

CHAPTER 10

NON-TENURE-TRACK ACTIVISM: GENRE APPROPRIATION IN PROGRAM REPORTING

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Threads: Self advocacy; Organizing Within and Across Ranks;
Professionalizing and Developing in Complex Contexts; Protecting
Gains, Telling Cautionary Tales

INTRODUCTION

Composition scholars have called attention to the dismal working conditions of contingent English faculty and identified best practices for improving these conditions (see *Forum: Issues about Part-time and Contingent Faculty*¹; Palmquist and Doe; Schell and Stock). Such practices often assume lines of communication and working relations between tenure-track (TT) and NTT faculty that too often do not exist within our home departments—and more generally, across our discipline. In fact, NTT members have made little progress even within their home departments, and the deep professional conflicts of interest that exist between TT and NTT lines—conflicts tied to the very livelihood of the faculty members inhabiting positions in both lines—promise no immediate relief for NTT. The problem that NTT face in their home departments is that they struggle to organize a collective of TTF that are willing to work *with* and *for* them in meaningful and sustained ways. TTF would need to labor in new and more complex ways to sustain interest in NTT working conditions and undertake the transformative work necessary to improve their conditions. This imagines a new component of TT work: engaged, sustained NTT advocacy. It is for this reason NTT struggle to gain recognition of their professional expertise

1 *FORUM: Issues about Part-time and Contingent Faculty* is an academic journal published twice annually, alternately in *College Composition and Communication* and *Teaching English in the Two-year College*. Since 1999, NCTE has used the venue to present and discuss institutional, programmatic, and departmental issues related to NTT.

from their TT colleagues that is necessary to reform their now well-documented and unsustainable conditions.

To overcome this obstacle, we argue that NTTF must think particularly about ways of acting that are persuasive, timely, and aim to establish the disciplinary authority and local contributions of NTTF in order to initiate conversations within the department that are dedicated to addressing the socio-cultural tensions among TT and NTT faculty. As the narrative we will share suggests, writing—specifically, engaging in genre appropriation—can be one such approach. Genre appropriation challenges institutional expectations concerning who can participate in the production, distribution, and circulation of genres, especially those genres typically produced by individuals with institutional authority. We argue that by challenging such expectations through appropriation, NTTF can engender and re-form departmental politics.

In this chapter, we will share our experiences participating in rhetorically informed non-tenure-track activism at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, a mid-sized public university with a strong teaching focus. In the spring 2011 semester, the UCCS English department underwent its seven-year external program review. TTF created the required report, which was intended to speak for the department as a whole, without soliciting feedback or participation from NTTF. The report did not speak to NTTF issues articulated in the previous accreditation report and did not recognize the NTTF as an integral part of the English department. Compounding the problem, the report contained errors such as misnaming an NTTF and misrepresenting the work of another. In response to these glaring errors and omissions as well as departmental policies and culture that continuously reinforced a clear class divide between TTF and NTTF, NTT writing faculty drafted and circulated their own report alongside the TTF's report.

We argue that the creation of a countervailing report is an example of rhetorically informed activism because NTTF appropriated an institutionally-sanctioned genre to focus the attention of TTF and administrative individuals on NTT issues. This action then set off a chain of events that maintained focus on NTT issues for several semesters after the program review occurred. Importantly, as we will show in the following narrative, appropriating the genre of the program report enabled NTTF to document our struggles and manifest our concerns, effectively writing them into the department's history. As the department finds itself in the process of program reporting in the future, its faculty members will be compelled to address this history. This is why we believe institutional genres, those documents and policies and procedures sanctioned by our institutions, can be such powerful resources for NTT activism.

Our narrative offers varying perspectives on these activist efforts. First, Justin

will provide information about the history of the NTTF's professionalization at UCCS, a history that in many ways spurred and enabled the faculty's decision to engage in activism during the spring 2011 semester. Then, he will share his experience leading the genre appropriation as a NTTF member during the reporting process in spring 2011. Following Justin's story, Chris will share his experience as a NTTF member who joined the department in the aftermath of the activist efforts led by Justin and his colleagues. Chris joined the English department the semester following the appropriation, and he occupied governing positions the appropriation created for NTTF members. His story reveals the departmental tensions that arose in response to the appropriation. We conclude the essay by drawing on our narrative to consider what it reveals about genre appropriation as a strategy for rhetorically informed non-tenure-track activism.

JUSTIN'S STORY: LOCAL CONTEXT AND RHETORICALLY INFORMED ACTIVISM

LOCAL CONTEXT: A HISTORY OF NTT PROFESSIONALIZATION IN THE UCCS RHETORIC AND WRITING PROGRAM

In fall 2008, I joined the English department at UCCS as a full-time instructor of rhetoric and writing. At the time of my appointment, the program was in its eighth year of curricular reform, which began with the WPA's appointment in 2000 and included a decade-long transformation of the program's first-year writing curriculum from a modes-based curriculum to a writing-about-writing curriculum (Dew 2003). The curricular reform proved a fundamental component of the WPA's vision to transform NTT working conditions in the writing program. Drawing on the benefits of a NTTF with low turnover rates, the WPA used the long-term curricular reform initiative to compel the professionalization of the writing faculty.

During the eight years leading up to 2008 when I joined the program's faculty, she used the intellectual demands of the curricular reform initiatives to cultivate an ethos of productivity for writing program faculty and leveraged this ethos as she collaborated with the college's deans and the university's provost and chancellor to convert all adjunct lines in the program to instructorships that carried with them a minimum of a half-time teaching appointment—two courses per semester. With the creation of each new instructor line, she established an expectation among faculty within the program for ongoing and immersive professional development. Development opportunities in the program were numerous and included stipends to participate in disciplinary conferences and workshops as well as required monthly meetings in which faculty were immersed

in theoretical concepts and collaborated to assume agency in the development of the first-year curriculum. In the four years I worked in the program, our NTT writing faculty members regularly assumed leadership positions during our monthly development meetings to teach each other about pedagogical issues; they continuously researched new issues and designed new assignments to introduce into the first-year curriculum; they collaboratively designed and implemented program assessment tools for the first-year curriculum; and they began drafting new outcomes for the first-year curriculum that explicitly addressed the relations between technology, rhetoric, and writing.

The instructorships ushered in a sense of improved working conditions for NTTF, and this led to a collective sense that the demands of our professionalization initiatives were well worth our labor. Most of us appreciated the opportunity for curricular involvement and the monetary support for development initiatives of our choosing. We were all grateful when the adjunct lines no longer existed, as our new positions carried rolling appointments that were renewed based on the annual merit reviews each faculty member submitted at the end of the calendar year. The reviews largely detailed the professional development work we collectively undertook while appointed in the program. And, no doubt, the newly granted health and retirement benefits, and a steadily increasing salary that grew from approximately \$17,000 per year in 2000 to \$32,000 in 2008 provided a sense of improved working conditions. For the large number of NTTF members who had taught in the program for a decade or longer, there was a real sense of transformation.

In addition to improved working conditions for NTTF, our professionalization had several significant impacts that, I believe, facilitated the activist efforts I share in the next section. Built into our curricular development were assessment initiatives that consistently suggested students enjoyed the curriculum we had worked so hard to develop, and for us this was the ultimate outcome of our work. Reports of student satisfaction and generally high levels of faculty engagement and productivity within our program enhanced our visibility across the campus, particularly with our deans, provost, and chancellor. Our professionalization also generated a collective consciousness among faculty in our writing program. We were organized. Unlike other programs I have worked in, our NTTF members knew each other well. Over the years, our curricular initiatives provided us ample opportunities to cultivate rich professional and personal relationships with each other and this led to a connected community among writing faculty, and between us and our WPA.

Despite a strong sense of community among faculty in the writing program, we worked in isolation from our TT colleagues—busily undertaking the work of the writing program while remaining disconnected from initiatives across the

greater English department. Despite our proven ability and desire to engage in program initiatives, we were not invited to department meetings or aware of department initiatives. Despite sharing offices in the same hallways, we rarely spoke to our TT colleagues. For this reason, there was a collective sense among NTT writing faculty, a sense that we openly expressed in conversations with each other over the years, that we were mostly invisible in our home department.

It is out of this historical trajectory of professionalization and departmental alienation that our narrative about NTT activism emerges. In the next section, I discuss an activist-oriented effort led by our NTT writing faculty during the spring 2011 semester, a semester that included our English department's seven-year external program review as part of its reporting protocol. Our efforts created an uncomfortable tension that brought us into working relations with our TT colleagues, and they have generated sustained focus on our positions in ways previously unparalleled in our department's history.

RHETORICALLY INFORMED ACTIVISM: GENRE APPROPRIATION DURING PROGRAM REPORTING AT UCCS

Activist efforts hinge on momentum. They depend on staging, implementing, and forging connections across efforts that occur over time. This is why I begin the narrative of our faculty's efforts during our department's program reporting in spring 2011 with an occurrence that preceded the efforts. Several months prior, at the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year, NTTF members in the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences at UCCS logged into their email accounts to find a message from the then dean of LAS. In the message, the dean notified faculty that he was spearheading an initiative to overhaul the annual review process for NTTF across the college and its departments. The initiative aimed to transform the review process, which was currently conducted by department chairs, by implementing a standardized, peer-review process by which all NTTF members would be reviewed by a committee comprised of NTTF members from across the college. Seeking to form the committee that would overhaul the NTTF review process, the dean solicited participation from NTTF, revealed that participation would not be compensated, and suggested the committee's work would be completed by the end of the academic year and the new review process implemented at the start of the next.

The sense of urgency and finality that the dean's email conveyed—that this initiative *was* going to happen no matter what and that it was beginning immediately—brought writing faculty together within a matter of hours. The halls were abuzz with concern: What motivated this initiative? Why did we need to reform our current review process? Why didn't anyone consult with us to

determine our needs for such a high-stakes initiative? The concern expressed by our faculty led several of us to draft an electronic survey seeking feedback and responses from NTTF across the college that we then distributed via a NTT listserv. After distributing the survey to approximately 150 faculty members, I, along with several of my colleagues, visited as many NTTF offices as we could to encourage participation. By the next morning, we had received nearly one hundred responses that unanimously expressed deep concern for the dean's initiative. We submitted these results to the dean for his review and asked that he halt the initiative. Facing a large number of concerned faculty, the dean immediately suspended the initiative and set up a series of open forums in which he met with NTTF to discuss their concerns and determine a best course of action for proceeding with the initiative. The forums were relatively well-attended by NTTF from departments across the college, and by the time they concluded, the dean agreed that NTTF needed to be included in high-stakes initiatives affecting their working conditions in the future, and he was persuaded to offer modest stipends to NTTF for their participation in the review committee. By the end of the 2010 fall semester, the review committee formed with full support from NTTF across the college.

I draw on this narrative because it set the stage for our activist efforts in our home department during our program review and reporting process in spring 2011. Still reeling from what we considered a small but important "victory" with the institution's administrative body, we met at the start of the spring semester only to learn from our WPA about our department's upcoming review, scheduled to take place in March. To prepare, we reflected on the 2003 external reviewers' report, looking for mention of NTTF issues that might determine a direction for our meeting with external reviewers in the upcoming reporting process. The reviewers' report from 2003 articulated poor working conditions that had greatly improved by 2011 due to our professionalization and our WPA's tireless advocacy. We still identified several unresolved issues from the reviewers' recommendations (e.g., salary compression for senior instructors, salaries that were still below the national average), but one issue in particular that demanded extended attention during our meeting was the rift between NTT and TT faculty in the department. The 2003 report noted that NTTF felt "isolated" from colleagues in the English department, and reviewers recommended the department mend this rift by incorporating NTTF into departmental initiatives in more meaningful ways. Because we had gained so many rich opportunities to participate in writing program initiatives, we simply could not overlook that we remained virtual strangers to our TT colleagues in the greater department.

Several weeks after our start-up meeting, well into February, the English department released its "official" program report for check-out in preparation

for our department's external review.² After reading the report drafted by TTF, my NTT colleagues felt the report's structure and content confirmed our marginalized positions in the department. When referenced throughout the report, the NTTTF were repeatedly othered from "the English department faculty" (read: TTF) and, adding insult to injury, several faculty members were even called by the wrong names or had their work misrepresented in a section of the report drafted by the department chair. Furthermore, just as with the dean's review committee the semester prior, we had been shut out of the process of planning and drafting the report, which we viewed as one of the only official avenues to document the status of our working conditions. For this reason, we believed the report had potentially profound impacts on our professional lives and thus warranted our participation in its development, participation that had been denied to us. This, of course, motivated us to respond.

Acting on our own accord and with the support of our WPA, at our February development meeting, we decided to write a NTTTF report for the review. Each faculty member identified the top five issues he or she faced as a member of the department and institution and sent them to me via email in the days following our meeting. Using the newly distributed NCTE "Position Statement on the Status and Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty" as a frame, I worked with three colleagues to synthesize and organize our issues around three major themes: "Salary and Compensation," "Security of Employment," and "Professional Identity" (see "Appendix: UCCS Writing Faculty's Program Review for 2011"). As we collaboratively revised the report via email and in our offices, it gradually took shape as a manifesto directed at an audience of external reviewers, administrative members, and TT colleagues in our department. We completed and individually signed the report the week before our program review, distributed it to the external reviewers via the dean's office, and announced to our colleagues via email that it was available for check-out alongside our department's "official" report. Needless to say, our actions drew immediate attention to NTTTF issues from all faculty in the department, causing the tension we desired in the production of our competing report, a tension we hoped would become the exigence for productive conversations leading to department reform.

When the external review occurred the following week, our collective of

2 An important point about the process of drafting the report: TTF from each academic unit (e.g., literature, professional and technical writing, and rhetoric and writing) drafted a report detailing the work the unit undertook since the previous program review in 2003. As NTT writing faculty, we entrusted our WPA, given our history with her, to write on our behalf, representing our program and its work. We were troubled more by sections drafted by other academic units that cross-referenced our writing program and our work as NTTTF in the program and greater department. In light of the previous semester's initiative with the dean, we identified a need and time to respond.

eighteen NTTF met with reviewers for one hour. Each of us arrived ready to speak to a particular issue in the report to ensure our concerns were understood. Weeks later when the reviewers' report arrived with recommendations, we were pleased to find that nearly 50 percent of its content addressed issues we raised in our NTT report. Because our document was integral to the external review process and warranted a large part of the reviewers' recommendations, we argued with TTF and administrative members to secure a role in developing our department's follow-up response. Against the desires of many TT faculty, we used this role to ensure that our department prioritized NTT issues by explicitly writing them into the department's response and, by extension, the department's history. And, again, against many of our TT colleagues' desires, we then pushed to immediately begin redressing the reviewers' recommendations, instead of waiting for the following academic year when the new chair was scheduled to begin her appointment. It was about maintaining momentum.

So began a series of bi-weekly meetings for the remainder of the semester where TT and NTT met for the first time as a collective to discuss the department's response to the reviewers' report and other departmental issues. As one might expect, our decision to release a NTT report without warning or soliciting participation from the TTF was thick in the air, and so the forums were initially disastrous attempts to communicate across NTT and TT lines. Therefore, at the recommendation of faculty from both lines, we enlisted the participation of our assistant dean to manage the forums through the implementation of Robert's Rules of Order. The structure that the dean's presence offered compelled faculty members, both NTT and TT, to listen and respond to each other's ideas and concerns. In retrospect, his implementation of Robert's Rules was a defining moment in departmental practice, as it enabled TT *and* NTT faculty to initiate high-stakes discussions, make motions in relation to discussions, and vote alongside one another on the motions. As NTTF, we used this emergent practice to our advantage. Given our organization, we strategically prepared for and controlled discussion, kairotically presented motions, and used our numbers to vote on and pass these motions. This practice enabled us to foreground the department's governing structure as the most exigent issue to address in the reviewers' report. Our collective thinking was that inclusion in the department's governing structures would plug us into departmental initiatives in meaningful ways and could potentially impact our working conditions the most substantially in the long term. It was again about maintaining momentum.

The force with which we proposed and maintained focus on larger structural issues in the department demonstrated that at any moment, during any meeting, as a department we could find ourselves engaging high-stakes initiatives that hinged on votes. For instance, TTF initiated a discussion in one of the

later meetings to move first-year writing and all NTT writing faculty outside the department and under the purview of the dean's supervision. During that meeting, we suddenly found ourselves debating with our TT colleagues about the scope of the first-year curriculum—was it a skills-based course, a content course, both, or neither?—and to what degree this scope made it an integral part of the department's undergraduate program. In what was a memorable and tense moment in the discussion, we asked our TT colleagues for a strong rationale that would justify booting first-year writing from the department, effectively undoing over a decade's worth of curricular work that had led to a growing rhetoric and writing track in the department's B.A. English program. The request was quickly thrown back at us when we were asked to justify why we should be allowed to *stay* in the department. The discussion was short-lived but highly emotional for NTTF as it challenged the very foundation of the professionalization work we had undertaken for over a decade and confirmed what we felt about our positions and our work in the department: We were not *really* an integral part of the English department or its work, at least in many of our TT colleagues' eyes.

Despite this intense political pushback from TTF, by the end of the semester we secured our position within the department and were voting alongside TTF to set the department's agenda for the following academic year. Most importantly, in one of the last meetings of the semester, we were promised governance rights for the first time in our department's history. By the start of the next academic year, in consultation with our deans, we implemented a new governance structure that carried relatively strong representation by NTTF.

CHRIS' STORY: TENSION AND CHANGE

I came to UCCS as a NTT faculty member in the fall of 2011 to teach first-year writing as well as an advanced grammar course required by all English Education majors. At the time, I was also a Ph.D. candidate at Northern Illinois University. My dissertation was half finished, but I had used up all five years of my assistantship. I had applied for the position at UCCS because I had won a university award that provided me with a tuition waiver but not with any money to live on. So, I dutifully signed up for dissertation hours while listening to warnings from my committee and other professors about the dangers of working a full-time job while also trying to write a dissertation; nevertheless, I jumped into my new job with both feet. I knew that the poor job market, especially for someone without a finished dissertation, would probably not yield a tenure-track job that year, and if trends continued, maybe not at all. The NTT position at UCCS provided a stable salary, health insurance, retirement benefits, and a reasonable 4/4 load with the potential for summer teaching. I knew I could be happy in such

a position for the long run, so I began work in August resolved to be an active and engaged citizen of the department by attending meetings, volunteering for committee work, and participating in professional development.

It was at the opening meeting of the year that I first learned about “the troubles.” In the chatter before the meeting began, I heard occasional comments about the position of the writing program relative to the rest of the department, but not knowing the context, I just assumed that this English program was similar to others I had worked in, with first-year writing playing a somewhat subordinate role to the primarily literature-based English B.A. program. This meeting was only for writing program instructors, after all, and such grouching is to be expected. I certainly did my share as one of the few rhet/comp graduate students in my Ph.D. program.

Over the course of that meeting, however, I began to see that the problems ran deeper than what I considered to be the typical divide between writing and literature. Aside from the WPA, the only tenure-track faculty member at the meeting was the department chair. She announced that due to the “issues” from the previous year, the department governance structure would be revised and that we should have details from the dean in a few weeks. The mood in the room was . . . uncomfortable. People shifted in their seats, glanced at one another, or glared at the chair. I caught myself sharing a confused and worried look with another of the new hires. Why was this news, which seemed positive at first glance, being taken this way? Why was a new department governance structure coming down from the dean rather than through the faculty of the department? After this announcement, the chair left the meeting, and the situation became more clear as the WPA took over the meeting and began to talk about the implications of the restructure in terms of a “victory” for NTT faculty. She explained, for the sake of the new hires, that during the previous year, there had been some heated discussion about the place of the writing faculty in the English department. Most NTT faculty didn’t teach courses specifically in the major, and some TT faculty believed that they then should not have a say in how the department was governed. Because this issue had gotten so heated and so personal, the dean had intervened and would be imposing a new governance structure to better integrate NTT faculty. At the time, I felt like this new governance structure would ensure that these “issues” would be on the mend. Looking back on this moment, I realize that my lack of familiarity with contingent faculty issues limited my understanding of just how difficult such changes can be.

Over the next month, however, I learned more about “the troubles” and realized that the fight was in no way finished. While many of the instructors didn’t want to talk about it, Justin and a few others were willing to give me a better understanding of the situation. When I learned about the details of the program

review and report that Justin discussed in the previous section, I knew that such a rift wouldn't be easily healed. During this month, though, I only heard one side of the story, which everyone I spoke to was quick to admit. Aside from the WPA, instructors and professors, from what I could see, simply didn't interact much in this department. The initial writing program meeting was the only one I attended in this first month. I later found that NTT faculty simply weren't invited to the actual department meetings. A full month into the semester, the only TT faculty members that I had met at all were the WPA and the chair, and the chair only due to her presence at our first meeting.

At our second writing program meeting, in September, the WPA announced that the new department governance structure was ready to be implemented. Because the dean had mandated that every committee have at least one TT and one NTT member, the WPA encouraged everyone to volunteer for at least one committee. I signed up to sit on the Curriculum and Requirements Committee and the Assessment Committee. The WPA also approached me separately and asked if I would sit on a committee that she was chairing. This committee would be comprised of individuals who taught writing courses within the major, and by virtue of my teaching the 300-level grammar course, I fit into this category. This committee was not an official part of the new governance structure, but as she explained to me, the Rhetoric and Writing concentration in the major needed to work on new courses and assessment, and both literature and professional writing had similar committees, also outside of the new governance structure, for such purposes already. This reasoning made sense to me, and I agreed to help.

It was during the meetings of these three committees that I truly learned about the repercussions of the NTT writing faculty's program report. The Rhetoric and Writing Committee was the first that I experienced and certainly the most contentious. It originally included the WPA, Justin, the department chair, another NTT member who taught the grammar course, an alumnus of the program, and the other two TTF who taught rhetoric and writing courses. The business of the first meeting was to talk about curriculum reform. The WPA believed that the courses offered were top-heavy (too many 400-level courses, too few 200- and 300-level), and one of the existing NTT members (who was not present at the meeting) had proposed a 200-level visual rhetoric course that the WPA was enthusiastic about. The ensuing discussion became quite heated, with disagreements over the necessary qualifications for teaching courses beyond the 100-level, how such a new course would fit into the curriculum, and what opportunities for new teaching *should* be available to NTT. The meeting ended with little resolution. A few days later when the WPA called for a second meeting to continue the discussion, the two TTF sent an email stating that they would "not participate in this ad hoc committee," because they were "concerned that

an ad hoc committee works against the goal of integrating the various emphases (and faculty members) within the department.” While several people were skeptical of these motives given the membership of our committee and the analogous committees in the other degree concentrations that were still meeting under the new governance structure, the WPA asked us to respect their decision to not attend the meetings. The rest of the committee continued to meet over the course of the year, and at the WPA’s request, we continued to include these two faculty in our email discussions; however, without the two faculty who taught the majority of the upper-division rhetoric courses in the department, little progress could be made on curriculum redesign.

During the spring semester, tensions once again rose when these two TTF came forward with a completely redesigned curriculum for the Rhetoric and Writing track. They had designed this curriculum themselves and without any input from the WPA or the NTTF who taught in the program and had already sent it through the established governance structure. By the end of the year, this new curriculum had not yet been adopted, but many who had been meeting during the year saw this as a convenient way to circumvent NTTF feedback in favor of committees with fewer NTTF voices. As the WPA pointed out, they had exchanged one “ad hoc” committee for another with purely TTF membership.

My second appointment was the Curriculum and Requirements Committee. The department chair also chaired this committee, and the members included the two TTF mentioned above as well as one other TTF in literature. I was the only NTTF on this committee, and with my status as a new hire, these three TTF seemed to feel more at liberty to speak freely in front of me. According to these three TTF, many of the TTF felt “blindsided” by the report put out by the NTTF. They felt hurt and “betrayed,” particularly by the WPA, for not approaching the other TTF with these grievances before airing the problems in front of the external review committee. They were angry about things that had been said in meetings the previous year, and angry about the new governance structure that, due to its complexity, placed a larger service burden on many of them. Additionally, they were reluctant to approach the WPA about anything. They said that they felt “steamrolled” during important discussions and were thus reluctant to approach her. To her credit, the chair actually stayed out of the majority of these discussions, only occasionally making comments of general frustration that weren’t directed at any person or group.

During this time, however, I continued to learn more about the NTTF side of the story. The WPA had been fighting for NTTF rights for years, and, as Justin points out, had been quite successful. According to the WPA, part of this struggle involved the education of TTF about NTTF rights and communication about the plight of the department’s own NTTF. The TTF were, apparently,

quite supportive of her work when it came to full-time positions and benefits, salary, and course sizes for the NTTF; however, when the discussion turned to including NTTF in department governance, that support turned into resistance, which eventually led to the genre appropriation described by Justin. I certainly understood the frustration of the NTTF and WPA with this perceived “one culture equals their culture” TTF attitude. I even experienced it myself in my interactions with some TTF. Aside from those I worked with on committees, I never spoke to any TTF, even though I saw many of them around the department office spaces on campus. However, close to the end of the spring semester, two TTF in one week stopped me in the hall to say hello and to chat briefly. When I mentioned this unprecedented event to one of my colleagues, she informed me that the WPA had announced during a meeting of most of the TTF that I had accepted a TT position myself and would be leaving the program. It suddenly made sense. While not a member of their specific club, I had still become a member of THE club.

Perhaps the most frustrating part of experiencing these events was seeing that, in some ways, a few individuals on each side were trying to improve the situation but never, it seemed, at the same time. I was involved in several conversations where, it appeared to me at least, individuals or groups were sincerely attempting to make some small step towards reconciliation; however, it always seemed like those moments were also the times when the other side would absolutely refuse to bend. The anger and frustration on each side seemed to be preventing any compromise, and as more of these failed reconciliations piled up over time, each side became less and less willing to be the first to approach the other. As someone who hadn't experienced the events that caused these negative feelings nor had been with the department long enough to have any type of influence, I could do little but continue to occupy my uncomfortably liminal space.

The continued degradation of the situation came to a head in the middle of the spring semester. After a failed mediation attempt from an outside arbitrator, the administration, in consultation with a select few TTF, began to consider officially separating the first-year writing program from the English department. The proposed plan would have the WPA holding a dual appointment as English faculty and reporting directly to the provost under the broad umbrella of “general education.” NTTF would then no longer be a part of the English department except those few who taught courses other than first-year writing, who would hold similar dual appointments. The plan had advocates and opponents on each side, with the strongest advocates being several of the TTF and the strongest opponent being the WPA. In the end, the proposal failed primarily because of money and autonomy. The TTF didn't want to lose the funding that came from first-year writing students being enrolled in English classes, and the NTTF

found that, due to some language in university policy, the English department chair would still be partially responsible for their annual evaluations. Though this “divorce” failed, that some TTF and the administration would consider such action at all speaks volumes to the rift in the department.

Coming in as an outsider, my year in this department and my service with TTF gave me a different perspective from Justin, who was in the thick of it from the beginning. I was able to hear the frustrations of both sides, to experience the vast cultural divide, and to see the positive changes as well as the fallout from the radical advocacy of genre appropriation. From this combination of perspectives, Justin and I have been able to learn a great deal about advocating for contingent faculty in productive ways. We’d like to end this chapter with some reflections on this unique situation.

REFLECTIONS ON THE POTENTIAL OF GENRE APPROPRIATION

As we argued in our introduction, one of the preeminent challenges that NTTF face in their home departments is that of engendering a focus on their working conditions and sustaining a network of support from their TT colleagues, whose status as resident faculty in the academy is a key component of improving such conditions; however, as we also stated, the lines of communication necessary for such support simply don’t exist in many departments. In light of this challenge, our writing faculty’s decision to appropriate—or participate in a way that challenges institutional expectations—the genre of the program report was rhetorically informed and significant to our NTT efforts in several ways. As rhetorical genre scholars suggest, one way to transform institutional relationships and practices is by participating in the genres that shape them; however, because genre participation is regulated by institutional policy and procedure that often excludes NTTF participation, activists must imagine creative strategies to make themselves participants in the genres and, we argue, appropriation is one such strategy. By appropriating the genre of our department’s report—a report historically drafted by and circulated among TTF in our department—we subverted institutional, departmental, and external expectations for genre participation in the reporting process. As it stood alongside our department’s “official” report, our NTT report enabled us to draw attention to NTT issues both within and outside of the department. It also exposed the rift between NTT and TT faculty that was such an integral component to the reviewers’ report during our department’s previous review in 2003 but that was omitted from the TTF’s 2011 report.

As a genre and rhetorical tool for NTT activism, the program report is most

interesting when thinking about how it sustains—through the subsequent responses, participation, and genres it compels—attention to, and continues to organize publics around, the departmental issues it reveals. This chain-like process of responding to genres through participation in other genres is what rhetoric scholars call *uptake* (Freadman 2003). In our case at UCCS, what we hoped would at least happen but could not know for sure, was that the program reviewers would take up our report, and by extension take up the NTTF and its concerns. The challenge for NTTF advocates using genre appropriation as an activist strategy, then, is to identify those institutional genres that more compellingly condition uptake within their particular institutional contexts.

As with any activist strategy, there are potential problems and risks associated with genre appropriation. At its most radical, genre appropriation can aggressively confront TTF and administrators alike with their complicity in creating and perpetuating unethical work conditions of NTTF. Such confrontations can put NTTF at risk unless they have allies and advocates in secure positions.

While this tactic may be perceived as antagonistic rather than constructive, particularly if used on high stakes documents like program reports, tension is necessary for change. The level of tension created by more radical forms of genre appropriation can be very difficult to control; however, it can also be worth the risk. In the situation at UCCS, the NTTF felt the long-term departmental alienation and class divide so strongly that the rhetorical intent of the genre appropriation was to produce such a degree of tension that it could no longer be ignored by the TTF. The NTTF recognized that the support that they sought from TTF would only come about once lines of communication existed, even if these lines were created through a forced response to a high-stakes situation like a program review.

While all activism entails some risk, not all genre appropriation needs to be as radical as a program report. The extreme effects of our efforts have led us to believe that the same technique applied to less risky genres, such as committee meeting minutes, department guidelines, and even course descriptions can help to bring NTT issues to the forefront and encourage discussion without such high stakes. For example, at the institution Chris moved to from UCCS, it is common for the term “faculty” to be used only for TTF in university documents. By continuing to refer to NTTF as “faculty” in the minutes of department and Senate meetings, which are uploaded to the university website, he encourages others to uptake this practice without the high stakes associated with more widely distributed documents.

Another potential problem is how to best bring new faculty, particularly NTTF, into existing discussions about advocacy. Chris’ story shows just how quickly a new faculty member can become enmeshed in ongoing department

politics, despite having very little context for these issues and little experience in NTTF advocacy. It is important for all new hires, again, particularly NTTF, to sit down and have frank and open discussions about the ongoing issues in the department. These conversations can be uncomfortable, but bringing new NTTF into these discussions from the start gives them a greater context for their new working environment as well as potentially marshalling another voice in support of NTTF rights. Tension and frustration can only increase if new faculty are left to learn about these issues through decontextualized conversations and department lore.

NTTF and their advocates should also be prepared to have frank discussions with TTF about the issues that surround contingent faculty rights. The forces that keep NTTF in subordinate positions are often institutional and unconscious, not personal and intentional. Certainly some TT faculty will adopt an elitist attitude and actively work against the rights of contingent faculty, but many are simply unaware of how vast the gap between ranks can be or why they should participate in such advocacy. For example, one of the Rhetoric and Writing TTF in our department once said that she didn't understand how NTTF advocacy was "part of her job." This instance speaks back to our belief that NTT efforts must aim on some level to help TTF imagine a new component of their work: engaged, sustained NTT advocacy. Start with educating the TTF and having internal discussions on why contingent faculty rights can impact an entire department. While this struggle can easily become a battle, the potential consequences can be nearly as serious as the problems that are fixed. Policies change slowly, but anger and resentment can persist for much longer and can hinder future work. Activism is a process that is much easier when everyone is informed and understands what is at stake.

And perhaps most importantly, no matter the circumstances, never stop communicating. Activist tactics are more successful if those involved commit to always continuing the discussion. Most of the anger and tension that made the NTT advocacy in the English department at UCCS less successful was due to a breakdown in the hard-fought lines of communication initially established by the NTTF genre appropriation. It may not be comfortable, and it may not be easy, but the necessary changes in culture that accompany a fair and complete integration of NTTF into the life of any department will always be predicated on sustained communication. The long-term social and political repercussions that come from the negative feelings engendered through silence and assumption can ultimately do just as much harm to the NTTF cause as eschewing activist strategies in the first place.

Our story shows the potential of genre appropriation. For NTTF at UCCS, this type of radical activism accomplished the rhetorical goal of opening virtu-

ally nonexistent lines of communication with TTF, however fraught those lines may have been. For this reason, we believe scholars must identify, theorize, and circulate narratives about rhetorically-informed activism that aims to create discourse among English faculty and encourage and sustain shared focus on NTT issues within English departments. We hope that the successes and failures of our effort can shed some light on options that NTTF have to advance their cause.

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