

## Preface

The teaching of writing in higher education almost always occurs within a writing program (or similar unit such as a department largely devoted to the teaching of writing) under the supervision and coordination of an administrator, often called a Writing Program Administrator (WPA). Furthermore, the field of teaching of writing has socially, economically, and historically been organized around writing programs. Finally, most people embarking on a career in the teaching of writing will at some point be engaged in administering a writing program. Surprisingly then, this volume offers the first overall history we have had of writing programs and their administration as a central organizing theme of the field. Understandably the field of teaching of writing has focused on the units of analysis all have had much experience of: being a writer, being a learner of writing, supporting learning of writing, and running a classroom devoted to the teaching and leaning of writing. Yet, just the next level up in the economic and institutional realities of administration, we gain a remarkable perspective on what the field of college composition is and how it has become that way. This is a story of interest to every teacher of college writing, whether or not they will be an administrator or are engaged in program policy issues.

On a more practical level, there has been a growing body of publications reporting the experiences of WPAs, providing practical advice, and surveying the nature and conditions of programs nationally. This fourth volume of the reference guides to rhetoric and composition provides an excellent introduction to this useful literature, so that anyone embarking on Writing Program Administration can explore the state of the art—and perhaps even more importantly connect up with the personal and publication networks WPAs have developed for mutual support. Nonetheless, despite there now being some collected wisdom based on the hard won experience of many dedicated and thoughtful people, we still have much to learn about this important role and

the decisions facing administration. I hope this overview of our current state of knowledge will inspire a new generation of research and evidence to provide guidance and support for the writing programs of the future.

—*Charles Bazerman*