reid recognize the need “to move beyond conversation and description of ‘what worked for us,’” there is overarching reality that in scholarship on writing pedagogy education, there are few studies that are “data-driven, longitudinal, or inclusive of more than one program” (Reid 692). In order to make an impact on writing instruction policy and to complicate and deepen the field’s theories about writing pedagogy education, studies on writing teacher education need to extend beyond the boundaries of individual institutions.

Although Reid makes a strong argument that writing teacher education has become a marginalized, sub-field specialty in composition and rhetoric, it is also important to note that what has happened with the writing pedagogy education may echo what Paul Butler demonstrates with scholarship on the rhetorical canon of style. Research and scholarship on style played a prominent role in disciplinary discussions in the field's journals and conferences through the early 1980s, but then, Butler notes, there was a "disciplinary abandonment of style" (Butler "Style" 394). Stylistics dropped out of favor as the field turned away from a primary focus on first-year composition and towards social, cultural, and political implications of writing and rhetoric. However, Butler argues (drawing on, in his 2008 book *Out of Style: Reanimating Stylistic Study in Rhetoric and Composition*, Janice Lauer's similar argument about the "diaspora" of research on the rhetorical canon of invention) that instead of vanishing off the radar, scholarship in stylistics was re-imagined and "reanimated", influencing statements like the 1974 "Students' Right to Their Own Language" and informing the field's work on research ranging from rhetorical analysis to the influence of race, class, gender, and culture on rhetoric and writing (Butler "Style" 400). In the same way, writing teacher education still happens: though it seems regulated to the margins of the field's journals and conferences, the work of training and supporting teachers of writing occurs through forums like the teaching assistant practicum, professional development opportunities for contingent faculty members, and initiatives like the National Writing Project.

One of the sites of writing teacher education is the graduate teaching assistant composition practicum, which varies in scope and length from institution to institution. In the preface of his collection, *Don't Call It That: The Composition Practicum*, Sidney Dobrin argues that the formal courses dedicated to preparing teaching assistants to teach college writing courses

are sites of enculturation. “Practica,” he claims, “give shape and formula to the identity of programs. This notion of program identity is important because it carries cultural capital through to first-year students and what it means ‘to write’” (Dobrin 26). How beginning writing teachers are introduced to both the field of composition and rhetoric and writing pedagogy affects them for the entire careers: their pedagogies are forever colored by the theories and practices they learn in their practicum courses or teaching orientations. These professional development sites, Dobrin demonstrates, are places where a program’s identity is solidified through the activities of the teachers who go through them. Although Dobrin’s argument is focused on the composition practicum course, his argument can be extended to the other ways writing programs train, prepare, and evaluate their teachers. Professional development and evaluation structures are not ancillary to what a program does; they define what a writing program values in writing and writing education.

The history of the Syracuse Writing Program’s professional development and evaluation structures from 1986 to 1996 supports Dobrin’s argument about how a writing program’s identity is constructed and circulated through its mechanisms for teacher-training and support. The coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee in the Syracuse Writing Program both emphasized the primary role of reflection, inquiry, a teaching community, and theory-based practice in the teaching of writing. The teaching portfolios the Syracuse Writing Program’s teachers constructed required teachers to look at their syllabi, assignments, and student evaluations, and through studied reflection on those artifacts of their pedagogy, make a statement about who they were as a teacher: what they valued and where they saw room for growth in their own practice. The coordinating groups in the first few years of the Writing Program’s history practiced inquiry. Teachers were encouraged to dive into composition theory,

take cues rather than cookie-cutter syllabi into their classroom, and experiment in their assignments and teaching strategies. The Writing Program encouraged inquiry-based experimentation, and both the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee were built to accommodate it and reward it. The coordinating group system was based on the idea that teachers need regular times to talk about their teaching, and through that teaching community built on discussions of practice and theory, teachers saw their work as a shared enterprise, not an isolated one. The coordinating group system resisted the idea that the contingent faculty members in the Syracuse Writing Program were “freeway flyers,” teachers whose job was to teach a class or two and then move on. The coordinating group system defined a space for a teaching community to form, and the part-time writing instructors became invested in the Writing Program through that community. Finally, both the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee emphasized the connection between disciplinary theory and good teaching or administrative practice. When Syracuse Writing Program instructors came back from CCCC in 1987 with the idea of using peer evaluation to evaluate teachers in the Program, they were encouraged to turn to research and theory about teacher evaluation to develop a proposal for a peer portfolio evaluation system in the Writing Program. Theory was emphasized as a useful tool for designing teaching and administrative practices. The administrative structures dedicated to writing teacher preparation in the Syracuse Writing Program served not just as places where writing teachers learned about disciplinary research or writing pedagogy but as sites where the cultural capital of the Syracuse Writing Program was defined and distributed.

Long-term Effects of Professional Development and Evaluation on a Writing Program and Its Teachers

Perhaps one of the most valuable parts of this historical study of the Syracuse Writing Program is how it answers, in part, Reid's 2011 call for studies of writing teacher pedagogy that are "data-driven, longitudinal, or inclusive of more than one program" (Reid 692). My research of the Syracuse Writing Program is longitudinal: focused on the time period from 1986 to 1996, this study looks at a decade of writing teacher support, development, and evaluation. Actually, the scope of my research extends beyond these ten years: through the interviews I conducted in 2011 with people who were members of the Syracuse Writing Program from 1986 to 1996, I am able to see the long-term effects of the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee on the people who taught in the Program up to twenty-five years later.

By investigating teacher development and evaluation over ten years (and even beyond), it's possible to see the effects of a commitment to professional development and reflective, portfolio-based teacher evaluation on both the program and the people in it. The teacher evaluation committee, for example, helped defined the role writing instructors had in the administration of the Syracuse Writing Program, which was quite substantial, and also set people on new career paths: teaching writing at other institutions, moving on to academic administrative positions at the university, or even expanding their role in the Writing Program. The Syracuse Writing Program still considers professional development opportunities (through activities like one-day mini-seminars, week-long technology camps, fall and spring teaching conferences, guest lecturer series, and part-time writing instructor representation on the program's standing curricular and technology committees) a necessary part of the program. These extracurricular activities are not "extras": they are budgeted for and promoted as ways to support dynamic,

reflective teaching. The Syracuse Writing Program knew from the outset in 1986 that pedagogical theories do not translate into classroom teaching without the interpretative work of teachers.

In addition to showing the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation for contingent faculty on a writing program and its teachers, this study also illustrates how writing programs reflect the complicated nature of all human systems. What happens in the writing program is affected by theory and principles, but the activities of a writing program are just as influenced by university budgets, leadership personalities, and the experiences had by individuals, like the interactions the instructors had at CCCC in 1987 that led to the proposal of a peer-review teacher evaluation system. Also, this study shows the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in administrative structures. The landscape of the Syracuse Writing Program changed between 1986 and 1996, and the teachers and the program required a different kind of teacher support and teacher evaluation by the end of that decade. It's important to note that the ideas of teaching communities, or inquiry-based learning, or responsive, reflective portfolio evaluation weren't thrown out the window because the coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee, in their current manifestations, weren't working. They were changed – they looked differently after 1996, but teacher support and evaluation were still essential, important pieces of the Syracuse Writing Program's administration.

Furthermore, the Syracuse Writing Program's teacher evaluation committee and coordinating group system offers the current conversations in the discipline about writing teacher pedagogy a "professionalization" model of writing teacher preparation, support, and assessment. This is far from a perfect model: the people I interviewed were as quick to criticize aspects of the coordinating group structure and the teacher evaluation system as they were to cite what they

thought was vital about them to their own growth as teachers and professionals. The coordinating group system and the teacher evaluation committee cannot be transplanted to other writing programs, but the principles they were built upon – including the writing instructors themselves in the conversations about their own preparation and evaluation, constructing an active community of teachers, publishing and circulating teachers’ pedagogical ideas, inviting teachers to play a role in the administrative systems of a writing program, building an assessment model that emphasizes the reflective nature of teaching, staying dynamic and responsive to changes within and outside the program – are ones that could serve useful to other programs or K-12 schools investigating teacher evaluation.

Finally, this longitudinal study reiterates what we know already about development: it takes time. Writing takes time. Since the declarations of Donald Murray, who challenged teachers of writing to glory in unfinished, evolving writing, and the work of process theorists from Perl to Emig to Flower to Sommers, the field of composition and rhetoric has widely recognized the messy, time-consuming process of composing. Though it’s possible to name certain practices writers engage in as they write, every writer puts together her words according to her own rhythm. It’s not a problem to overcome; rather, it’s a given that shapes what writing teachers do when they teach students to write.

Teaching is a lot like writing in the sense that it is a practice that is dynamic, evolving, personal, and time-consuming. Educational philosopher Donald Schön called good teaching “artistry” and “reflection-in-action,” two phrases that could aptly describe writing (Schön). Though it is a possible to break down the work of teaching into concrete steps and describe abstract principles that define effective teaching, every teacher enacts curriculum through her

own personality and perspective. It's not a problem to overcome; rather, it's a given that shapes what teachers do when they teach.

The difficulty that emerges for those who are charged with the responsibility of teaching, evaluating, and supporting teachers is how to fit together this understanding of teaching, which is experimental, contextual, and recursive, with the demands of accountability and assessment, made manifest in educational policy ranging from No Child Left Behind to the present adoption of national K-12 core curriculum standards. Although these federal and state policies seem removed from the concerns of the college composition classroom and writing program administrators, the discussions of teacher preparation, evaluation, and support that are currently happening in English education are connected to the conversations in the field about TA training and the support of contingent writing faculty. The history of the professional development and evaluation structures designed for the contingent faculty in the Syracuse University Writing Program shows the effect on both a writing program and the teachers in it of a decision to make the support and evaluation of teachers an integral part of a writing program's administration.

Just as we know writing students need more than a 15-week first-year writing course to develop into competent, confident college writers, writing teachers need more than a single practicum course or a week-long orientation to become critically reflective teachers. The Syracuse University Writing Program operated under the premise that professional development and responsive evaluation are essential for *all* practitioners, not just new ones. The same principles that underscore composition pedagogy theory and writing-across-the-curriculum theory, that writers develop over time and writing instruction and assessment should be viewed as a long-range, ongoing enterprise, can be applied to how writing program administrators construct administrative structures that can support the long-range, ongoing development of

writing teachers. In order to develop their craft of teaching, teachers need opportunities to reflect on and assess their pedagogy. Consequently, there must be systems designed meet the teacher support and evaluation needs in writing programs, and these structures must be considered a long-term, continual investment of a writing program.

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- . "The Syracuse Writing Program and Cultural Studies: A Personal View of the Politics of Development." In *Cultural Studies in the English Classroom*. Eds. Berlin and Vivion. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1992. 87-94. Print.

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EDUCATION

PhD in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric, Syracuse University, expected May 2012

Exam Areas: Composition Pedagogy, History, and Administration; New Media and Design; Plagiarism and Intellectual Property

Dissertation: *Lightning in a Bottle: A History of the Syracuse Writing Program 1986-1996*. A historical study and analysis of the long-term effects of professional development and evaluation structures on part-time writing instructors at Syracuse University, 1986-1996.

MST in English Teaching, University of New Hampshire, December 2005

Emphasis: Creative Nonfiction and Composition Pedagogy

BA in History and English with Integral Honors, Le Moyne College, May 2004

Teaching Certification: New York State Social Studies 7-12

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Le Moyne College (2010-present)

- Visiting Assistant Professor
ENG 102/WRT 101, Critical Writing
College Reading and Writing Skills, Summer Loyola Institute (high school population)
ENG 393, Practicum in Teaching and Tutoring Writing

Syracuse University (2006-2010)

- Teaching Assistant (2006-2010)
WRT 104 SummerStart, Introduction to College Writing
WRT 104 HEOP, Introduction to College Writing (non-traditional students)
WRT 105, Practices of Academic Writing
WRT 105 HEOP, Practices of Academic Writing (non-traditional students)
WRT 205, Critical Research and Writing
WRT 307, Professional Writing
WRT 307 Service Learning, Professional Writing

- Writing Consultant, Syracuse University Writing Center (2010)

University of New Hampshire (2005)

- Teaching Assistant
ENGL 401, Freshman English

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Curriculum Developer, Le Moyne College (2011-present)

As part of a summer curriculum development grant, I worked with a fellow English department faculty member to revise Le Moyne College's first-year writing course to more clearly reflect scholarship in composition and rhetoric and Ignatian pedagogical theories. The revision of this course is part of a broader college-wide initiative to revise the undergraduate liberal arts core curriculum. This project involved designing assessments for the new course and teaching six pilot sections in the 2011-2012 academic year.

Writing Program Administration Intern, Syracuse University Writing Program (2008-2009)

During this internship, I worked directly with the directors and administrators of the Syracuse Writing Program on a number of writing program administrative-related initiatives and projects. Some selected projects included research and presentations on assessment and electronic portfolios, preparation for the annual spring teaching conference that focused on community engagement and the undergraduate writing and rhetoric major, and research on the professional development needs for the Writing Program's part-time writing instructors.

Research Assistant, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Syracuse University (2008-2009)

In this project, I worked with Louise Wetherbee Phelps to assemble a collection of her administrative and scholarly writings for a two-volume publication. My work involved scanning documents and sorting, categorizing, and labeling them into a working archive.

Graduate Writing Fellow, Robert J Connors Writing Center, University of New Hampshire (2004-2005)

As a graduate writing fellow, I worked with the Department of Engineering at the University of New Hampshire to develop writing-intensive assignments for the undergraduate engineering majors. I also collected data about the engineering students' writing, and through that study, helped the engineering faculty develop assessment schemas for their students' writing projects.

Research Assistant, Elizabeth Hayes, Le Moyne College (2003-2004)

In this project, I worked with Elizabeth Hayes to conduct research about university writing across the curriculum initiatives by surveying literature about WAC, drafting faculty and student surveys about writing and writing-intensive courses, interpreting the data from the surveys, and planning faculty development workshops.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

PUBLICATIONS

"A Name on a Tree." *Harlot: A Revealing Look at the Arts of Persuasion*. April 2011.

"Facing and Debunking the Internet Menace: Literacy Instruction and Plagiarism Prevention." Co-authored with Rebecca Moore Howard. *Educational Leadership*. March 2009.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Conference on College Composition and Communication. Research Network Forum. "Perspectives on Professional Development: A History of the Syracuse Writing Program." Atlanta, GA; April 2011.

Imagining America Graduate Student Public Scholarship Conference. "Writing with Social Workers." Syracuse, NY; April 2010.

Conference on College Composition and Communication. "What Happened to the Art in Composition?: Seeing the Possibilities of Design in Writing Curriculum." Louisville, Kentucky; March 2010.

Feminisms and Rhetorics. "Arc(hiving) Knowledge: Reconfiguring Collaborative Feminist Methodology as Collectivity." Lansing, Michigan; October 2009.

Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. "Crop That: Using Photoshop to Move from Analysis to Design." Boston, Massachusetts, March 2009.

Symposium on Academic Motherhood. Association for Research on Motherhood. "Sustainable Scholar and Mother." Boston, Massachusetts, March 2009.

Conference on College Composition and Communication. Research Network Forum. "A Writing Program without First-Year Composition." New York, New York; March 2007.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

"Listening to the Stories the Writing Program Tells." Invited Panelist. Writing Program Fall Teaching Conference. Syracuse University; August 2011.

"Writing Across the Curriculum: Questions and Answers." Invited Workshop Presentation. Academic Excellence Day. Le Moyne College; May 2011.

"Writers In-Between: Creative Nonfiction from the Writing Program." Invited Reader. Nonfiction Reading Series. Syracuse University; April 2011.

"Writing in Digital Spaces." Invited Presentation. Writing Program Spring Conference 2010. Syracuse University; April 2010.

“Preparing High School Students for College-Level Writing.” Invited Seminar Presenter and Participant. Woodrow Wilson Early College Initiative. Princeton, New Jersey; October 2009.

“Note-taking, Blogging, and Archiving in Graduate School.” Guest Speaker. Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Doctoral Program. Syracuse University; September 2009.

“Service Learning in Professional Writing.” Invited Presentation. Writing Program Spring Conference. Syracuse University; April 2009.

“Typography Basics for Professional Writing.” Invited Presentation. Syracuse University Professional Writing Class; March 2009.

“Writing Genres at a Spring Factory.” Invited Presentation. Syracuse University Professional Writing Class; February 2009.

“Electronic Portfolios in the Writing and Rhetoric Major.” Presentation. Writing Program Major/Minor Committee. Syracuse University; November 2008.

SERVICE

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

- Workshop Participant, Sustainability across the Curriculum, Le Moyne College, 2011.
- Member, Major/Minor Committee, Syracuse University Writing Program, 2008-2009.
- Member, Lower Division Committee, Syracuse University Writing Program, 2007-2008.
- Grader, Freshman English Proficiency Exam, Le Moyne College, 2006-2007.
- Co-Chair, Le Moyne College Freshman Orientation Committee, 2004.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- New York State Education Department. Standards Setting for NYS Regents Exam in English, Albany, NY, 2011.
- Textbook Reviewer, *Writing about Writing*. Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle. 1st edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.
- University Hospital Social Work Department. University Hospital, Syracuse, NY, 2009-2010.
The continuation of a service learning project started at Syracuse University

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- St. Mary's Appeal and Liturgical Committee, St. Mary's Church, Jamesville, NY, 2008-present.
- Moses DeWitt Elementary School Parent Teacher Group, DeWitt, NY, 2010-present.
- YMCA Youth Basketball Coach, Fayetteville, NY, 2011.
- T-Ball Coach, Jamesville-DeWitt Little League, Jamesville, NY, 2010.

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS

- Summer Curricular Development Grant, Le Moyne College, 2011
“Writing, Rhetorical Ethics, and Ignatian Pedagogy: Rethinking WRT 101, Le Moyne’s Core Writing Course.” This project was done with Associate Professor Erin Mullaley at Le Moyne.
- Certificate in University Teaching, Syracuse University, 2011
- Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Syracuse University, 2010
- Graduate Student Public Scholarship Mini-Grant, Syracuse University, 2009
- Distinguished Student Teacher, Le Moyne College, 2004
- Elizabeth Schlaerth Memorial Medal in History, Le Moyne College, 2004
- Newhouse Writing Awards, Le Moyne College, 2002 and 2003
- John W. Bush Memorial Award for the Best Paper in Historiography, Le Moyne College, 2002
- Msgr. Charles F. McEvoy Medal in Sophomore Liberal Arts, Le Moyne College, 2001

PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND EDITING

- Professional Writing Consultant, Comcast Corporation, Manchester, NH (2010-present)
- Graduate Editing Center Editor, Syracuse University Writing Program (2010)
- Index Preparation, *Lingua Fracta: Towards a New Rhetoric of New Media*. Collin G. Brooke. Hampton Press, 2008.
- Website and Promotional Material Content Writer and Editor (2008-present)
www.operatales.com; www.savestmarys.com
- Editorial Assistant, *College Composition and Communication* (2006-2007.)
Assisted with the development of CCC Online Archive with Associate Editor, Collin Brooke.
- Technical Writer, Midstate Spring Factory, Syracuse, NY (2006-2007)

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

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| • Writing program administration | • Service learning pedagogy |
| • Teacher training and composition pedagogy | • Style and design |
| • Professional writing and editing | • Plagiarism and intellectual property |
| • Curriculum development | • Historical archiving and historiography |
| • New media and 21 st century literacies | • Creative nonfiction |
| • Public policy and education | |
| • Intersections between K-12 and college-level writing | |

