

3 A History of Writing Program Administration

THE BEGINNINGS

Writing program administration has from the beginning been tied to freshman (or first-year) composition, a peculiarly American institution: there was until very recently no comparable course in universities based on the European model.¹ To understand the history of writing program administration and to understand the politics still surrounding the position of WPA, one must go back to the beginnings of this unique course, since the institutional structures that gave birth to the course and the attitudes towards it are still very much with us today. And as Robert Connors reminds us, by

studying the ways in which composition was formed both by choice and by necessity, we learn who we are, come to understand more clearly the power we hold and constraints upon us. Through a better understanding of how we as teachers and scholars came to exist, we can perhaps understand more clearly the complex forces that make up our special discipline and work more successfully within these forces. (“Historical Inquiry” 158)

The essays in James J. Murphy’s *A Short History of Writing Instruction* demonstrate that although instruction in the composition of discourse has been a part of instruction in rhetoric in the West since 500 BCE, it was not until the nineteenth century that universities began to shift from a focus on oral to written production, and from a focus on reading, speaking, and translating the classical languages to a focus on English as the language of instruction and learning. Writing went

from being a script for oral production to a skill thought necessary for professional life in an increasingly technological economy with a rising middle class. Although they deal with writing program administration only tangentially, several historians of the field have traced the events and influences that led to the creation of a separate course, usually within an English department. These histories, along with others that trace the development of faculty hiring patterns and of current-traditional rhetoric, help to explain the professional context in which many WPAs still operate. As Connors says, “We continue to inhabit a professional world directly shaped by our history” (“Historical Inquiry” 160).

In writing this brief history of writing program administration, I have been guided by the work of Robert Connors, as articulated in three of his articles: “Writing the History of Our Discipline,” “Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology,” and “Historical Inquiry in Composition Studies.” Although the purpose of this volume is to serve as a reference and therefore summarize existing research, there is as yet no comprehensive history of writing program administration to summarize. Therefore I have felt it necessary to add original material as necessary to fill in some of the gaps. In this, as in the choice of material to use as I mapped out the history, I have followed a fairly traditional historical model (as did Connors), relying on published sources. I recognize that the alternative model of historical research, based on the model of the *Annales* School in France, would also examine memoranda, journals, assignments, minutes of university committees, handouts, and student papers. Some general work has been done in this area (for example, Wozniack, Masters), but a more comprehensive history of writing program administration will depend on many more such studies that include administrative work as part or all of the focus. The discipline of history itself continues to grapple with the notion of history and objectivity, noting the postmodern fact that no history is entirely objective (Novick); I therefore present this narrative as a sketch, a first attempt for others to fill in or correct as needed.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS AND COMPOSITION

At their beginnings, American colleges (there were no universities) such as Harvard were private, sectarian,² undergraduate affairs of at most a few hundred students; their mission was to prepare an elite

group of young men for the Protestant ministry, teaching, or public life. If one wanted a doctorate, one had to go to Europe, usually to a German university. There were no separate departments; faculty often taught multiple subjects within the classical curriculum. The administrative structure usually consisted of a board of trustees (made up of clergymen), a president, and the faculty; as Connors notes, “very few colleges were so large that all administration could not be carried out personally” (“Rhetoric in the Modern University: The Creation of an Underclass” 56), usually by the president. The administrative model was that of the family, with the president as the *paterfamilias*, in charge of almost every detail of college life. For example, John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister and President of Princeton University during the period of the American Revolution, served as president and principal orator of the college, and in addition “was the chairman of the Philosophy Department, of the History Department, and of what today we would call the English Department, and gave sermons in the college chapel every Sunday. In addition, he tutored students in French and Hebrew” (Herman 144).

All this changed after the Civil War. Responding to the growing influence of science and technology in the late nineteenth century, American universities changed radically in just one generation: they did away with the classical curriculum in favor of an elective system, developed disciplinary specialties and departments, and focused on developing students for an expanding number of professions. They also grew larger and more complex, requiring more oversight and therefore more administrators (between 1890 and 1910 enrollments almost doubled, and by 1920 had almost doubled again; see Connors, “Rhetoric in the Modern University” 80–81; Cremin 545; Veysey 4). To meet the demand for trained elementary and secondary school teachers, normal schools opened to provide teacher training. In 1839 there was a grand total of three students enrolled in one normal school; by 1875 there were 22,000 students in 82 different institutions (Harper 80). In part because of the ongoing influence of those in the abolitionist movement after the Civil War, colleges were founded for African Americans to open higher education to a group that had (by law in many states) been denied any education at all. Although there were some colleges for women before the Civil War, the number of these increased dramatically as the women’s suffrage movement (which grew out of the abolitionist movement) pushed for women’s rights. The Morrill Act

of 1862 established public Land Grant Universities that emphasized applied arts such as engineering, agriculture, and home economics. These institutions were specifically aimed at those who had heretofore not been able to afford a college education, those the Act referred to as “the industrial classes.” As Robert Connors notes in *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, this brought a new population of students to American higher education. “From the province of a small group of elite students, college education became, during this time, much more available to the masses. The colleges suddenly found themselves with students who needed to be taught to write, who needed to be taught correctness in writing, who needed to know forms, and who could be run through the system in great numbers. Composition-rhetoric after the Civil War evolved to meet these needs” (9). The course we now know as freshman composition became an almost universal requirement very quickly, located by historical accident in new disciplinary units called English Departments.

William Riley Parker’s classic “Where Do English Departments Come From?,” an essay based on the talk he gave at a meeting of the Association of Departments of English (an organization for English Department chairs), helps in part to explain why the relationship between literature and composition has been and still remains uneasy. Parker uses a domestic metaphor to explain the formation of these disciplinary units in the late 1800s as a product of the marriage between oratory (eldest daughter of rhetoric) and philology (a field based on the German tradition of scientific inquiry, gradually superseded by linguistics). The marriage was unhappy and brief—oratory broke away to form departments of speech, and philology, morphing into linguistics, either struck out on its own as well or formed a happy alliance with anthropology. (The Speech Association of America was formed in 1914, the Linguistic Society of America in 1924.) English departments were left with a focus on literature, allying themselves with language departments in that regard and with them forming the Modern Language Association in 1883, to distinguish these languages from those studied in the classical curriculum.

How did it happen that composition became part of English? As Parker points out, there was no particular reason that the teaching of writing should have been entrusted to teachers of English language and literature; teaching language meant teaching it historically and comparatively, not teaching students how to write. But during the last

quarter of the nineteenth century university enrollments doubled. “So long as there had been a narrow, prescribed curriculum and not too many students, departments of instruction had little or no administrative significance”; it was not until the 1890s that “departments became important administrative units, pigeonholes into which one dropped all the elements of a rapidly expanding curriculum” and college officials began to delegate to those units such tasks as deciding on issues of personnel and curriculum (348). Perhaps inevitably, departments became ambitious and competitive for resources; English began to eye unoccupied territory, including writing, for acquisition. In 1888 the “Committee of Ten” of the National Education Association recommended that literature and written composition be a unified high school course, and college entrance exams thereafter involved writing about literature. Composition became identified as part of something called English, a department which itself was, in Parker’s words “the catchall for the work of teachers of extremely diverse interests and training, united theoretically but not actually by their common use of the mother tongue,” part of a discipline that has never really defined itself (348). Speaking as the chair of an English department himself, Parker stated that “the history of our profession inspires in me very little respect for departments of English; their story is one of acquisitiveness, expediency, and incredible stupidity. I care a lot about liberal education, and I care a lot about the study of literature in English, but it seems to me that English departments have cared much less about liberal education and their own integrity than they have about their administrative power and prosperity” (350). Part of that prosperity involved and still involves teaching composition, the cash cow of most English departments. By gaining control of the teaching of writing, English departments gained control of the only universally required course, and therefore large enrollments, making it one of the biggest (and in some cases most powerful) departments in the university.

THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC AND THE NEW EMPHASIS ON ENGLISH

The history of rhetoric in American colleges, both within and outside of English departments, is also important background for understanding the history of writing program administration. This history also helps to explain why rhetoric was devalued and is still not particularly

well understood in English departments, the academic home of many WPAs, and how what has become known as “current-traditional” rhetoric (first so named by Richard Young) developed and became so firmly established that it is still alive in some corners of academe.

The first book-length historical study involving rhetoric, Albert Kitzhaber’s 1953 doctoral dissertation (*Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850–1900*), was not published until 1990, after circulating for years among scholars on microfilm and dog-eared photocopy. As John Gage details in the introduction to the book, it remains one of the most influential historical studies of the field. Kitzhaber gives a clear picture of how freshman composition began at Harvard and then spread throughout the country in the last half of the nineteenth century, thus creating a need for more persons to oversee the course. Prior to the Civil War, instruction in American universities was largely based on memorization and recitation, a pedagogical method designed to strengthen memory (and therefore useful to future clergyman); the student often memorized sections of a textbook and recited them aloud to his teacher (2). The teacher was more often than not a tutor, someone on the lowest rung of the academic ladder, and the teaching more often than not perfunctory (31). The purpose of education was to strengthen moral character through mental discipline, not to supply or create useful knowledge.

Kitzhaber points out that Charles W. Eliot is a key figure in the changes that took place at Harvard after 1869, changes that became the model for other institutions across the country (33). Eliot had himself studied in Germany, where many Americans went for doctoral study, and was a powerful force in establishing an elective system that encouraged specialization, introduced science into the curriculum, did away with recitation and substituted lectures, and most important for the history of language studies, raised the status of the modern languages, especially English, in place of the Greek and Latin of the classical curriculum. It was also during Eliot’s presidency that entrance examinations began to be required, setting a precedent for similar exams at other institutions (and for WPA work to be forever intertwined with assessment). At first these examinations consisted of reading aloud (34), but soon concern for the written as well as the spoken word became apparent; by 1872 the Harvard catalog stated that correct spelling, punctuation, expression, and legible handwriting were expected of all applicants, and by 1873 a short composition

(based on selections from English literature) was required (35). One of the reasons for the entrance requirement in English was to relegate the “mechanical” skills of writing to the preparatory schools, nearly all of which were still private,³ so that the university could follow the German university model and devote itself to research. But of course, the students of yesteryear, like their counterparts today, did not always arrive at the university knowing how to write in the ways that their professors required. Mary Trachsel provides a full history of this first of many such exams in *Institutionalizing Literacy: The Historical Role of College Entrance Examinations in English*.

As James Berlin documents it in *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*, the situation came to a head in 1891. The Harvard Board of Overseers appointed a committee of outside representatives from the professional world, who concluded that the preparatory schools were failing in their job and declared that teaching students how to write was not the college’s concern—the lower schools must do a better job. The reports generated by the committee (the Harvard Reports of 1895 and 1897) were widely publicized, generating a series of “Why Johnny Can’t Write” newspaper and magazine articles: “The larger effects of the Harvard Reports were unfortunate. Knowing nothing about writing instruction, the committee members focused on the most obvious features of the essays they read, the errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and even handwriting. They thus gave support to the view that has haunted writing classes: learning to write is learning matters of superficial correctness” (61). First year composition was born under the shadow of remediation and a focus on correctness, a heritage that can create difficulties for present-day writing program administrators.

The growth of first-year composition out of and then away from rhetoric is also documented by John Brereton in *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925: A Documentary History*. True to its title, this book reprints a number of original documents from the first composition program at Harvard and from subsequent programs at other institutions, as well as excerpts from early textbooks and various booklets and leaflets that instruct students about how to write essays and exams. For President Eliot, English was to be the modern equivalent of the classics, preparing students for citizenship and productive work in American democracy (9). To help carry out this new emphasis on English, Eliot had hired Adams

Sherman Hill, a newspaperman and lawyer, in 1872, making him Boylston Professor of Rhetoric in 1876. Hill was the force behind the first placement examination in English composition, forcing all preparatory schools to change their curricula to accommodate Harvard.⁴ With the rise of discrete courses within particular disciplines, writing ceased to be a part of all classes across the curriculum (as David Russell has shown), and became confined to one course, a course that was gradually pushed down to the freshman year. As mentioned earlier, Harvard-trained students left to take teaching positions at other institutions, and other colleges began to develop a similar required course. John Michael Wozniak has traced the spread of first-year composition (as well as the accompanying transformation of traditional rhetoric into modern composition) by examining textbook adoptions at Eastern colleges. By 1900 the course was required nearly universally (Brereton *Origins* 13).⁵

Hill's influential text, *Principles of Rhetoric* (1878), took the stance that rhetoric was an art, not a science (Hill 321). Brereton argues that this was to be a devastating stance in an institution increasingly devoted to the scientific paradigm of research: "To argue that rhetoric was not a science, not a way of knowing, was to consign it to training, to an introductory level of college, to pedagogy. If it was an art, its instruction depended on the skill of the teacher, not on a knowledge base build up by concentrated study, by research" (*Origins* 10). Harvard's composition program depended on teachers, not scholars; it never developed a graduate program, after the fashion of other disciplines in the newly created research institutions, and did not develop the research that might have grounded the undergraduate program theoretically. The program, which had started with a group of talented faculty Brereton characterizes as true academic stars, began to lose its credibility even with the school's own faculty. And as Brereton points out, colleges have an unspoken rule: You are what you teach. "Working with first-year students is a job for a teacher, not a scholar. And of course since even its proponents argued it was an art, not a science, the notion grew that just about anyone could teach it, and before long just about anyone did. Even before teaching assistants were common, teaching composition was an entry level job, one to leave behind after acquiring seniority" (18). Rhetoric became the province of departments of speech or communication, where research was being done, not to be joined again to written composition until Edward P. J. Cor-

bett published *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* in 1965. The English department developed a system which prevails today: “professors teaching advanced literature courses, and instructors, part timers, and graduate students teaching composition. By 1910, composition had become almost totally apprentice work, and responsibility for its oversight became the province not of a scholar or curriculum expert but an administrator” (21), a bureaucratic functionary.

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPOSITION UNDERCLASS

How composition teachers became an underclass in English departments is further detailed by Robert Connors (“Rhetoric in the Modern University”). The German research university, which had no undergraduate component, was the most advanced institution of its kind during the nineteenth century, attracting students from all over the world. Between 1815 and 1915 more than 10,000 Americans attended German universities (58); many of these, like Eliot, brought back not only new knowledge, but also a passionate enthusiasm for the research institution as a scholarly ideal, devoted to learning for learning’s sake via empirical scientific investigation. Following Harvard’s lead, American institutions began to be reorganized along the German model, with parallel specialties beginning to develop. But although there was a rich tradition of German research in the sciences and social sciences, there was no intellectual tradition of rhetoric in German universities—Americans going to Germany for doctorates came back as chemists, social scientists, mathematicians, psychologists, philologists, but not rhetoricians (62). As Connors notes,

[i]n any bureaucracy, self-reproduction is necessary for institutional success and longevity. At this self-reproduction, the newly formed departments, including English, proved proficient. New graduate schools were founded in almost every year during the 1870s and 1880s, and soon new native PhDs were being sent into the world, charged by their teachers to be fruitful and multiply. The doctorate provided a convenient licensing structure for increasingly competitive graduate schools, and gradually, between 1880 and 1900, the PhD came to be seen as a *sine qua non*

for prospective university (and even college) teachers.

It was this demand for doctorates that truly spelled the end for rhetoric as a discipline [. . .].
 (“Rhetoric in the Modern University” 63)

As early as the 1890s, composition began to be relegated to those Connors calls the “hapless bottom feeders”: graduate students and instructors (72). These latter were usually in their last year of doctoral study; an instructorship was where a young PhD could expect to get started in order to rise through the ranks, a sort of apprenticeship system. These entry-level positions were the only ones available. But the research such students had been trained to do did not prepare them to teach composition, and new instructors were often assigned three, four, or five sections of composition per semester (sometimes when they were trying to finish their dissertations). It is no wonder, then, that these instructors came to hate teaching composition (73). With a few exceptions, “English departments decreed that literature teaching—the serious intellectual occupation of the discipline—would get the rewards. In fact, literature itself came to *be* the reward; a long apprenticeship in composition would be rewarded with literature teaching once promotion came” (Brereton, *Origins* 21–22). Further, a disproportionate number of these apprentice teachers were women. Of the limited opportunities for women to do graduate work at this time, most were in the humanities, especially in English. But academe was very much a male preserve. Women who entered the profession found it hard to rise above an entry-level position (77); they never reached the promised reward of teaching literature.

THE PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULA OF EARLY COMPOSITION COURSES

Because of the fact that composition was “apprentice work,” the pedagogy developed accordingly into a formulaic approach that untrained (and usually unmotivated) teachers could take on immediately. Although determining prevailing pedagogy at any point in history involves some speculation (since teaching is an isolated and individual activity), we do have some reports that give us an indication of how the first composition courses at Harvard were taught. Hill himself seems

to have been a somewhat ineffectual teacher, at least initially; Rollo Brown, in his biography of LeBaron Russell Briggs (one of the faculty Eliot hired in the early 1880s to assist Hill and who became Dean of the College) reports that at first Hill

had no sense of discipline—as the word is used pedagogically—and the students, carrying on the easy traditions of a course that had been under the direction of young men who taught transiently, were not inclined to look upon his work with overmuch seriousness. In truth, they sometimes hummed pleasant academic melodies while he read a man's theme in the classroom. (51)

However, he persisted, and by the early 1880s Eliot hired colleagues to assist him: Barrett Wendell, W. B. Shubrick Clymer, and Briggs. The pedagogy by this point seems to have been adversarial, “with the teacher as a stern taskmaster skilled in rooting out falsehood and cant and the student in fear of the teacher's scorn” (Brereton *Origins* 19). Wendell in particular seems to have been a quirky individual and teacher, as detailed by Wallace Douglas in his essay “Barrett Wendell,” affecting what his students called “eccentricities of voice and manner” (8).

One mode of instruction was clearly lecture; Barrett Wendell put together a textbook based on his own composition course, *English Composition: Eight Lectures Given at The Lowell Institute* (1891), and subsequently used by others for their courses. The collected lectures take an atomistic approach to teaching writing, focusing on words, sentences, and paragraphs, then on the whole composition in terms of unity, form, coherence, and style (clearness, force, and aesthetic elegance), an approach that may still be found in some modern composition textbooks. Wendell did launch an important pedagogical innovation for the course, the “daily theme,” an exercise evidently based on his own practice of daily writing and designed to help students be more accurate observers of the world around them (R. Brown 57) and one that became a hallmark of first-year composition at Harvard. He also required students to read and criticize each others' themes in class, focusing on the subject of each chapter in his book: first on words, then sentences, then paragraphs, and finally style. Wendell comments that this approach is useful for two reasons: “In categorically criticising

the theme of somebody else, [the student] is compelled at once intelligently to master the theory of the chapter under consideration, and to display his knowledge of it in an orderly way. And if he criticises well—which proves the case rather oftener than one would expect—he greatly lightens the task of the instructor who has finally to criticise the theme in question” (2).

The demand for information about how the “daily theme” composition course at Harvard was run became so great that two of the people teaching it published a book that set forth the methods of the course: Copeland and Rideout’s *Freshman English and Theme Correcting in Harvard College*. The authors state that in 1899–1900 this course was taught in a scale that was evidently larger than most: 620 or so students taught in 19 sections by 11 different instructors, but the scheme could be modified for smaller groups. In the introduction to the book they offer their explanation of the course, that it “might suggest something practical to one who is attempting to attain for himself or to impart to others a simple and adequate prose style” since “this, the habitual use of correct and intelligent English, is what the instructors try to drill into the Freshmen” (2). The point of the class is to train a group of young men, some of whom the authors termed “illiterate” and some of whom were more mature writers, “to the point where they can write English of which they need not be ashamed” (2). The daily themes were key to this objective: Copeland and Rideout are clear that the “first effort of the instructors [. . .] is not to make the daily themes interesting, but to make them correct” (9).

To accomplish the task of writing error-free prose, students were to provide themselves with Prof. Adam Sherman Hill’s revised *Principles of Rhetoric*⁶ as a text, along with an English Composition Card, which gave them a key to the abbreviations for the corrections they were to make on their themes. Just how well faculty actually followed this key in responding to students is cause for speculation. In his biography of Briggs, Rollo Brown states that at a dinner in honor of the great man at the Harvard Club in 1925, a student rose and addressed him:

“We have always wanted to know more about those WWWs, YUUs, and WBZs and the like that you used to put on the outside of our stories. Now that you are through using them, we should like to be let in on the secret. What are they? And what do they mean?” Dean Briggs arose, smiling to the top of his

head, and replied: "They are private symbols I devised for indicating the quality of themes. They don't mean anything except to me!" (91n)

The writing assignments were fortnightly themes (three to six pages) that had to be rewritten or at least revised, daily themes (some of which were translations) of not more than one page (which also had to be revised if "faulty" [3]), and readings from various literary texts as well as from Hill. Students were also required to attend three lectures or recitations per week, one of which was the "third hour" general meeting of multiple sections (according to Brown, this was added when Professors Hill and Briggs insisted that the class should be upgraded to a three-hour class, and the senior faculty agreed to add it only if it did not require any work outside the classroom [54]), confer with his instructor once a month, memorize 50 lines from a prescribed text, and read "one or two prescribed books, of which he is expected to form an intelligent opinion" (6). There were also mid-term and final examinations, with options for instructors to hold hourly examinations if needed. The authors provide a helpful outline of the course, the first example we have of a document that has become an important part of modern WPA work, the curriculum guide for a multi-section course (see Figure 1).

The impact of this pedagogy seems to have been widespread at the beginning; Rollo Brown tells us that "teachers in hundreds of colleges wanted to know more about this method of helping men to see clearly and write directly. Newspaper editors rejoiced that college men were learning to write straight sentences; and magazines and weeklies discussed the educational value of the 'daily theme' eye" (58). Further, Brown tells us that Wendell and his colleagues "trained men to look at the world with their own eyes, and to write directly and honestly about what they saw, without regard for the traditional ways of looking at things. The men thus trained went all over the country to teach in the colleges and universities, and they carried with the gospel that the world right where one lives is interesting if one will only look and think" (59). The curriculum developed at Harvard by these early faculty lasted from 1875–1910.

But as Brereton documents, the Harvard approach was not without its critics. Many institutions were developing alternatives. The first was simply to set the entrance requirements high and have no writing classes at all; a few colleges (like Princeton) made this alternative

	DAILY THEMES	FOETNIGHTLY THEMES	EXAMINATIONS	READING ¹	MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES
October	Subjects taken from observation of surroundings. Translations once a week. "Third-hour" themes. Special exercises in class.	Oct. 25. Theme I.: "Who I Am, and Why I Came to Harvard." Due rewritten or revised, as all other fortnightly themes, within two weeks.		"King Henry IV," Part I., or "Antony and Cleopatra," or "Twelfth Night."	
November	As in October.	Nov. 8. Theme II.: "How to Make or Do Something." Nov. 22. Theme III.: "Something Learned in a College Course."	An examination, one hour long, at the discretion of the instructor.	Mr. Kipling: "The Jungle Book."	
December	Weekly translations. "Third-hour" themes. Special exercises in class. No restriction as to the subjects of other daily themes.	Dec. 6. Theme IV.: "An Expression of Opinion on some Topic of Interest." Dec. 22. Theme V.: No subject prescribed. A criticism of one of the "required" books recommended.		Thackeray: "Pendennis," or (for those who have read "Pendennis") "Henry Esmond," or "Vanity Fair."	Every week: Two lectures or recitations in each "section" of about thirty men; one meeting of several united sections, with lectures and writing of "third-hour" themes.
January	As in December, with the addition of Invitations, Letters of Acceptance, etc.	Jan. 17. Theme VI.: A Biographical Portrait.	The midyear examination (three hours).		
February	As in December.	Feb. 28. Theme VII.: A Description.		Macaulay: Life of Clive, or Life of Johnson, or Life of Hastings.	Every month: One conference, — an interview, for fifteen minutes, between student and instructor.
March	As in December.	March 14. Theme VIII.: A Description. March 28. Theme IX.: A Narrative.			
April	As in December.	April 11. Theme X.: A Narrative.	An hour examination, at the discretion of the instructor.	George Eliot: "Adam Bede."	
May	As in December.	May 7. Theme XI.: A Brief. May 23. Theme XII.: An Argument.			
June			The final examination (three hours).		

FRESHMAN ENGLISH

INTRODUCTORY

¹ Throughout the year the students read Professor Hill's "Principles of Rhetoric." They also read one book of "The Golden Treasury," and commit to memory fifty lines from the Fourth Book.

Figure 1. "Outline for Freshman English at Harvard, 1899-1900." From C. T. Copeland and H. M. Rideout, *Freshman English and Theme Correcting at Harvard College*. New York: Silver Burdett, 1901 (pp. 4-5).

work for a long time (*Origins* 14). There were also notable exceptions to the Harvard model developed by dedicated individuals, as Susan Kates documents in *Activist Rhetorics and American Higher Education, 1885–1937*. Kates describes the pedagogy at three institutions founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to serve the disenfranchised (middle-class white women at Smith College, African American women at Wilberforce University, and the working classes at Brookwood Labor College) that emphasized the relationship between language and identity, addressed civic issues, and brought community service into the curriculum. But as Brereton documents, what eventually displaced the Harvard system at most institutions was “an eclectic mix of three other approaches: personal writing, writing about literature, and writing about ideas” (*Origins* 15). Personal writing, adapted from Wendell’s daily themes, focused on personal experience; at Michigan, Fred Newton Scott argued for such a curriculum as a way to connect writing to real experience, and Scott’s student Gertrude Buck “wrote articles that provided some of the most sensible rationale for this kind of writing . . . and wrote a text embodying it” (15). The composition course that focuses on literature as a basis for writing actually predated the Harvard approach, invented and popularized by Thomas Lounsbury at Yale—an elective course in literature that had a heavy writing requirement (16). This sort of course became extremely popular, given the fact that English department faculty could draw upon their own expertise in literature. There were many variations of the course, all of which involved “some elements of the old rhetoric course’s emphasis on *belles lettres*, style, and examples drawn from English literature. In the most common type of literature-based course students read a wide variety of English (and later, American) works: poems, some plays, plus a novel or two, and write critical essays about them” (16). A third alternative was what Brereton terms “the idea course,” which became popular after the turn of the century. This course consisted of a close analysis of literary non-fiction essays with the emphasis on the structure of ideas (16). It was first taught by Frank Aydelotte at Indiana in the 1890s; Aydelotte wrote about the course in several national journals (one particularly influential one published in *Educational Review* was entitled “English as Training in Thought”). He also wrote a textbook entitled *College English*, designed to help teachers organize a course combining literature and composition as he had done at Indiana. Although the course did not survive at

Indiana, his textbook seems to have had considerable influence on the curricula of other institutions, in particular Wisconsin and Columbia (Blanchard 111). Brereton states that this course “developed into the most common of all early twentieth-century composition courses, the expository writing course stressing certain key works of serious non-fiction. Students would analyze the prose and sometimes react to its ideas, at other times imitate its structure or style” (*Origins* 17). By 1920,

composition had assumed the shape it would retain for the next half century [. . .]. The half-century from 1875 to 1925 had witnessed an enormous revolution in the relation of composition to students and to other academic subjects, all within the context of a transformation of America higher education. It is not surprising that this period of ferment should have been followed by a period of stasis[. . .]. Composition, like much in the American Curriculum, had become stable, at a point very far away from the rhetoric of the 1850s. (25)

A sort of canon of essays developed for the class, embodied in a rhetoric/reader textbook, sometimes accompanied by a handbook; this approach became identified with what has become known as “current-traditional rhetoric.”

THE TENACITY OF CURRENT-TRADITIONAL RHETORIC⁷

Given the underclass status of composition and the lack of a scholarly tradition to inform the development of a curriculum or scholars to oversee it, it is not surprising that the composition curriculum and its pedagogy became formulaic. The term to describe this approach, “current-traditional rhetoric,” was first proposed by Richard Young in his 1978 essay, “Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention,” borrowing the term from Daniel Fogerty’s *Roots for a New Rhetoric* (and adding a hyphen). As Young describes it, the features of this approach are familiar: “The emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage (syntax, spelling, punctuation) and with style (economy, clarity,

emphasis); the preoccupation with the informal essay and the research paper; and so on” (31). The rise of this approach to teaching composition, which (as Young noted) included teaching the “modes” of discourse (exposition, description, narration, and argument, or EDNA, as Sharon Crowley has termed them in *The Methodical Memory* [101]), was first discussed by Kitzhaber and then chronicled more fully by Robert Connors in “The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse” and in “The Rhetoric of Explanation: Explanatory Rhetoric from 1850 to the Present.” Although an approach focusing on four modes of discourse has waned, as Connors notes, the formulaic and arhetorical nature of current-traditional rhetoric is still alive in many texts and programs. The history of current-traditional rhetoric is therefore important for an understanding of the history of writing program administration.

Connors traces the development of the modes in various textbooks published in the nineteenth century, especially the 1866 textbook *English Composition and Rhetoric* by Scottish logician and educator Alexander Bain. Up until Bain’s text, most American composition textbooks were organized around belletristic kinds of discourse (sermons, treatises, history, orations, etc.). Although the “four modes” had been mentioned in earlier texts, Bain made them the organizing principle of his book. Connors describes briefly how Bain posited three “departments” of the mind—Understanding, Will, and Feelings—and developed the modes around them. The classification scheme was then picked up by John Genung (a Baptist minister with a German PhD who spent his teaching career at Amherst), who published several textbooks, the most influential of which was *Outlines of Rhetoric* published in 1893. (A comprehensive treatment of textbooks from this period may be found in Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States*.) By 1895 the modes were entrenched textbooks and therefore in the classroom. As Connors tells the story, pedagogy based on the modes waxed strong during the enormous changes taking place in rhetorical study during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and only began to wane in the mid twentieth century. Connors notes that the persistence of the modes should be taken as a warning:

For years the fact that this schema did not help students learn to write better was not a concern, and even today the modes are accepted by some teachers

despite their lack of basis in useful reality. Our discipline has been long in knuckling from its eyes the sleep of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the real lesson of the modes is that we need always to be on guard against systems that seem convenient to teachers but that ignore the way writing is actually done. (“Rise” 455)

One of the reasons that the modes “lack a basis in useful reality” is the fact that the scheme is grounded in nineteenth-century theories of psychology (then called “mental philosophy”). William Woods points out in “Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the Teaching of Writing” that these theories were of necessity speculative rather than empirical (21); they were not systems identified with particular theorists, but general assumptions that shaped the thinking of a number of early psychologists, and which influenced Alexander Bain as he developed his composition textbooks. Woods explains that there were two lines of explanation for the way the human mind worked: one theory held that there were innate “faculties” (such as memory or taste) that could explain human thought, feelings, and will. The other held that individual (or “simple”) ideas coming from memory or immediate sensory data were combined according to “principles of association” to form complex ideas and groups of ideas. Woods points out that these two lines of thought were mutually exclusive. “The ‘faculty’ theories did make limited use of the principle of association in their treatment of memory, but the associationists utterly rejected the theory of the faculties of mind, even though they would sometimes use its terminology (the will, the feelings, etc.), as we still do, for the sake of convenience” (21). Bain, as did other progressive thinkers of the 1800s, held with associationist theories.

In “The Intellectual Background of Alexander Bain’s ‘Modes of Discourse,’” Jon Harned explores more fully the question of why Bain focused on the modes as he did, showing how Bain’s approach was grounded in the scientific thought of the day and his contributions to it in his own writings, especially *The Senses and the Intellect*. Bain posited what are essentially two laws: the law of contiguity, when actions or feelings that occur together cohere so that to remember one is to remember the others, and the law of similarity, when actions or feelings revive previous similar actions or feelings (43–44). Bain went on

to apply these laws to rhetoric, positing that various figures of speech appealed to three forms of mental activity: thought, will, and feeling.

It is by means of these three sorts of rhetorical appeals that Bain classifies the modes of discourse. Description, Narration, and Exposition address the Understanding; Persuasion (or Oratory, as he sometimes calls it), and Poetry addresses the Feelings. The conception of Description, Narration, and Exposition as modes of discourse derives from the laws of association, though Bain never says so explicitly. “Description” exercises the associative operation of contiguity in which the world is perceived frozen in time like a still life [. . .]. “Narration”

[. . .] is the perception of contiguity in time, of the world in flux [. . .]. “Exposition” as a form of writing is based on the discovery of similarity, and is linked in Bain’s mind, like the Law of Similarity, with science. (Harned 45–46)

Harned points to one of the reasons that Bain’s taxonomy of discourse became so popular and so lasting. At the time he wrote it, American education was undergoing a transformation—the small liberal arts college was on the decline, and the modern university with its focus on research and on graduate and professional schools was emerging. The modes of discourse were a better fit than the old belletristic forms for this new kind of institution, since they had to do not with aesthetics but with the business of communication, and since they could present themselves as scientific (48). James Berlin, in *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*, also argues that the rise of the modes signals the triumph of the “scientific approach,” one that was not successfully challenged until the mid-twentieth century (62).

This is one reason why, over time, the modes of discourse began to collapse into what Bain thought of as the most “scientific” of them, exposition. In “The Rhetoric of Explanation,” Robert Connors describes more fully this gradual narrowing of the writing curriculum. The beginnings of a movement towards an emphasis on exposition, Connors argues, was Henry Day’s 1850 text *Elements of the Art of Rhetoric* (published in a second edition as *The Art of Discourse*, 1867). Day’s analysis of explanatory discourse presents the first version of the “methods of

exposition” that became so common in later textbooks: narration, description, analysis, exemplification, and comparison and contrast. The popularity of Bain’s *English Composition and Rhetoric* during the latter half of the nineteenth century eclipsed Day’s work, but exposition experienced a revival as a result of an 1893 text written by Fred Newton Scott and Joseph V. Denney, *Paragraph Writing*. For quite some time, separate textbooks had been appearing for each of the four modes; as English and speech began to break apart into separate disciplines, argumentation went with speech. There was a slow rise of a renewed version of Day’s processes of explanation; then, the text Connors calls the “watershed” book appeared: *Expository Writing* by Maurice Garland Fulton. Fulton was not a theoretician, but someone Connors describes as a functionary given to the creation of anthologies who happened to hit it big. In the introduction to his text, Fulton said that he wished to “centre attention upon exposition since it is the kind of writing that is most directly serviceable in practical life” (v). Connors tells us that after 1912 the history of written rhetoric is essentially that of the waxing of expository writing. One of the reasons for its popularity was that it provided a “neatly packaged and easily taught pedagogical tool, a tool of a sort no other mode offered” (64).

It is sad but true to say that there was no real rhetorical theory attached to explanation. The pedagogy worked itself out in textbooks according to laws of the marketplace and cultural stimuli; nothing new or innovative was propounded. It was not until the early 1960s, when composition studies began to shake off the lethargy that had long been associated with its second-class status within English departments, that we again see a vital scholarly tradition in explanatory rhetoric, a tradition that had been missing since the death of Fred Scott. (67)

The fact that associationist and faculty theories of how the mind worked were mutually exclusive did not deter current-traditional pedagogy from using them both. Faculty psychology held that mental processes were a result of innate “faculties” such as memory, will, taste, judgment (the list varied); the theory held that there was an analogy between the powers of the mind and the powers of the body. Exercising a muscle and it grows stronger; ergo, exercise the will, judgment,

taste, memory, etc., and those faculties will become stronger as well. Since these are general faculties, it follows that exercising them will improve performance in other areas: exercising the memory in memorization of grammar rules will help develop a practical grasp of other details, useful in, say, business or law. Memorization of grammar rules is not only an aid to mental discipline, it is a form of self-improvement (Woods 22–23); thus grammar drills became embedded in the teaching of writing not for the sake of improving writing, but for the sake of exercising students' minds and strengthening their moral fiber.

It is not surprising that faculty as well as associationist psychology should have such an influence on writing pedagogy, since it was consonant with the educational theories of the time. In *The American School 1642–1985*, Joel Spring points out that in the early part of the nineteenth century Americans organized a number of different institutions, including schools, for the moral reformation of society; there was a widespread belief in the power of these institutions to perfect the good person, which would then create the good society (47). Nineteenth-century theories of psychology were key to the notion of character malleability through schooling. The educational theories of Benjamin Rush (the “father of American psychiatry” according to Spring) were particularly influential, since he argued that a moral faculty was a natural part of the human mind (48). Faculty psychology in general reflected the growing belief in the early part of the nineteenth century that human beings were perfectible. “This belief provided the intellectual basis for the reform movements in the early part of the nineteenth century that produced modern systems of education and other institutions designed to improve human character” (49).

The guiding standard for many colleges in this regard was the Yale Report of 1828, a report that was a reaction against some of the curricular reforms then being proposed. This report, among other things, sets out the basis for some aspects of college life that persisted up until very recently: the need for *in loco parentis* control of students to protect them from temptation, the resulting necessity for residential schooling, and most importantly, a curriculum that provided a general background of knowledge that provided a balanced exercise of the mental faculties. If any mental faculty were not exercised, the mind would not achieve full perfection (Yale Report, 63–64).

The reasoning used in the report was that balanced mental faculties would result in a balanced charac-

ter. The general studies offered by the college were to provide the exercise necessary for achieving a balance of mental faculties and character [. . .]. Each subject-matter area would contribute to the exercise of a different part of the mind. For instance, the report claims that mathematics would teach demonstrative reasoning, physical sciences would teach inductive reasoning, ancient literature would provide finished models of taste, English reading would teach speaking and writing, philosophy would teach thinking, and rhetoric and oratory would teach the art of speaking. (65)

In The Emergence of the American University, Laurence Veysey points out that this view of education was entirely consonant with the view of colleges founded on a religious base. He quotes from James McCosh's inaugural address as president of Princeton in 1868: "I hold it to be the highest end of a University to *educate*; that is, to draw out and improve the faculties which God has given. Our Creator, no doubt, means all things in our world to be perfect in the end; but he has not made them perfect; he has left room for growth and progress; and it is a task laid on his intelligent creatures to be fellow-workers with him in finishing that work which he has left incomplete" (23).

Thus the entire curriculum of the university in pre-Civil War times was based on the theories of faculty psychology. Although the curriculum changed radically in the late nineteenth century, the Yale Report (and with it, theories of faculty psychology) continued to set the tone for collegiate education well into the twentieth century; it can still be detected in some current conversations about what constitutes a liberal education and what the outcomes of general education programs should be. It is no wonder, then, that the modes of discourse and the focus on grammar in the teaching of writing have enjoyed such long life. With no scholarly tradition and few researchers/scholars to head up writing programs, the teaching of composition remained fixed for generations in formulaic approaches determined by textbook writers.

THE PRE-PROFESSIONAL PERIOD: WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION UP TO WORLD WAR II

Barbara L'Eplattenier argues that two factors argue for the pre-1940s existence of the work, if not the title, of writing program administrators: "First is the sheer size of Freshman or Introductory Composition at most institutions and the ways these immense programs were organized; second is recent historical work about women, historical work that has tangentially uncovered women working as writing program administrators within First-Year Composition programs" ("Finding" 133).

Let us first consider size. Although the growing size of the student body during the period before World War II was not nearly at the rate that it would be after the G.I. Bill, the increases were still considerable. As John Heyda notes, in 1870 there were 52,000 students enrolled in all institutions of higher education in the United States. A decade later the figure had risen by 131 percent to 116,000. During the 1880s it rose another 35 percent, in the 1890s by 50 percent, in the first decade of the twentieth century by 68 percent, and by 1930 to 1,101,000 ("Industrial-Strength Composition" 251). Although the depression of the 1930s slowed growth for a time, by 1940 nationwide totals had risen to 1,494,000. As enrollments soared, universities had to develop institutional structures to manage them, especially since the size of the faculty did not increase proportionately.⁸

During this period, writing program administration was, to use David Schwalm's distinction (see Chapter 2), a task rather than a position. Because there were not yet professional organizations for WPAs, the history of writing program administration during the period from the beginning of first-year composition up to World War II is necessarily a history of individuals assigned to that task in individual programs. We have few such histories; as Joseph V. Denney wrote in 1897, "composition work is in theory the business of everybody and in reality the business of nobody" (6). However, Barbara L'Eplattenier argues that the administrative histories we do have "demonstrate that the work of writing program administration has existed as long as there have been institutions offering writing courses" ("Finding" 136). Both Charles Pain (*The Resistant Writer: Rhetoric as Immunity, 1850 to the Present*) and Randall Popkin ("Edwin Hopkins and the Costly Labor of Composition Teaching") argue for a biographical approach to the early his-

tory of composition, stating that broad ideological studies have limited usefulness; we should also be looking at the relationship between a person's life and his or her pedagogy and professional contributions. Such an "historical case study" approach seems particularly useful in considering the early history of writing program administration. In reviewing these individual histories, however, it is important to avoid what historians refer to as "presentism," which Hunt (in the online version of the American Historical Association's newsletter) defines as "the tendency to interpret the past in present terms." It is important to keep in mind the social and historical context in which these persons worked, and that our own views of students and of composition were probably not their views, even though some of the administrative work they carried out was similar.

In the period before World War I there are a few rhetoricians whose work has been studied in some detail; Kitzhaber lists these as "The Big Four": Adams Sherman Hill and Barrett Wendell at Harvard, John Franklin Genung at Amherst, and Fred Newton Scott at the University of Michigan (59–73). All were teachers of writing and authors of influential textbooks, but Kitzhaber states that only Scott was an original thinker; because he also chaired a separate department of rhetoric, we may also think of him as a writing program administrator. Scott's contributions are discussed in Kitzhaber's *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850–1900* (and Berlin, following Kitzhaber, in *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*), Brereton's *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925*, and, most fully, in a series of articles by Donald Stewart and in *The Life and Legacy of Fred Newton Scott* by Donald and Patricia Stewart. Scott spent his entire career, both as a student and as a faculty member, at Michigan: he received his BA in 1884, his MA in 1888, his PhD in 1889, and was a faculty member from 1889 until he retired in 1927 (Kitzhaber 70). His interest in rhetoric was keen; in fact, Kitzhaber notes that even though the term "rhetoric" was out of favor, he insisted on being known by the title "Professor of Rhetoric" rather than of English (70). Scott is particularly interesting because he was an exception to the rule of non-scholarly writing program administration in his time.

Scott was evidently an incredibly energetic, even charismatic leader on the national level: he served at one time or another as the President of the Modern Language Association, as President of the National Council of Teachers of English, as President of the North Central As-

sociation of Colleges and Secondary schools, and as President of the American Association of Journalism Teachers (Stewart “Rediscovering Fred Newton Scott”). His leadership in his own institution was also strong; in 1903, apparently because of his request, the university set up a separate Department of Rhetoric, with Scott himself at the helm. This department included creative writing and journalism, courses in the fundamental principles of rhetoric and criticism, courses designed for students who were preparing to teach, and courses to give students practice with the leading types of prose composition. As Stewart and Stewart demonstrate, the description of the courses offered during its first year demonstrate that this was a total program, balancing theory and practice, endorsing a generous definition of rhetoric that included historical, theoretical, and practical work (41), quite different from the curriculum at Harvard. Perhaps most important, the department developed a graduate program in rhetoric, producing some distinguished graduates (such as Gertrude Buck) who went on to leadership roles at other institutions.

In “A Model for Our Time: Fred Newton Scott’s Rhetoric Program at Michigan,” Stewart defines Scott as a model in terms of his expansive notion of rhetoric. Although he does not go as far as Berlin in characterizing him as an early social constructionist, Stewart does detail Scott’s insistence on rhetoric in a social context. Both Stewart and Berlin agree that “Scott was shaping an alternative to the dominant current-traditional rhetoric of the time” (Stewart “Model” 43). In collaboration with Joseph V. Denney and with his own former student Gertrude Buck, Scott wrote a number of textbooks on rhetoric that gave teachers alternatives to the dominant pedagogical approach of the time and for twenty years edited a series of research publications (under the general heading of *Contributions to Rhetorical Theory*) that gave his graduate students an outlet for their work with him (Kitzhaber 71–72). As many writing program administrators do today, he worked to establish good relationships with the preparatory schools in Michigan:

At Harvard, where secondary school English was looked on with something not far from contempt, teachers of English in the schools were blamed for all the linguistic shortcomings of entering freshmen. Scott took a different approach. He tried to reduce the gap between the high school teacher and the col-

lege teacher, to show that both had essentially the same problems. For years he labored to bring about cooperation and understanding for the benefit of both groups. He was in thorough agreement with the plan that had established a pyramidal educational structure in Michigan, with the elementary schools at the base and the university at the apex, each level having responsibilities toward the others. He called it the “organic” plan, as opposed to the “feudal plan” followed by Harvard. (Kitzhaber 72)

Unfortunately, Scott’s model of writing instruction and also of writing program administration did not prevail during this period. Stewart details this story of Scott and his program in “Two Model Teachers and the Harvardization of English Departments.” In this essay Stewart describes the Harvard approach as embodied by Francis Child, Harvard’s fourth Boylston Professor of Rhetoric. During the years he held that title, Child had complained bitterly about the years he had wasted correcting freshman themes. Stewart states that he was “absorbed in his own research. The kind of contact with students that rhetoric requires could only have irritated him. In fact, Albert Bushnell Hart wrote that ‘Francis Child used to say with a disarming twinkle that the university would never be perfect until we got rid of all the students’ ” (qtd. in Stewart, 120). He was delighted when in 1876 Johns Hopkins, the first American university to be established on the German research university model, offered him a chair in English literature. Harvard, unwilling to lose him, created a similar chair for him and moved his assistant, Adams Sherman Hill, into the Boylston Professorship. Child was determined to elevate the status of literature study to an academic discipline; from 1872 to 1910 he seems to have almost single-handedly built an English department, one that (because of the prestige and influence of Harvard) became the model for departments all over the country—a model that still survives.

Stewart tells this story as one of professional choice: “In the late nineteenth century the young profession of English came to a fork in the road, and with little hesitation, I suspect, made its choice and confidently set out on a path with which it was and has been fully comfortable” (119). As Connors points out, it was “a rattling good story, and certain ways it is even an accurate one. But it is not the complete story, and work in composition history since 1985 has been struggling

to add some depth to the all-too-simple tale of Decline and Fall.” One of the problems with this Harvardization tale is that it “does not look deeply enough into the social, cultural, and ideological contexts of rhetoric and composition as they developed in their own eras” (“History” 64).

One important piece of contextual information for Scott’s story was resources, as Brereton makes clear. Even though Michigan’s was the most comprehensive writing program in the country, it was shockingly short on faculty even during the time that it was part of the English Department; in 1895 Scott was one of four full-time faculty responsible for teaching 1,200 students a year (*Origins* 177). During the period between the two world wars Michigan, like other universities, was experiencing burgeoning enrollments; in 1900–01, a total of 3,712 students were enrolled, but by 1920–21 there were 10,623, with no substantial increase in resources to teach them. In 1923 the Rhetoric Department enrolled 2,600 students, 1,513 of whom were freshmen. Composition classes averaged about 30 students (Stewart and Stewart 171). The enrollments became larger than the administrative structure could sustain. It is also clear that Scott’s program was not the only separate department of rhetoric created only to disappear some years later; Scott’s friend Edwin Hopkins created a separate unit at Kansas at about the same time (see below), Mount Holyoke and Wellesley also had separate departments for rhetoric (L’Eplattenier and Mastrangelo 140), and in a 1908–09 internal report, the chair of Vassar’s English department states that dividing departments into two units, rhetoric and literature, “has been unfortunately done in many places” (Bordelon 104). The demise of these separate units focusing on rhetoric coincided with and was related to the rise of separate departments of speech. A final issue was the great energy of Scott himself. The department of Rhetoric *was* Scott, and under his leadership it flourished for thirty years. But it flourished only as long as his energy could sustain it as a one-man show; there was no institutional or professional structure to sustain it. Two years after his retirement, the department was absorbed back into English and sank without a trace.⁹ Scott’s story is an object lesson for the profession; unless they are institutionalized in some way, programs that depend on the energy and resourcefulness of only one WPA are only as strong and long-lived as that person.

The career of Edward Hopkins is discussed in “The WPA as Publishing Scholar: Edwin Hopkins and *The Labor and Cost of the Teaching*

of English” and “Edward Hopkins and the Costly Labor of Composition Teaching,” both by Randall Popkin; Hopkins’s career provides us with an early model of the writing program administrator as researcher. Hopkins (1892–1946) taught at the University of Kansas his entire career and was a founding member of the National Council of Teachers of English. He knew Fred Newton Scott, and like Scott (perhaps using the Michigan model) lobbied for a separate program. In 1902 the Department of English Literature, Language, and *Belles Lettres* was divided into a Department of English Literature and a Department of Rhetoric and English Language (which consisted mostly of first-year rhetoric classes), with Hopkins as chair of the latter. Thus his position, like Scott’s, in some ways resembled that of today’s WPA.

As Popkin notes, although Hopkins published work on the teaching of literature and composition, he is best known for the research project that resulted in a book that was the first of its kind: *The Labor and Cost of the Teaching of English in Colleges and Secondary Schools, with Especial Reference to English Composition*, published by NCTE in 1923; it was an empirical study of the workload of composition teachers, a topic that still resonates with WPAs today. It became a bestseller and a famous piece of scholarship, one that sought to prove that there were serious difficulties for faculty when they had too many students to teach. His research gives us some notion of the conditions of the time: faculty he surveyed had an average of 104.1 students per semester, and most found it impossible to do their work well. He argued that, based on his calculations, a reasonable student load for each faculty member would ideally be 36 students, but that an absolute maximum would be 62. Popkin argues that Hopkins’ research provides an early model for WPA work as scholarship, making recommendations for program improvement that are grounded in research (like his study of class size and workload). His own history as a WPA is also cautionary. Popkin documents the fact that Hopkins himself had an almost impossible schedule as a teacher and writing program administrator, at one time needing a year’s sick leave for illness and nervous exhaustion.

Most of these individual histories of WPAs are from research institutions. Kenneth Lindbloom and Patricia Dunn argue that one of the reasons for the dominance of what they call the “Harvard narrative” in the history of composition studies is the focus on research which has fostered disrespect for pedagogy as well as for administration; the history of those institutions whose mission it was to produce teach-

ers—the normal schools—has been left out of the story (37–38). They trace the story of a cooperative program at one such institution, Illinois State Normal University, from 1904–1905, and in particular the influence of one professor, J. Rose Colby (who was the first person to receive an English PhD from the University of Michigan in 1886, three years ahead of Fred Newton Scott). According to manuscripts in the school's archives, Prof. Colby believed that schooling, especially the study of language, had both social and ethical purposes; she believed that language study belonged not just in English classes but across the curriculum (41). The authors trace her work on a “Committee on English” from 1904–1905, a committee whose recommendations focuses on asking content area teachers to take more responsibility for student writing; they state that this might be seen as “an early call for writing across the curriculum” (49). As a corrective to any “presentism,” however, the authors note that part of Prof. Colby's motivation was to free literature teachers from the demands of language instruction (60).

Recent feminist projects to include women in the histories of rhetoric and composition, as noted above by L'Eplattenier, have shed some light on the histories of other women involved in writing program development and/or administration. During the late nineteenth century a number of women's colleges were founded, serving the daughters of the rising middle class (as Solomon's study of women's colleges at the end of the nineteenth century shows, the rich still educated their daughters at home). The most prominent of these were the “Seven Sisters” institutions: Barnard (1889), Bryn Mawr (1885), Mt. Holyoke (1837), Radcliffe (1879), Smith (1871), Vassar (1861), and Wellesley (1870). Since Harvard is so central to the story of first-year composition, one might think that Radcliffe would be as well; but Radcliffe was an anomaly among women's colleges. Although Harvard began admitting women in the late nineteenth century, they were not admitted on the same basis as men but as part of the Harvard Annex. This unit opened in 1879 as Radcliffe College, but as JoAnn Campbell points out, Radcliffe “had no college buildings, no dormitory life for its women students, and the professors were all Harvard faculty who offered the women their lectures and courses for pay in addition to their Harvard salaries. Even after there were dormitories, only men taught the students” (“Controlling” 476). It is to the separate women's institutions that we must look for the histories of women WPAs.

Of these, perhaps the most distinguished was Gertrude Buck, who spent her entire career at Vassar College. Buck was a student of Fred Newton Scott, receiving her PhD from the University of Michigan in rhetoric in 1898 (the first such degree in the U.S.). Brereton discusses Buck's contributions to the writing curricula of the time; taking Scott's argument for personal themes to connect writing to real experience, Buck wrote articles "that provided some of the most sensible rationale for this kind of writing" (*Origins* 15). Brereton reproduces a 1901 article by Buck, published in the *Educational Review*, "Recent Tendencies in the Teaching of English Composition," that sets forth this rationale, arguing for an alternative to the Harvard approach of composition without an academic subject matter (*Origins* 241–51). As well as critical and theoretical articles, Buck also published co-authored textbooks on composition that set forth the innovative curricula she developed at Vassar. In *Toward a Feminist Rhetoric: The Writing of Gertrude Buck* (a useful collection of Buck's work), JoAnn Campbell argues that Buck's writings show an effort to "rethink a patriarchal rhetorical tradition, reshape teacher-centered classrooms, and revise intellectual and social issues of concern to women" (ix). The descriptions of the pedagogy she developed to go with her co-authored textbook, *A Course in Expository Writing* (1899), would seem to bear out this claim. There were few lectures and no quizzes (since these were considered not to be compatible with free discussion); instead there were discussions of the literature they had read, individual and group interviews with the teacher on the themes they had written, and group work in class for discussing and critiquing themes. In 1917 a publication called *The Sampler* was inaugurated, in which students could publish their work (*Toward* xxxi), providing the "real audience" that Buck argued was the way to encourage students to critique their own work carefully (*Course* v). Buck's writings challenged the contemporary reductive view of writing as grammar instruction; her focus on grammar was holistic and logical and her writing assignments rhetorical. According to Campbell, by "incorporating a romantic belief in the organic nature of language, Buck hoped to make composition useful and vital to a changing student population" (xxxvi). Further, "Buck's rhetoric was more closely aligned with the Greek ideals of civic service than the mercantile and mechanical goals of current-traditional rhetoric" (xli).

In "The 'Advance' Toward Democratic Administration: Laura Johnson Wylie and Gertrude Buck of Vassar College" Suzanne Bor-

delon discusses the collaborative administration of these two women, Wylie as the chair of the department and Buck as the coordinator of rhetoric and Writing at Vassar College. Bordelon points out that Buck was profoundly influenced by John Dewey, who was at Michigan while she was a student, and argues that for Dewey and for Progressive Era educators like Wylie and Buck, education served a political function: to create a democratic society. The model of writing program administration that Buck developed with Wylie, based on Dewey's theories, emphasized the role of the faculty in the administrative process and made the department more inclusive and democratic. In the early years after its founding in 1861, Vassar, like many other colleges of the time, was organized around a family model: the president as well as the students lived on campus, and most of the faculty (and their families) lived in what was called the Main Building. But like other institutions, in the 1890s Vassar began to grow and organize itself into departmental units, and the administrative machinery became more sophisticated, with department chairs who were told explicitly that they were to be managers in the top-down manner that was being developed in the business world. Wylie viewed this managerial stage as necessary development toward a more democratic form of administration, in that it brought about a certain efficiency, but the need for a more inclusive model soon became obvious in a college whose faculty were active in social reform and the suffrage movement; faculty began to take more active roles in running the departments. Further, Wylie held an organic view of the department she chaired from 1897–1922; for her there were no separate (or inferior) branches but simply different aspects of or approaches to “English.” Buck administered the writing and rhetoric program, and for her work was promoted to full professor and given a salary equal to that of the chair. Wylie's argument for this salary in her 1908–09 Report of the Department of English emphasizes the need in terms of the size of the department and subsequent administrative load:

Of this administrative load, Miss Buck does her full share, relieving me entirely of a great deal of it. Indeed, if we did not work to-gether [*sic*] in entire harmony, it would be necessary either for me to do considerably less teaching, or to divide the department, as been unfortunately done in many places, into the departments of English or Rhetoric, and Lit-

erature. The present union of the two subjects in a single department has many advantages of economy and efficiency, and it seems unfortunate that in order to preserve these, one of the people concerned should suffer serious and permanent financial loss. (qtd. in Bordelon 103–04)

JoAnn Campbell (“Women’s Work, Worthy Work”) points out that this cooperative administrative model was a product of the context in which it developed and the persons involved. The situation at Bryn Mawr about this same time demonstrates this fact in spades. In “‘Replacing Nice Thin Bryn Mawr Miss Crandall with Fat, Harvard Savage’: WPAs at Bryn Mawr College, 1902 to 1923,” D’Ann George discusses the difficult relationship between Regina Crandall, the Director of the Essay Department, and the president of the university, who refused to grant her anything other than subordinate status in her administrative role. George documents how Crandall lobbied the president continually and unsuccessfully for faculty status, for more control over the curriculum, and for better working conditions for writing teachers. The president, M. Carey Thomas, had helped to found the college on the notion that gender stereotypes of women needed to be changed, and that women should share equal academic footing with men. But she did not see teaching writing or directing a writing program as legitimate academic work:

Thomas couldn’t legitimize Crandall’s position because the male-dominated academic culture branded her work drudge work, unintellectual work, and therefore women’s work. Thomas’s way of battling gender stereotypes was not to challenge patriarchal value systems but to use Bryn Mawr to find a place for women—though not all women—in those systems. To value Crandall’s work and position, in Thomas’s eyes, would be to condemn all women to subordinate positions. (25)

Crandall and all the writing teachers received lower pay than the literature faculty, although if any writing teacher showed literary abilities he or she could be promoted to the literature faculty and never teach writing again; any faculty who showed an interest in continuing to teach writing were fired or replaced. The writing program was simply

a vehicle for finding and eventually rewarding promising literature faculty. Crandall, having no authority over the curriculum or the hiring of faculty in the program she directed, fought back in a number of letters lobbying for better pay and working conditions for her faculty. Thomas asked her to resign and when she refused, Thomas replaced her with Howard Savage, a new graduate of Harvard with training in teaching English A there and with views of writing that were similar to those of Thomas. His salary was also that of a literature faculty member, and he taught literature as well as directing the writing program. Savage cut the program by reducing the number of required semesters of writing and by establishing an “efficient” method of grading papers (involving a set of symbols teachers could use), thus justifying an increase in class size to 80 students and a reduction in the number of teachers (from 7 to 4.5). Savage ultimately did not fare well at Vassar, leaving in 1923 for another position; as a writing program administrator he seems to have embodied James Sledd’s caricature of the “boss compositionist,” one who made the writing program efficient and cheap by making the curriculum formulaic and by hiring (women) faculty who worked for low pay and were content with a subordinate position, while he himself enjoyed full faculty status.

A number of historically Black colleges were also founded in the period just after the Civil War; the history of writing program administration at these institutions remains an area ripe for research. In “Sifting Through Fifty Years of Change: Writing Program Administration at an Historically Black Institution,” Deany M. Cheramie discusses the difficulties of administration at Xavier University. Xavier was founded in 1915; in some ways it is atypical, since it is the only one of the 102 historically Black institutions that is also Catholic, but it is probably typical in other ways. Cheramie points out that like other such institutions, “Xavier was founded by a group of people who saw a need [. . .]. These people were dedicated to educating African Americans and giving them opportunities denied them by a lack of civil liberties. Yet the educators who had this calling quite often did not understand the needs of the students they were teaching” (146). The course descriptions reveal an effort on the part of the faculty to help their students fit a middle-class mold, which relied (and still relies) on a perceived standard associated with “white” middle class spoken and written English; students were expected to adapt their language to this standard, which resulted in numerous courses for “remediation” (147).

Archival evidence shows that although writing courses existed from the beginning of the university, the school was so poorly funded that administration in all areas was lean (usually carried out by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament who founded the institution), and was based in expediency—who could they afford to hire? Where could they fit the students? How many students could they get into a single class? (161). It was not until 50 years after its founding that Xavier was able to support a sufficient teaching staff, let alone a writing program administrator.

James Berlin, in *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900–1985*, gives some general background on writing programs during the period between World Wars I and II. He tells us that organized freshman composition programs led by directors became common in the 1920s and 1930s as enrollments in post-secondary education grew steadily. These programs, with various administrative procedures for dealing with students, were most common in the Midwestern and Western state institutions, but some also could be found at private universities such as Harvard and Bradley. “Their minimal essentials were a placement test, grouping students by ability, and some sort of procedure for verifying the success of the program, such as exit tests or follow-up programs for students who later displayed shortcomings” (65). He describes the program at Syracuse in the early twenties as typical. Its 1,200 freshman took a placement test that consisted of a writing selection and grammar questions, the tests were read by faculty to determine student placement into three categories: high, middle, and low. The highest group took only one course, English A, the middle group took English A and B, and the lowest group took English A, B, and C; English A was writing about literature. English B expository writing that included themes, a research paper, and a study of the correct forms of business and person correspondence. English C dealt with sentence structure, grammar, and spelling, focusing on correctness (66). There were attempts to ensure uniform grading standards via a model grading standard, a final exam for each course (a check on the performance of the teacher as well as of the students), and a requirement that teachers submit their final grades to a departmental committee on grading that had the authority to recommend changes (67). Berlin terms it a “technological model,” one that emulated Harvard and was reflected in various forms at Illinois, Purdue, Wisconsin, Minnesota, UCLA, West Virginia, North Carolina State, and

Cornell (68). As Berlin points out, it was an attempt to provide for the needs of students with varying abilities, aiming at increasing chances for success for those who might otherwise fail; it was also—because of the fact that these courses were taught by graduate students and contingent faculty—an administrative model that involved above all surveillance and enforcement of curricula and standards. Betty Pytlik traces the development of TA training programs, which for the most part (up until the 1970s) involved such enforcement in “How Graduate Students Were Prepared to Teach Writing—1850–1970.”

Although the persons who directed these programs were many and varied, the career of Stith Thompson gives us some insight into how composition, although not yet considered a scholarly discipline, could in fact help to advance a career path. Thompson had a long and distinguished career at Indiana University, where he directed and taught composition from 1921–37 as a young faculty member; his story is told in an essay by Jill Terry Rudy (“Building a Career by Directing Composition: Harvard, Professionalism, and Stith Thompson at Indiana University”). Rudy argues that although he later became known for his folklore scholarship, Thompson furthered his career trajectory with both composition and administration at a time when the notions of professionalism and disciplinary status systems were still emerging. With a PhD from Harvard, Thompson understood professional expectations about publication; his first publication, a composition textbook, was a foray into academic publishing that gave him name recognition and brought him the offer from Indiana, a step up the career ladder from his position at that time. Although this was from all accounts a leadership position within the department, Rudy points out that while it might help one gain a foothold in publishing, work in composition during the first half of the twentieth century was not a way to develop a scholarly reputation. After directing the program for a time, Thompson went on to become a folklore scholar. Rudy cautions against viewing this career trajectory as a bait and switch, since such a view assumes a disciplinary purity that was not extant. During his years as director he instituted placement tests, monitored grades, and generally “helped the Indiana composition program fulfill an important aim of professionalism: to train, sort, and credential future professionals” (83). Because there was not yet a scholarly tradition in the field, he could not reach the Distinguished Professorship at the top

without publishing in literature, but composition helped him start to climb the career ladder successfully.

THE PERIOD OF PROFESSIONALIZATION: POST WORLD WAR II

Like the Civil War before it, World War II and its aftermath brought enormous changes, not the least of which was a flood of enrollments in higher education; the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known popularly as the G.I. Bill, had an enormous impact. One of the provisions of the Act was federal subsidies for attending colleges or other approved institutions; veterans were free to attend the college of their choice. Within the next 7 years, about 2,300,000 veterans took advantage of the educational benefits to attend colleges and universities (Butts and Cremin). Edward Corbett describes the situation in "A History of Writing Program Administration":

English departments especially bore the brunt of that tidal wave of students because, in those days, virtually every college and university required all beginning students to take at least two years of English: a freshman English course and a sophomore survey course in either English or American literature. A veteran just beginning a college education became one of the twenty-five to thirty students who were packed into one of the dozens of newly created sections of freshman English. (65)

The professionalization of writing program administration began in large part because of this tidal wave, when English departments, especially those in public institutions, had to find some way of coordinating the ever-multiplying sections of freshman English. As Corbett characterizes the post-war period, it was a time of desperation in English departments; it didn't take long for departments to figure out that, with the escalating numbers, there would need to be a director or coordinator for such a huge course. Writing program administration was still a task rather than a position, but the seeds of professionalization were sown during this period as those in charge of such programs sought each other out for workable solutions to pressing problems such as staffing issues (where could one get enough qualified teachers to

meet the demand for more sections?) and curriculum development (what was the best way to teach this new group of students?).

The most complete history to date of writing program administration during the period after World War II may be found in Amy Heckathorn's doctoral dissertation, "The Struggle Toward Professionalization: The Historical Evolution of Writing Program Administrators" (1999) and her subsequent essay, "Moving Toward a Group Identity: WPA Professionalism from the 1940s to the 1970s" (2004). Heckathorn outlines how early WPAs "began to come together to create a group identity, an evolution glimpsed through primary research in journals, books, and direct interviews which demonstrate that WPAs have struggled to transform themselves, and others' impressions of them, from bureaucratic managers of an undervalued discipline to dynamic administrators and theorists of their work and of their field" ("Moving" 191–92). She argues that although there were certainly writing program administrators before the Second World War, there was not yet a group identity. She points to the 1940s as the starting point for the formation of this professional group identity, dividing the period before the formation of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (1979) into what she terms the early era (1940–1963) and the transitional era (1964–1979); this latter category coinciding with what Robert Connors refers to as the "era of disciplinarity" in composition studies ("Composition History and Disciplinarity" 4). Heckathorn notes that these are in some sense artificial categories, but they provide a heuristic "for understanding how administrative work changed to meet the challenges of an evolving discipline" ("Moving" 192). Along with archival materials, interviews with experienced WPAs, and early publications, Heckathorn also gathered information from the MLA's *Job Information List* (began in 1971); "in this discussion of employer needs . . . lie insights into the work and worth of the positions being advertised. WPAs' evolutionary changes are visible in these job descriptions—from early, undefined attempts to articulate the work of WPAs to later, more specific and complex descriptions of the roles WPAs would fill" (194).

Thomas Masters provides a general history of composition in the period just after World War II in *Practicing Writing: The Postwar Discourse of Freshman English*, based primarily on archival evidence from three institutions in Illinois (The University of Illinois in Urbana and what was then its branch campus in Chicago, Northwestern Univer-

sity, and Wheaton College). Masters found that the first priority at all three institutions was “the attempt to instill in students a code of correctness and style,” that weekly papers were required in all three, and that the papers “were read not as attempts to convey or construct knowledge, but as proof that they had internalized the code” (136). Masters discusses the career of Charles Walter Roberts who was, like his counterparts at other large institutions who directed Freshman English, in charge of the legions of doctoral students who taught the course. The course, based on the sort of “mass production model” Brereton describes as common at large Midwestern universities after the turn of the twentieth century (*Origins* 470)

exemplified the common sense, tightly managed, critically unselfconscious approach to the teaching of writing that many schools have emulated. In their “Memorial to Charles Walter Roberts,” delivered after his death in 1968, his colleagues John Hamilton, Frank Moake, and Harris Wilson noted that “if one had been asked to name the most distinguished and influential director of the basic college writing course in the United States, one would have to name Charles Roberts[. . .]. Large numbers of Illinois PhDs who taught English composition under his direction . . . [have] become directors of composition and heads of departments in other colleges and universities throughout the United States.” (Masters 9)

Roberts was in charge of a program that was squarely in the current-traditional mode, and he considered doing away with the elimination of Rhetoric 100 (the basic writing course of the time) as the apex of his career, since it placed responsibility for student literacy with the secondary schools (Masters 197). But he was also evidently an innovative and dedicated administrator, one of the co-founders of CCCC (he served as the organization’s journal editor from 1950–1953). At Illinois he provided a day-by-day syllabus for his inexperienced teaching staff, began a publication entitled *The Green Cauldron* to publish exemplary student writing, and worked closely with the University Senate Committee on Student English to gather statistical data on student writing and publish handbooks for faculty (195). He also worked

nationally as well as regionally to improve conditions for teachers and students (197).

Richard Lloyd-Jones gives some insight into what it was like to be a WPA at a large institution in the years after World War II, in a position like that of Roberts. Lloyd-Jones, himself (like Edward Corbett) a returning veteran, notes that it wasn't just a matter of numbers. War veterans were a different sort of student; "they were in a hurry, serious about learning, and not easily pushed aside" ("Doing as One Likes" 115). But faculty stepped up to the task. "One of the glories of our profession in the twentieth century is the legion of freshman directors who took over the onerous and often thankless job of planning a writing program, of setting up practicums to train the writing staff, of visiting the classes of callow teachers, and of fielding the complaints of parents and students" (Corbett "History" 67). Corbett notes that it is surprising how quickly these fearless individuals prepared themselves for the task and became resources for each other (and for their graduate TAs), given that there were no other resources at the time. Many of these newly minted administrators had literary backgrounds, but in some cases they had experience with teaching English in high school and with teacher training and supervision at the secondary level.¹⁰

The job of WPA was then, as now, often fraught with structural difficulties. After finishing his doctoral work, Richard Lloyd-Jones was appointed to run the technical writing program at Iowa, his qualifications being that he had taught in it. He details some of the issues in "Doing as One Likes." "Suddenly I was hiring teachers in a system that did not permit us to make appointments until after registration had confirmed enrollments, the day before classes began" (117). Like many of his counterparts in this era, Lloyd-Jones learned about writing program administration while doing it, adding courses to the program and transforming two existing graduate courses to focus on rhetorical theory and style. "No administrator ever enquired about what I was doing, so on my own I was creating a base for a program in non-fiction writing. That in turn meant that I had to be an autodidact, reading like mad to offer decent courses" (117). Like others in his situation, he became actively involved in NCTE, working on a committee that examined the state of knowledge about teaching composition; he notes modestly that the resulting publication, *Research in Written Composition*, was "well-received" (118). This book in fact marks the beginning of composition as an area of serious scholarship. In part because of his

association with Richard Braddock, Lloyd-Jones soon found himself on the first NCTE Commission on Composition and the later on the CCCC Executive Committee, groups that he describes as “effectively two postdoctoral seminars” (118).

WPAs at this time often had free rein to develop programs. Like Lloyd-Jones, Theodore Baird was able to create a writing course at Amherst (a small, private men’s institution) almost entirely single-handedly, a course that lasted from 1933 to 1966. Walker Gibson gives a general outline of the team-taught course in his essay on Baird; Gibson was himself one of the younger colleagues with whom Baird worked (in a “three years and out” instructorship [139]), a process that allowed elements of the course to be replicated elsewhere. In *Fencing with Words*, Robin Varnum shows how Baird became what we would now call a WPA, in large part because of the sheer strength of his personality as well as his vision of what a composition course should be and do.

Baird is best known for developing carefully sequenced writing assignments that required students to focus not on literature (as in many other institutions at the time) but on language and its uses. When asked about the purpose of the curriculum he developed and directed for some thirty years, Baird told Varnum: “We were interested in the way LANGUAGE makes order out of chaos. Over and over again we considered how language does this” (emphasis original 85). He described the course sequence, English 1–2, as a “laboratory course,” noting that there are “no lectures, and the student does no required reading. Each student supplies his own subject matter for writing. That is, we ask the student to put into English what he has learned, both in and outside the classroom” (89). Baird worked with the five or six members of the department who taught the courses each year to develop a careful sequence of assignments; they met together once a week to debate and argue over the assignments, refining them as the years progressed. He set these meetings up in the hope that “by an exchange of ideas, by self-criticism, by argument, we can define our objects more clearly and use the best methods for achieving them that we know about” (5).

It was always clear that Baird was in charge, however. One colleague who worked with him in the 1960s as a young faculty intern described being mentored by Baird as “a terrifying experience” (205), and the course as an exercise in “liberal authoritarianism” (209). Stu-

dents described English 1–2 as a sort of “boot camp,” a very competitive male atmosphere (209) aimed at deliberately disorienting students (157, 161). Some found it quite stimulating, others were exasperated by it. As Varnum chronicles, the course was finally discontinued in the late 1960s, as new curricula were being developed as a response to the push for social change. Baird retired in 1970. He told Varnum he thought he had maintained English 1–2 as long as he had because “I scared them. They weren’t quite brave enough to say, ‘We are through with this.’ If they [the English department] had said that, what could I have done? I had no authority, just my presence” (212); the course did, however, have a lasting influence on those who taught it. Many of these faculty took Baird’s curricular ideas to their jobs at other institutions, where their presence still may be felt.¹¹

THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WPAs: CCCC

Writing program administrators first began to organize after World War II, forming an organization called the Conference on College Composition and Communication; the first meeting was in 1949. Corbett notes that many of the prime movers of the new organization were from Big Ten schools in the Midwest; most of the workshops at the early meetings dealt with the administration of Freshman English (“A History” 68). There had, of course, been a few scattered meetings before then, organized for the mutual benefit of various groups of WPAs; Lisa Mastrangelo and Barbara L’Eplattenier document the meetings of the Intercollege Conference on English Composition organized by writing faculty from Mount Holyoke, Wellesley, Vassar, and Smith from 1919–1924, during the Progressive Era. But CCCC was the first attempt at a national organization, under the umbrella of an already-existing national organization, the National Council of Teachers of English.

The history of the early years of CCCC has been summarized by David Bartholomae in an essay that was his 1988 Chair’s Address to the conference (published in 1989), “Freshman English, Composition, and CCCC.” Drawing on pieces written by John Gerber and other early leaders in the organization, Bartholomae notes that it was an organization formed by those who needed to have discussions about practical concerns that existing venues like MLA and NCTE were not

making possible (39). Richard Lloyd-Jones explains why those discussions were needed: “The folks who came to that meeting were pressed by what seemed to be a crisis and wanted to have practical talk about how to deal with a flood of new students—many of whom were first-generation college students, most somewhat older veterans [. . .]. In a single year—1946—college enrollments had doubled” (“Who We Were, Who We Should Become” 487). The fact that their colleagues did not understand the work that they were doing was also a reason for these newly appointed WPAs to band together. John Gerber, the first Chair of CCCC, in a 1975 paper entitled “Loomings” (evoking the first chapter of *Moby Dick*) recalled the angst of those who had taken over the new quasi-administrative position of director of freshman English and who organized the meeting:

We were [like Ishmael] indeed grim about the mouth [. . .]. We believed that we had devised new methods of instruction, better ways of evaluation, and more reliable ways of reading student papers. We worked harder, we were sure, than our colleagues. Nevertheless, despite all this and more, we remained second-class citizens. Department chairmen thinly praised us each fall and then forgot about us for the rest of the year. Eighteenth-century scholars looked down their noses at us and medievalists barely tolerated us. So we decided to go to sea—that is, to organize. (2)

Some of the very first workshops (held in Chicago in 1950 and published in the May 1950 *CCC*) give the flavor of this new professional organization: “The Function of the Composition Course in General Education,” “Objectives and Organization of the Composition Course,” “The Organization and Use of the Writing Laboratory,” “Freshman English for Engineers,” and “Administration of the Composition Course.” This latter workshop was repeated at several consecutive meetings (a precursor of the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ Workshops begun in 1982).

In the early years, CCCC was a relatively small organization; Edward Corbett notes that even in the early 1970s when he was Program Chair for the convention in Seattle, he felt lucky if they could attract 300 people (“How I Became a Teacher of Composition” 5). Its focus was practical; the early meetings were workshops focused on the most

pressing common problems directors were facing, and the journal that developed out of the meetings was at first a venue for reporting on those workshops and discussing what many contributors referred to as the “problem” of freshman English. Many experimental approaches were in the air as a result of the communications movement, in part an outgrowth of training programs that had sprung up during the war to get GIs up to speed for wartime tasks in what was in many ways the country’s first technological war; David Russell discusses this movement at some length in *Writing in the Academic Disciplines*.

The massive postwar influx of GIs into higher education made colleges and universities receptive to the idea of a communications course, for it combined scientific and patriotic rationales with managerial efficiency. Enrollment tripled between 1945 and 1949, sparking a host of experiments with communications courses. But unlike the military programs, which integrated writing instruction into technical courses, these were essentially core courses, which combined speech and composition, sometimes adding elements of the new field of semantics, particularly the analysis of propaganda and advertising. (259)

Composition and Communication eventually went their separate ways as disciplines, as detailed by Diana George and John Trimbur (in “The ‘Communication Battle,’ or Whatever Happened to the 4th C?” and by John Heyda in “Fighting Over Freshman English: CCCC’s Early Years and the Turf Wars of the 1950s”). But evidence from the early years of the journal shows that much of a freshman English director’s time was taken up not only with administrative issues but also with designing entirely new curricula to meet the needs of a new group of students, in part in discussions with colleagues from communication but also with those in the emerging discipline of linguistics.

Several articles and workshop reports from the early years of CCCC document administrative efforts to deal with the crush of students. For example, in “Freshman English During the Flood” (1956), Charlton Laird describes a timesaving plan to help teachers deal with the influx of students: peer tutoring. Rather than meeting three times a week as a class, the students met only once, spending the rest of the time in groups, reading and commenting upon each others’ papers. There is,

however, little evidence of a research base for any of the early articles in *CCC*, let alone those that specifically focus on writing program administration as a field for study. The lone exception is an article entitled “Administration of the Freshman English Program” (1955) in which Emerson Shuck reported the results of a survey he conducted to study current practice, listing common concerns that emerged from his study: class size, teaching load, type of course, student placement, remedial programs, establishing proficiency in composition, the administrative structure of the program, and administrative tasks. In “Loomings” (1975) John Gerber noted the deficiencies of those early CCCC conversations and publications:

We rarely talked about teaching as a process. Had we done so we would have been more concerned about the nature of those at the receiving end, namely the students. I find almost nothing in the programs or in the *Bulletin [CCC]* about the particular nature of the students in the fifties, and the need for adapting our teaching such persons. What is surprising about this is that the students of the fifties, especially of the early fifties, were a very special breed [. . .]. It was the period of the Korean War, and of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his hunt for commies and perverts. In some ways it was as sick a period as we have ever been through. Even liberal Americans had lost their sense of humor and were downright frightened, many of them, that they would be singled out by McCarthy and his henchmen. No wonder that *Time* magazine in 1951 called college students grave, conventional, apathetic, and fatalistic. A Purdue poll showed that the majority of them had little confidence in the freedom assured by the Bill of Rights. In 1953 Thornton Wilder used the term that has been applied to them ever since: they were, he wrote in the *Yale Daily News*, the “silent generation.” (11)

Gerber closes by referring to Emerson’s concept of the scholar in his right state as “man thinking,” and in his degenerate state, when the victim of society, a mere thinker, or worse, a parrot of other’s thinking. Gerber declares that “if we had any basic weakness in the 1950’s

it was that we were sentences and paragraphs and not men and women thinking" (12). Dwight Purdy, in "A Polemical History of Freshman Composition in Our Time," opines that in spite of the fact that there were some dedicated directors, much WPA work was haphazard and poorly done during this period, when most directors were amateurs.

An assistant professor took on the odious job of directing freshman English for tenure's sake. He (always he then) had some interest in teaching composition but none in constructing and managing a durable program, and the only theory he knew was Aristotle. I exaggerate a bit. There were dedicated directors about. I knew some. But the untenured assistant professor coerced by senior professors was more common. From this estranged figure came mismanagement, or none at all. The twenty, forty, or four hundred teaching assistants in his care were often selected by no rational principle. None of their course work had a thing to do with composition [. . .]. The director chose common texts with little or no consultation and more than likely set up a program without a coherent structure

[. . .] He was overwhelmed. (793)

THE BIRTH OF THE COUNCIL OF WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

As Neal Lerner points out, the two greatest influxes of students into higher education occurred during the years 1879–1880, when there was a 122 percent increase in enrollments, and the baby boom year 1969–1970, when there was a 120 percent increase (188). The 1960s and 1970s were revolutionary decades in academe for more reasons than sheer numbers, including, among other changes, the paradigm shift in composition studies from a current-traditional focus on the finished product to a focus on students' writing processes; Donald Murray's "Teach Writing as Process Not Product" (1972) became a rallying cry for WPAs who were involved in staff development and/or TA training programs. This period also marks the beginning of composi-

tion as a discipline in its own right. A number of markers may be used to demonstrate this fact. Most often quoted is the 1963 publication of *Research in Written Composition* (Braddock et al.), which was both a summary of research so far and a call for a research agenda in the field. At the same time, the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board was holding a series of institutes to improve the academic preparation and pedagogy of English teachers in the schools, a format followed by subsequent institutes for teachers established by the National Defense Education Act in 1964; Richard Lloyd-Jones documents these institutes and also the rise of the National Writing Project in "On Institutes and Projects." (Lloyd-Jones notes that in 1979 and 1980, NEH funded two six-month institutes for College Directors of Freshman Composition. Some of the materials developed in those workshops later appeared in *Courses for Change*, edited by Carl Klaus and Nancy Jones, a collection with an emphasis on program reform [163–64]). These institutes, Lloyd-Jones argues, helped to establish composition as scholarly and professional work at the university level. One can also point to the rise of professional journals in the field, as documented by Maureen Goggin (*Authoring a Discipline: Scholarly Journals and the Post-World War II Emergence of Rhetoric and Composition*), the increasing numbers of doctoral programs emphasizing rhetoric and composition (as documented in periodic surveys in *Rhetoric Review*), and in the case of WPAs, the increasingly sophisticated job descriptions appearing in the MLA's *Job Information List* (as documented in Heckathorn's dissertation). Specialized professional organizations, often off-shoots of the larger ones, were beginning to form as well among people with common concerns and issues, not all of them having to do with research and teaching; the Associations of Departments of English, an organization for English department chairs, was formed in 1962, and The Council of Writing Program Administrators was born in the late 1970s.

The period was one of social ferment. The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement (growing out of the Civil Rights Movement), and the Anti-War Movement were all factors that contributed to social unrest and discussions of needed changes in university curricula. After a dip in college enrollments in the late 1950s (when the WWII veterans finished their education), there was an upsurge of enrollments as baby boomers began to enroll in ever-increasing numbers. At the same time, graduate programs were expanding at research institutions; as

Carol Hartzog documents in *Composition and the Academy*, freshman composition became a means to support graduate students in English departments, which led to an increased need for TA training. Community colleges, which had existed in small numbers since the turn of the century, became the new growth industry in higher education, in part to deal with the sheer numbers of students but also in part because of the growing democratization of higher education, a sense that everyone, not just the elite few, had a right to attend college. Affirmative Action legislation and Educational Opportunity Programs helped to ensure that those who had previously been denied access to higher and graduate education would now be included. In the 1960s, 457 new community colleges opened their doors, and the American Association of Community Colleges was formed during that same decade. (Today, according to the website for the Association, community colleges educate more than half of college graduates in the nation.) Responding to this growth, NCTE and CCCC began in 1965 to support the development of two-year college regional conferences, an arrangement that eventually resulted in the formation of the Two-Year College English Association.

In his history of writing in the academic disciplines, David Russell discusses the institutional responses to the influx of students from an increasingly diverse group of students, many of them first-generation college students.

Like [racial] integration, the rapid growth in numbers forced colleges to face the task of initiating students whose language background was radically different. For example, one of those new institutions, City University of New York (CUNY), began project SEEK [a program for students from low income areas of the city, which meant its population was mostly African American and Hispanic] in 1965 to prepare students whose grades excluded them from admission. Social and political upheavals in the late 1960s forced CUNY to begin open admissions in 1970, five years earlier than planned. Out of that experience, Mina Shaughnessy, a former copy editor and part-time writing instructor at CUNY, founded the study of *basic writing* [. . .]. (274–75)

A group of faculty interested in and dedicated to this newly-named field of basic writing began to meet regularly on Saturdays at the Graduate Center to talk to each other and help each other out as they explored ways of helping this new group of students. These faculty included Mina Shaughnessy and her group at City College, Kenneth Bruffee at Brooklyn College, Sondra Perl at Hostos Community College, Harvey Wiener at LaGuardia, Bob Lyons and Don McQuade at Queens, and Charles Bazerman at Baruch College (Bazerman, "Looking" 22; Wiener interview and e-mail; Brereton "Symposium"). Harvey Wiener organized the group into a more formal body, the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors (CAWS); this was an organization that provided some of the structure and much of the leadership for the nationwide organization about to be born.

During this period the Modern Language Association was restructuring itself, responding to what amounted to a revolt among some of its members who demanded a more democratically run organization (as detailed by Richard Ohmann in *English in America: A Radical View of the Profession* 34–5). The various committees that controlled the program were restructured into divisions in 1975, including a new Division on the Teaching of Writing, sponsoring their first sessions at the December 1976 meeting (Papp). MLA required a planning committee to organize the sessions; Ken Bruffee recalls that the committee consisted of Edward Corbett, Winifred Bryan Horner, Harvey Wiener, and himself (e-mail). They organized a number of sessions¹² successfully and then pressed for one more; it was Wiener's idea to use that meeting to form a national organization for writing program directors. That session, described on p. 1054 of the 1976 program as an "organization meeting for a writing program administrators' council," was scheduled for the last day of the conference, at 11:00 a.m.; Bruffee recalls that MLA, "typically skeptical of our importance," assigned the group a closet-size room (e-mail). What the organizers themselves had visualized as a fairly small group of people who wanted to learn from each other (and then adjourn to cry in their beer, according to Winifred Bryan Horner ["WPA Presidents' Forum"]), turned out to be a packed session, full of directors of writing programs from across the country. Those who attended, Horner among them, remember that the atmosphere was electric. The notion of a national organization was brought up. Harvey Wiener was immediately nominated as president, Horner as vice president, and Elaine Maimon was included in

the newly elected board as a representative from small liberal arts colleges. The name of the new organization was chosen deliberately, its initials (WPA) a nod to the New Deal (Wiener interview).

Because the machinery of CAWS was already up and running, the new organization—in effect, CAWS gone national—was formed in just a few months. The constitution and by-laws were approved in early 1977; among the goals articulated were “to serve the interests of writing programs by educating the academic community and the public at large about the needs of successful writing programs” and “to promote cooperation among the various writing programs in [. . .] colleges throughout the country by sharing information and by defining common interests and needs” (Council “Bylaws” 61). The organization issued its first publication in March of that year, *WPA: A Newsletter for Writing Program Administration*, edited and distributed by Robert Farrell (who was running the writing program at Cornell). It consisted of a statement of purpose for the organization, a draft form for a national handbook on writing programs, a list of WPAs with addresses and a list broken down by type of institution, and an editorial comment. The newsletter became a referred journal, *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, in 1979, bound in a distinctive red cover (chosen—again deliberately—by its first editor, Bruffee, to suggest the subversive nature of WPA work).¹³ The journal, back issues of which are now online and available from the Council of Writing Program Administrators website, contains essays on every aspect of a WPA’s work.

The organization was fortunate not only in being able to build on an already existing structure, but also in its first president. Harvey Wiener got the organization noticed immediately; he identified sessions at both MLA and CCCC, and organized panels for those meetings. Together with the WPA Executive Committee, which began meeting for an entire day at CCCC, he set up workshops for new WPAs so that they could learn from their more experienced counterparts; the first of these was held at Martha’s Vineyard, August 7–15, 1982, and was reported on by one of the participants in the Spring 1983 issue of the journal (Zelnick). Wiener himself and Tim Donovan of Northeastern University ran the workshop as part of Northeastern’s summer program. As the first of its kind, it was an experiment, evidently a not altogether successful one. In an analysis of the workshop evaluations published in the WPA journal, Zelnick (who had attended

the workshop) noted that the attendees complained that the organizers “refused to specify a few set issues” but had instead decided on a “loosely organized process of discovery” (11). The small problem-solving group sessions were also a source of frustration, since participants came from such different institutions and had such varying levels of experience that they had no common ground. But Zelnick also opined that the workshop was valuable in that it helped form a network of colleagues, a more secure identity as a professional, and an awareness of the organization and its resources (14). The workshop has continued—to much more enthusiastic evaluations—up to the present day, adding an annual conference in 1986; the conference was reported on by Lynn Bloom and Richard Gebhardt in the Spring 1987 *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, offering advice to future conference and workshop organizers. Wiener also worked to get the organization affiliated with other national organizations, including CCCC (which did not take long) and MLA (which did).

Wiener went after grant monies for the fledgling organization. The Exxon Foundation gave WPA three start-up grants to establish the Consultant-Evaluator Program (and to help pay the evaluators), and then endowed the program with a larger grant. (At the time he wrote the grants, Wiener was an evaluator for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; he wrote the proposals based in part on that experience.) The Consultant-Evaluator Program provided—and continues to provide—outside evaluators to give expert advice on the organization and administration of writing programs, which are sometimes neglected in the regular evaluations of departments of English. The organization printed the guidelines for the evaluation of writing programs in the journal, thus providing campuses that could not afford a campus visit with some notion of what a program assessment should look like (Wiener interview). More recently, the organization has established a fund for research to which WPAs can apply.

But perhaps the most important thing that the new organization did was to coin the term that described the work: writing program administrator. Harvey Wiener believes that this was a major contribution to the profession, adding “a dignifying occupational tag to the parlance” which “bestowed a new level of legitimacy” to the job (2000). Just after World War II, when the rapid growth of universities demanded more formal administrative structures, various existing members of the English Department were asked to take on the task

of administration, but were called “freshman composition coordinators” or “directors of composition.” As Richard Bullock states, it was “a shared burden rotated, as are many chairmanships, among all faculty” (14); medievalists, specialists in nineteenth century romantic literature, Shakespeareans, Melville scholars, or the faculty members who taught the secondary education methods classes were put in charge of designing a curriculum and training the rapidly growing numbers of teaching assistants. Writing in 1958, John P. Noonan noted that these faculty were chosen on the basis of their administrative ability and personality rather than any particular special background or training they might possess. It was not considered a professional task, but was considered university service.

Although this system was based on the notion that anyone trained in English literature knew enough about composition to be able to run a writing program, it did have the virtue of putting people with at least some seniority and knowledge of the university in charge of the administrative tasks required, and it occurred during a time when service to the department was a more important part of tenure decisions (as noted by Purdy, an assistant professor could take on the job “for tenure’s sake” 793). This situation changed as composition became a discipline in its own right—when, as Stephen North puts it, composition became Composition (15). As doctoral programs in composition and rhetoric developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, English departments began to hire the graduates of these programs to take over (as documented by Chapman and Tate in 1987). Wendy Bishop, herself one of these graduates at the time, wrote one of the earliest pieces attempting to define the role that these new disciplinary specialists were expected to take on, “Toward a Definition of a Writing Program Administrator: Expanding Roles and Evolving Responsibilities.” In this piece she includes many of the administrative duties that were being assigned to these young faculty: student placement and record keeping, course staffing, program accountability, and curriculum development. Bishop’s piece was a signal to neophytes as to what they could expect in their new roles as newly named WPAs.

Problems developed immediately for these young instant administrators. Although having someone with a disciplinary specialty in composition in charge of writing programs made eminent sense, having a brand new assistant professor in an administrative role did not. As Patricia Bizzell says in her foreword to Diana George’s collection,

Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers and Troubadours: Writing Program Administrators Tell Their Stories, a WPA

may teach and do research in his or her area of graduate training, but this work consists of only a small fraction of the job. The administrator must consider issues of budget, curricular planning, personnel management, technological support, physical plant—a veritable host of issues—and must deal with a wide range of people, from students to professional subordinates and peers to power brokers in academic high places, to address these issues. Graduate training [. . .] does not—and perhaps cannot possibly—prepare a person for these demands.” (viii)

As the essays in George’s collection show in often painful detail, many of these new hires were completely unprepared for such a position; their doctoral programs had not included any study of or experience with administration, they did not have the lived experience that would help with administrative decision-making, and their junior status meant that they had difficulty taking on the leadership role an administrator needs to assume. (The title of Keith Rhodes’s essay gives the flavor of the stories told in this book: “Mothers, Tell Your Children Not to Do What I have Done: The Sin and Misery of Entering the Profession as a Composition Coordinator.”)

To compound the problem, this period of time was also one in which universities across the country were ramping up their tenure and promotion expectations to coincide with those of the most elite research institutions: publish or perish. During the 1980s the position of writing program administrator became a revolving door at many institutions; new PhDs were hired to do administration and then told at the end of six years that their work counted only as service, and that they had not published enough to get tenure. The tale of tenure denied became so common that in 1989 the Conference on College Composition and Communication, in its Statement of Principles and Standards, called for having the WPA position held only by tenured faculty; an article written by Gary Olson and Joseph Moxley at about the same time (and cited frequently thereafter) endorsed the same system. Wendy Bishop and Gay Lynn Crossley document the difficulties that arose in “Doing the Hokey Pokey? Why Writing Program

Administrators' Job Conditions Don't Seem to Be Improving." The main problem was that, now that there was a disciplinary specialist in composition, English departments felt justified in assigning that person everything having to do with writing; the job definitions being generated as a result were so complex that no one person could possibly manage the position (47).

The response was a series of exhortations from scholars in the field and position statements issued by the Council of Writing Program Administrators. In 1987 Richard Bullock called for viewing WPAs not as "caretakers of a slice of bureaucracy" but as administrators who were also "experts and scholars testing and refining their knowledge in the practical area of application" (14). In an oft-quoted essay entitled "Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA," Edward M. White argues that seizing and using power is an essential part of the WPA's role, exhorting WPAs not to accept conditions of powerlessness but to empower themselves through "good arguments, good data, and good allies, mixed with caution and cunning" (7). (The military metaphors White uses suggest the feelings of embattlement at the time: "In order to assess our situations, we need to assess where the enemies of our program lurk, what their motives and weapons are, and how we can marshal forces to combat them" [6].) Although the revolving door for new WPAs is still far from rare, the situation began to change in the last decade of the twentieth century.

The 1990 WPA summer conference (the same conference at which James Sledd coined the term "boss compositionist") was organized around the theme of "Status, Standards, and Quality." At that meeting members of the workshop that preceded the conference discussed the issue of status and the intellectual work of the WPA; some of them began to formulate a resolution. Christine Hult, then editor of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, presented a paper at the conference about the conflicted status of writing program administrators and invited those present to "begin a dialogue toward formulation of a statement of professional standards by the WPA organization. Such a statement would outline prerequisites for effective administration of writing programs as well as equitable treatment of WPAs" (Hult et al., 88). The conversations that started in the workshop and continued during the conference eventuated in a draft document drawn up by the end of the conference known as "The Portland Resolution."¹⁴ A committee was set up by the Council of Writing Program Admin-

istrators to review and revise the draft; it was accepted by the Executive Committee and published by Hult and her committee in 1992. The document outlines the untenable job situations for many WPAs at that time (unrealistic expectations, little recognition for their work, few resources) and presents guidelines for the effective administration of writing programs: writing clear job descriptions, setting forth clear guidelines for the evaluation of WPAs, establishing job security and stability for them, ensuring access to the individuals and units that influence their programs, and making sure that they have the resources and budget to run quality programs. Not long after, the Council developed a second position statement, "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration"; this document, discussed in detail earlier (in Chapter 2), was intended to set out guidelines for tenure and promotion evaluations, but has also served as an official statement about the nature of the WPA's work as intellectual as well as managerial. It has also served as a useful guideline for outside evaluators writing letters for the tenure and promotion of writing program administrators.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF *WPA: WRITING*
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

In "Professionalizing Politics," Richard Ohmann writes:

A group of workers turns itself into a profession by grounding its practice in a body of knowledge, developing and guarding that knowledge within a universally recognized institution such as a university; limiting access to its lore and skills by requiring aspirants to pass through graduate or professional programs; and controlling the certification of those aspirants for practice either by widespread agreement among employers (for example, to hire only those philosophers or biologists who have earned doctoral degrees) or with the backing and enforcement of the State (as in medicine, law, public school teaching, and so on). (227)

The journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, more than any other scholarly journal in the rapidly developing field of composition and rhetoric, provided a venue for the growing body of knowledge about writing program administration during the 1980s and 1990s, helping it become a recognized sub-field of composition and rhetoric. In a 1985 article that reviewed the years of his editorship, Bruffee commented that the articles fell into three categories: how-to articles, contextual how-to articles, and professional identity articles (6). Ten years later, Christine Hult, editor from 1988 to 1994, traced the professionalization of the journal in “The Scholarship of Administration.” Bruffee had observed that up to 1985, most articles were of the first type, a few of the second, and very few of the third; Hult observed that by the end of her term as editor, the balance had shifted considerably toward the second and third as WPAs strove towards a professional identity (125). Hult pointed out that the journal gradually came to exemplify what Ernest Boyer termed the “scholarship of administration,” which she defined as “the systematic, theory-based production of a dynamic program (as opposed to traditional scholarship which is generally defined as the production of ‘texts’). Because it is dynamic, it more nearly resembles the productions of our colleagues in music, theater, or dance, but demands no less ‘scholarly’ expertise than that required by the performance of a Bach cantata” (126–27). She called for the establishment of departmental and university guidelines for tenure and promotion that include this sort of scholarship for WPAs.

As noted earlier, the Council of Writing Program Administrators developed and published documents that have further aided the professionalization of the field: the Portland Resolution, which outlined the work that a WPA could be expected to do, and a position statement, “Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration.” These documents, backed by Boyer’s work in redefining the nature of “scholarship,” have helped to raise the professional status of the WPA in an institutional sense.

WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In 2001 the Council of Writing Program Administrators sponsored a conference entitled “Composition Studies in the 21st Century”; out

of that conference came *Composition Studies in the New Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*, edited by the conference organizers, Lynn Z. Bloom, Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. It is interesting to compare the topics in this volume with those in the early issues of *CCC* and of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. Where the journal articles were for the most part discussions of very practical, hands-on issues of the “how to” variety (as Bruffee described them), the sections of this book focus on macro-issues. It is organized around a series of questions: “What Do We Mean by Composition Studies—Past, Present, and Future?,” “What Do/Should We Teach When We Teach Composition?,” “Where Will Composition be Taught and Who Will Teach It?,” “What Theories, Philosophies Will Undergird Our Research Paradigms? And What Will Those Paradigms Be?,” “How Will New Technologies Change Composition Studies?,” “What Languages Will Our Students Write and What Will They Write About?,” and “What Political and Social Issues Have Shaped Composition Studies in the Past and Will Shape This Field in the Future?” Each question has two essays devoted to it by a noted scholar in the field and a response from a third; most of the contributors were, at least at one point in their careers, writing program administrators.

The Council of Writing Program Administrators has grown from a small, local organization to a national one, boasting a newsletter, a refereed journal, an annual workshop and conference, a research grant program, and has current affiliations with the Association of American Colleges, MLA, CCC, and NCTE. In 1991 David Schwalm started the WPA listserv, a list that has served to put WPAs in touch with one another electronically, providing a venue for an invisible college of WPAs across the nation. Today this listserv is sometimes the first introduction a new WPA has to writing program administration as a profession. But one of the more interesting developments in the profession is the fact that the position of WPA has become the training ground for university administration in general; Elaine Maimon, now Chancellor of the University of Alaska, Anchorage, has said at many meetings that everything she ever learned about being a college administrator she learned as a WPA. Many former WPAs are now serving as department chairs, deans, and upper-level administrators. David Schwalm (himself a Vice Provost) discusses some of the reasons for this in “Writing Program Administration as Preparation for an Administrative Career”: “Being a WPA taught me about the need to

see issues in a larger context, to take broader views, to accept less than 100 percent solutions, to recognize that although there is a season for deliberation, there is also a season for decisiveness” (133). Writing program administration has become, for many, part of a career path in higher education administration.