

CHAPTER 2

DESPAIR IS NOT A STRATEGY

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Threads: Organizing Within and Across Ranks; Local Changes to Workload, Pay, and Working Conditions; Protecting Gains, Telling Cautionary Tales

The meaning of the term *contingency* depends on your position within a university system. When full-time, non-tenure-track faculty members regularly serve on important departmental and university committees, when they enjoy appropriate voting rights and take on administrative positions within and beyond their departments, and when they regularly win university awards and teach the curriculum's foundational courses for thirty years—they are, by no means, “contingent labor.” Nevertheless, this is how instructors have been classified at Louisiana State University. Although they have always officially held one-year contracts, the continuing employment of instructors who passed a rigorous review was never questioned . . . until recently. In the following essay, we will outline

- The stable and functional, if imperfect, employment conditions of instructors in the LSU English department up until 2003;
- The upper administration's backlash against the department's system; and
- On-going efforts to counter this backlash, to create a more equitable system of job security, to improve working conditions, and to lobby for better wages.

We tell this story from two perspectives: that of a former department chair who came to LSU in 1975, and that of a writing program administrator (WPA) who faced the aftermath of the backlash when she came to LSU in 2010. We have joined forces to tell our story and to oppose the university's treatment of instructors as “contingent labor” because despair is not a strategy.¹

1 In order to counter the “rhetoric of despair” that accepts unjust university structures of employment as inevitable, Seth Kahn proposes activism based on an ecological model of systems. Marc Bousquet also argues against despair, but he doubts that low-level managers, like WPAs and department chairs, can effect meaningful change: “Composition as Management Science” (157-85).

HISTORY

From the early 1970s to 2003, the LSU English department cultivated a cadre of well-trained, experienced, full-time, non-tenure-track Instructors. They were the core teachers in both the writing and the general education literature programs; they served on important departmental and university committees; they had full benefits; and they regularly won prestigious teaching awards. Some who had taken on administrative tasks were promoted into the tenure track.

During this thirty-year period, LSU made a concerted effort, first, to achieve the Carnegie Foundation's "Research I" (now changed to "Comprehensive/Doctoral") designation and, second, to reach "Tier I" status in the *U.S. News & World Report* annual rankings.² These efforts did not affect research professors alone; universities are giant webs and, when one filament is touched, all the other parts of the web vibrate. Whereas prior to this effort to raise the university's research profile, professors of English had taught three courses per semester, including composition and general education literature courses, in the late 1970s professorial teaching loads were reduced to two courses per semester. These changes had a double effect: Because of the reduced professorial teaching load, professors (especially new hires) developed active research agendas, and the prestige of the graduate programs advanced substantially.

Differential work expectations for professors (two units of teaching/two units of research) and instructors (four units of teaching) created the kind of two-tiered faculty structure that is common in large universities throughout the U.S.³ Professorial labor was needed to staff graduate seminars and courses for English majors. Almost no professors have taught in the composition program for years. Thus instructors and graduate students took over the major responsibility for teaching the skills of reading, writing and research that are fundamental to undergraduate education.

Another change during these years had unexpected consequences for the instructor rank. Prior to the effort to elevate LSU's standing in high-profile rankings of universities, the English department had to wage war every semester to keep class size in writing courses at acceptable levels. In the late 1990s, however, the upper administration decided that one way to impress the rankers, who awarded points to institutions whose undergraduates were enrolled in at least one small class among their total schedule of courses, was to allow no more than nineteen students in sections of first-year writing. Of course, the department

2 Frank Donoghue critiques the quest for higher rankings in the *U.S. News and World Report* list of best colleges: "Prestige and Prestige Envy" (111-37).

3 David Bartholomae analyzes the problems that a two-tiered teaching and research faculty creates.

rejoiced that instructors, who teach three sections of writing and one section of introductory literature (capped at forty) every semester, would be able to give students the individual attention required for effective instruction in writing. But the new cap also required the English department to hire many more instructors. The cadre of instructors swelled to exceed the size of the professorial ranks—more than seventy instructors, fewer than fifty professors.

Through all these changes, the LSU English department continued to recognize the vital contribution of instructors. If not all the professorial faculty, at least the departmental administrators have always known that the power the English department wields within the larger university depends not only on the publication record of its productive professors, but also on the size of the writing program and the high standard of instructor teaching. During these years, however, a division existed between the English department's recognition of instructors and the official employment status of instructors as contingent labor hired annually.

Unlike large metropolitan centers like New York City or Los Angeles, Baton Rouge, Louisiana does not have a large pool of M.A.s or Ph.D.s looking for work. So even if the LSU English department had tried, it could never have depended on adjunct labor to staff the writing program, the common practice in many universities across the country. Except for last-minute appointments and a few instructors who, for personal reasons, preferred permanent part-time status, all English instructors are full-time employees. Strong leadership in the writing program, supported by the professorial faculty of the English department, has always insisted on hiring full-time instructors, who must participate in a graded series of extensive teaching reviews: normative evaluations in the first and third year, and a summative evaluation in the sixth year. Instructors who passed the rigorous sixth-year review were awarded the departmentally designated rank of "Career Instructor," which insured their continuous employment so long as there were writing courses to teach. This is the stable, functional, if imperfect, system⁴ that the English department was able to sustain through the period of LSU's evolution toward "Comprehensive/Doctoral" and "Tier I" status.

University policy, however, still required that instructors be hired on one-year contracts, which must be "continued" every year. Some of these award-winning instructors—who serve as rectors for residential colleges, as writing program administrators, as leaders in service-learning courses, etc.—have taught at LSU for thirty or more years. Nevertheless, the university still classified them as contingent labor. Every year they were "continued," the official term for "re-hired," and they could be "released," the official term for "fired," with one-year's

4 Marc Bousquet emphasizes that the turn toward hiring full-time non-tenure-track teachers, although not as abusive as the dependence on adjuncts, is neither new nor ideal (170-72).

notice (for those instructors who had worked at LSU for three years or more). At the turn of the millennium, the English department led an effort to develop a professional career path with appropriate job security for instructors. With the support of the mathematics department, we crafted a proposal to bring university employment procedures in line with departmental recognition of the value of instructor labor. The proposal would have created three-year rolling contracts for all instructors who had passed their sixth-year review. Although the proposal had the support of the Faculty Senate, the upper administration flatly rejected it. Deans of powerful colleges insisted that they needed the freedom to “release” instructors, regardless of years and quality of service—which is precisely what they did in 2003 (making hollow promises to create more tenure-track lines) and in 2008 (insisting that budget cuts demanded harsh measures).⁵

Although the English department failed in its effort to convert accepted practice (indefinitely “continuing” instructors with demonstrated records of excellence) into contractual employment security (three-year rolling contracts), no changes disrupted long-standing departmental practice until 2003. This year marks the university backlash against the English department system of regular reviews and promotion to “Career Instructor”—a backlash impelled by a change in administrative philosophy. In search of higher rankings, a stronger research profile, and more grant dollars, LSU hired a series of upper administrators to create and implement a “Flagship Agenda.” But instead of dedicating the time and resources required to implement the agenda’s lofty goals for research, education, and community engagement, these administrators announced initiatives, stayed a few years, then moved on to higher paying positions elsewhere.⁶ One of these initiatives, imposed in 2003, was devastating. It required the English department to “release” forty-five (out of a total of seventy-two) or 62.5 percent of the instructors, with the promise of new professorial budget lines, plus stipends for additional graduate students.

What impelled this backlash against long-standing instructor employment practices? Whereas one set of upper administrators had sought to advance LSU in the rankings by creating small sections for teaching writing, a new set of upper administrators, alarmed at the size of the instructor rank, sought to advance LSU’s status by converting instructor budget lines to professorial budget lines. With no regard for the exigencies of staffing a writing curriculum that included

5 Cary Nelson exposes administrators’ insistence on the need for “flexibility” as code for the plan to maintain a pool of cheap laborers who can be hired and fired at will as staffing needs change (3-5).

6 Bousquet discusses the proliferation of university administrators since the 1990s, their theories of “continuous reinvention” for improving efficiency, and their frequent moves for career advancement: “The Faculty Organize, but Management Enjoys Solidarity” (90-124).

hundreds of sections of basic composition courses, as well as courses in business and technical communication, the upper administration insisted that resources be reallocated as part of the new “Flagship Agenda.” Soon, however, this set of upper administrators made advantageous career moves: their promises for a much larger professoriate in the English department were never kept, and the department was left with about half of its cadre of instructors, devastated morale, and the task of rethinking how to teach its writing courses.⁷

In order to cope with the fallout from the “releases” (negotiated down from forty-five to thirty-five), the English department decided to do what it could within its power. We formalized our system of regular reviews and instructor ranks into a document, “Instructors: Rights, Responsibilities, Evaluation, and Review,” adopted by the entire faculty in 2007. Our goal was to:

- Base departmental procedures on best practices advocated by the Conference on College Composition and Communication and the Modern Language Association;
- Restate our procedures in the language of the LSU policy statement that governs hiring, review, and promotion of non-tenured faculty;
- Demonstrate the solidarity of the full English department (including all professors) with instructor policy; and
- Prepare a base for continuing to lobby for appropriate job security for Instructors.

In addition to defining the review and promotion procedures, the document opens with a preface explaining the responsibilities and rights of instructors.

Instructors are crucial to the continuity and enhancement of undergraduate instruction in English. They serve as the primary teachers of record for university writing courses, and they teach general education and specialized courses at the 2000 and 3000 level. Thus they constitute a professional cadre of teachers—indeed, the core faculty responsible for writing and introductory literature and language courses. They serve on almost every departmental standing committee (e.g., the Executive Committee) and on many university committees (e.g., Faculty Senate). In addition, they help administer programs both in our department (e.g., Associate Director of University Writing) and in external units (e.g., Rector of

⁷ Much has been written about the development of the American corporate university and its deleterious effects on teaching. For a study that focuses on the link between corporatization and the “casualization” of labor, see Johnson, Kavanagh, and Mattson, editors.

Residential College Programs).

In keeping with their role in departmental decisions, this document outlines instructors' voting rights and committee memberships.

Voting rights:

Instructors will have votes in the following areas:

- Undergraduate curriculum decisions, excluding 4000-level courses.
- Election for a departmental chair. See Election Procedures administered by the Executive Committee.
- Instructor review. The voting faculty on instructor reviews will include instructors who have passed their sixth year review (or who held the internal departmental rank of Instructor III in 10/2003).
- Election for the Instructor Personnel Committee.
- Committee memberships:
 - All departmental standing committees (such as Undergraduate Studies, Community Relations, Readers & Writers, etc.), with the exception of committees governing the graduate program and professorial appointment, review, tenure, and promotion.
 - Appropriate university standing committees and governing bodies, such as the [College of Humanities and Social Sciences] Senate and the Faculty Senate.
 - Instructor Review Panels. Review panels will include instructors who have passed their sixth year review (or who held the internal departmental rank of Instructor III in 10/2003).

This preface serves as both a reminder to all English department faculty members, and an explanation to the wider university community of how crucial instructor labor is to the mission of LSU.

Refusing to surrender to the administrative backlash of 2003, the English department, with the full support of the dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, then petitioned the upper administration to adopt procedures for awarding three-year “rolling” contracts to instructors who pass their sixth-year review. Not only are these procedures congruent with the university policy statement governing non-tenure-track faculty and with the by-laws of the LSU Sys-

tem Board of Supervisors, but also they have a precedent in multi-year contracts awarded to non-tenure-track faculty in one of the university's research centers.

Unfortunately, our petition coincided with the economic downturn of 2008, exacerbated in Louisiana by the repeal of a state income tax. Fueled by conservative ideology and political ambition, a deliberate campaign to contract all state services, including education, has had devastating effects at LSU. At one point, LSU was told to prepare for a *thirty percent* budget cut. A new team of administrators, all of whom have since left LSU, responded to the budget crisis by issuing “release” letters to all instructors university-wide—regardless of years of service or number of teaching awards. Eventually, fourteen foreign language instructors were “released” (read “fired”), and programs in Japanese, Russian, German, etc., were terminated.

Meanwhile, our “revenue neutral” petition for three-year rolling contracts for instructors languished on the desks of three successive provosts. (The cycle of career administrators, who stay for a year or two, then leave, is now complemented by a cycle of interim administrators, who serve for a year or two, then step down.) Because regular university channels were blocked, we moved forward on two fronts: within the department, we implemented strategies for improving instructor morale; outside the department, we formed a faculty activist organization, LSUnited. The following will address both of these fronts.

IMPROVING INSTRUCTOR MORALE

When the new WPA arrived, she met a much-bruised group of teachers. Wary instructors, fearing the worst after the 2003-2005 releases, had now been sent “termination letters.” A number of instructors had resigned; others were visibly angry and discouraged. New strategies needed to be designed and put into place as soon as possible in order to begin to turn morale around. The strategies included:

1. Implementing bottom-up input, rather than top-down leadership;
2. Respecting instructor curriculum design;
3. Streamlining a labor-intensive assessment process;
4. Providing instructors with clear goals, consistent implementation, and open communication; and
5. Advocating for instructors through labor organizing and activism.

IMPLEMENTING GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

The opportunities to change the culture of discouragement within the writing

program and develop more positive and less despairing rhetoric were legion. Most new WPAs know that effecting genuine program change requires patient listening and observing first, before suggesting changes or even soliciting input. Unfortunately, shortly after arriving, the new WPA learned that a new and more rigorous curriculum would be demanded of the first-year writing course if it were to pass a new assessment review. The present course had been based more on personal writing, and the assessment committee made clear it would not pass in its current form. This was the first opportunity to employ the grass-roots approach as a strategy to gain instructor trust, although the message from the review committee had been delivered via a top-down approach. The new WPA convened a new first-year writing course committee that also included a rhetoric and composition professor and a graduate student, but most members were instructors and an instructor chaired the committee. After gathering input from their colleagues and holding several well-attended instructor meetings, the committee came up with a rigorous and exciting first-year writing course. Rather than the WPA taking ownership of the excellent instructor work, the committee itself led the meeting to roll out their new curriculum, answer questions, and explain in detail how the new curriculum might be taught. They brought in examples of papers and assignments. Once the main thrust of the new course had been agreed on (analytical writing), the administration of the writing program developed a course website, gathered materials from instructors, and served as facilitators and web designers in support of the committee and the many instructors who enthusiastically embraced the work of their colleagues. In addition, one holdover assignment from the previous curriculum, which was the only assignment that was researched, analytical and not personal, was expanded and retained as the assessment paper. The strategy here was to avoid changing everything and to give instructors time to develop the other new paper assignments. Although the original mandate had come from the upper administration, the new WPA had asked the instructors to take charge of the implementation of the mandate.

HONORING CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY INSTRUCTORS

In response to the devastating 2003-2005 instructor layoff, the English department had moved the second required writing course to the sophomore year. The thinking was that sophomores have chosen their majors and thus have a disciplinary focus to write about. Furthermore, there are fewer sophomores than freshmen; thus fewer instructors would be needed to teach the new curriculum. When the new WPA arrived, she was charged to “gel” this relatively new course, which was taught by veteran instructors, new hires, and

graduate students: the course lacked a clear identity. Again pursuing a grass-roots strategy, she called for all syllabi for this second-year course and analyzed them. This review revealed that the second required course was in some ways very traditional and argument based. After this discovery, the WPA called another instructor meeting, also well attended. The WPA led a discussion of the argument-based structure evident in syllabi submitted by faculty, articulated this genre and its historical underpinnings, and then asked if faculty wanted to continue what seemed to be a broad-based consensus of what that course should teach. Instructors were enthusiastic, partly because, in spite of the need to change the curriculum for the first writing course to meet the review committee's criteria, the second course could still be taught as it had been in the last few years. Because research had been an element insisted on by the review committee, instructors agreed to add more research to the assigned papers. Otherwise, the main aspects of the course had been developed by individual faculty over time, and the fact that the new WPA was valuing previous practice was important and served to boost morale.

STREAMLINING ASSESSMENT

When the new WPA arrived, the current method of assessment was a vexed issue for the instructors. It required all instructors to spend several intense days grading/ranking all the end-of-semester papers, which were written within an electronic interface. Instructors resisted and resented such a labor-intensive assessment, especially since the additional work was not compensated. In response, the WPA suggested other statistically valid and reliable options for assessment.

Instructors were especially encouraged by the prospect of using random sampling and combining it with a rotation of about one-fourth to one-third of the faculty for each semester assessment. This option also insured that instructors would not have to give up valuable grading time at the end of the semester. To achieve a high level of confidence in the results (95%), it would be necessary to randomly sample four papers from each section; this method resulted in a reduction of the number of hours instructors had to devote to assessment. Instead, teachers gained more time for grading and served on the assessment on rotation. Instructors were ecstatic over the new assessment.

This streamlining, along with the validation of the second-year course, seemed to relieve some of the tension in the program. However, the termination letters still hung over the instructors' heads and no one could convince them that, because of their importance in the university, their jobs were safe. Everyone had either experienced or heard about the 2003-2005 "releases." What would prevent layoffs from decimating their ranks again?

ADVOCATING WITHIN UNIVERSITY CHANNELS

Clearly, the only real solution to the threat of the termination letters would be to have them rescinded. Any lip service toward job security and advocacy could, at best, be seen as the WPA's naiveté and, at worst, increase the cynicism and frustration toward all things and people administrative. More than one instructor had resigned or made plans to retire as soon as possible because of the letters. The dean of the college also addressed the issue and pledged support. At times, the lip service only seemed to increase the anger. The termination letters had been issued to insure maximum legal flexibility in releasing staff during a period of brutal budget cuts. The chances that a new WPA would be able to have them rescinded were nil. Early in that first semester, though, a couple of opportunities for addressing the situation presented themselves.

One such opportunity was a meeting with the interim provost, the dean of the college, the department chair, the WPA, and a handful of instructors teaching in the department's English as a second language program (ESL). The WPA had requested an opportunity to re-introduce the three-year rolling contract petition to this interim provost. In part because of repeated administrative turnovers, this petition had sat on the desks of provosts and interim provosts, although the English department chairs kept resubmitting it. During the meeting, the WPA presented a chart illustrating the large proportion of writing classes taught by instructors. In response, the provost said (off the record and not in writing) that English instructors were too important to be "released." In order to try to ameliorate instructor anxiety, the new WPA communicated to instructors, in small groups and one-on-one, that there had been verbal reassurance at "high levels" of their continuing employment.

At this vulnerable moment, it was important that the WPA advocate for job stability and fair treatment of instructors to the upper administration, but also it was crucial that the WPA communicate that commitment to the instructors themselves. This kind of communication helped build confidence in the brand new WPA, assured instructors that the problem of job security had not been forgotten, and stifled rumors.

A new challenge to job security came early in that same first semester of the new WPA. A senior administrator in the Department of Mathematics attempted to convince the WPA that it was in the students' best interest to turn all required writing courses over to a computerized grading and commenting system, thereby eliminating the need for all but one instructor. The administrator boasted of his having been able to do just that in basic mathematics courses. It was difficult for a new WPA to confront such strong persuasive efforts, while the dean and chair had either not been briefed on the purpose of the meeting or had just failed

to warn the WPA. Since the mathematician did not know the realities of teaching writing, the WPA carefully explained the differences between the programs. Meanwhile the dean's body language revealed his support. Again, the WPA communicated to instructors these advocacy efforts and the dean's apparent support, and teaching all sections of required writing courses with one instructor has not surfaced again.

After a year and a half of receiving termination letters that were renewed each semester, instructors were finally returned to one-year contracts in 2011, and morale improved . . . somewhat. Nevertheless, the 2003-2005 "release" of thirty-five instructors, followed by the termination letters of 2010-2011, had made it abundantly clear that the upper administration considered instructors contingent labor, regardless of years of service and demonstrated excellence in teaching. More than one instructor, even some of the best, announced that they were less inclined to perform departmental service or participate in professional development activities, given their low salaries, the university's failure to award raises for five years, and the lack of job security. New strategies were needed to address the issues of salary and job security.

ADVOCATING BEYOND UNIVERSITY CHANNELS

In 2010, based on a recommendation from a Faculty Senate exploratory committee, a faculty group began to organize a local chapter of the Louisiana Association of Educators (LAE), an affiliate of the NEA. The former chair, the WPA, a few other English professors and instructors saw this effort as a way to address both the salary and contract issues. Although the organizing efforts seemed rather disorganized, a number of English department faculty members signed union cards and began paying dues to the local chapter. Their hope was expressed in the chapter name, "LSUnited." But convincing fellow faculty members, especially instructors, to become card-carrying, dues-paying members of a union proved very difficult.⁸ The annual dues were very high: over \$500/year for professors making salaries in the \$60-100,000 range, and only slightly less for instructors who made around \$30,000 per year. During the first two years of organizing efforts, most members joined primarily because the union gave LSU faculty access to a paid lobbyist. Any meaningful change in funding for the university would require legislative action, and the Louisiana legislature had imposed massive budget cuts on higher education during the economic downturn. Indeed, these budget cuts were the cause of the instructor termination letters.

⁸ Michael Berubé, Stanley Aronowitz, and Marc Bousuet detail the challenges of organizing unions of university teachers—whether graduate teaching assistants, adjuncts, full-time non-tenure-track instructors, or tenure-track professors.

What LAE could provide during this period of vulnerability was a voice for public education in the legislative process.

Nevertheless, high dues impeded recruitment, and repeated requests to LAE and NEA for organizing assistance were ignored or denied. All NEA's resources were focused on union-busting efforts in states like Wisconsin, and LAE was busy fighting its own battles to protect the K-12 teachers threatened by legislation to reduce pensions, to award state funding to private academies, and to impose arbitrary teacher performance reviews. It soon became apparent that the interests of LAE and university faculty were not always congruent, and that LSU faculty did not yet have the political will to unionize. So LSUnited disaffiliated from the union, and redefined itself as a faculty advocacy group.

Although disaffiliation might have appeared to be a step backwards, it had the opposite effect. It allowed the active members of LSUnited to concentrate on what mattered most to members: securing faculty raises after five dry years, protecting and improving retirement benefits, and lobbying for appropriate job security for instructors. LSUnited also found a forum for bringing these issues to the attention of not only the university's upper administration, but also the governing board of the entire LSU system and the public. Monthly LSU System Board of Supervisors meetings include a period for public comment during which representatives from the local press are present. Using these public comment periods as a platform, LSUnited mounted a consistent campaign of speakers before the Board of Supervisors: activists from LSUnited; award-winning "Distinguished Research Masters" and chaired professors; veteran instructors; and young professors who had decided to take jobs elsewhere. Month after month, these speakers shocked board members with their frank, but always professional, testimony. Local press began to publish sound bites from speakers' prepared remarks, and word spread among the faculty that someone was speaking publicly about salaries and appropriate job security. Board members themselves seemed embarrassed, assuring the speakers at the end of every public comment period, "Please don't think you are being ignored. We hear what you are saying and we're sympathetic." Such comments, of course, allowed LSUnited to return at the next meeting with demands for actions to match sympathetic words.

At his first LSU Board meeting, the new incoming chancellor and system president heard these testimonials. In his first open meeting with faculty, he alluded to our concerns. Then, in his first weeks on the job as chancellor and system president, he announced 4 percent raises. What role LSUnited's campaign of lobbying the board played in securing the long overdue raises is indeterminable, but the faculty certainly saw and appreciated that LSUnited was speaking for them. Likewise, there were hopeful signs that LSUnited's persistent lobbying

convinced the provost to consider the petition, submitted four years earlier, for three-year rolling contracts for instructors. At a Faculty Senate meeting in the fall of 2013, the provost stated, “I don’t see any reason why we can’t get this done this year.” Soon thereafter, the Office of Human Resource Management convened discussions with selected instructors.

Finally in 2014, the university adopted a new instructor policy that included first and third-year reviews, three-year contracts awarded to instructors who pass a rigorous sixth-year review, and the new rank of “Senior Instructor” (with a step-raise) awarded to instructors who have served continuously for twelve years. The next year, all instructors received salary adjustments based on merit and years of service. Although the new policy does not include “three-year rolling contracts,” and although the raises are insufficient to compensate for years of neglect, we count these gains as a modest victory. Our writing program survived the backlash against its previous system of instructor employment, review, and promotion, and it has now added a modicum of appropriate job security to that imperfect but workable system.

There is, of course, more work to be done: recent letters announcing the instructor raises state that, in addition to annual performance reviews and student evaluations, raises will be contingent on “your rate of student success as measured by the percentage of students receiving a D, F, or withdrawing from your course.” The upper administration is now focused on student retention (on which tuition dollars depend), and, yet again, vulnerable instructor labor has become the site of a wrong-headed response to a perceived crisis.

CONCLUSION

Our story demonstrates that despair is not a strategy—even though strategies must change over time as obstacle after obstacle surfaces. For many years, LSU had a stable cohort of respected instructors with a measure of job security. Despite repeated attempts to dismantle this functional system of instructor review and employment, the WPA and the department chair, with the support of the entire English department, have projected a firm belief in the value of instructor expertise and advocated publicly for fair compensation and appropriate job security. Respect and advocacy have helped restore morale, returned stability to the core writing faculty, and made substantial progress toward concrete improvements in employment conditions.

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