

Academic Labor: Research and Artistry

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ALRA

Academic Labor: Research and Artistry

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From the Editors

ALRA seeks to highlight the work of scholars and creators who are addressing issues of labor in the academic setting. Prior to the development of *ALRA* and the broader site of CSAL (Center for the Study of Academic Labor), those interested in research and creativity, as it pertains to academic labor, often struggled to find sites to locate their work. *ALRA*, like CSAL more generally, hopes to provide a scholarship home for academics who explore these issues.

Established to promote forms of knowledge production and artistic production that expose labor conditions in the academy, *ALRA* exists to motivate research on matters relating to contingency in the academy. The pages of forthcoming issues of this journal will represent a range of contributions, from the statistical to the historic/archival, from the theoretical to the applied, from the researched to the creative, and from empirical to essayist forms. *ALRA*'s editors and reviewers include social scientists, artists, and theorists specializing in labor issues. The goal is to offer a diverse body of scholars, policy-makers, researchers, activists, and artists a location to come together in a spirit of collective strategizing and consciousness-raising about key issues in the academy, particularly as they relate to labor.

The journal is open access to make the issues and content available to as broad an audience as possible, and this same spirit of access and inclusion governs our submission guidelines as well: In future issues of *ALRA*, we hope to present a broad range of genres and approaches to understanding labor in the academy. These genres may include, but are not limited to, reports, policies, position statements, essays, organizing and advocacy toolkits, photographs, photographic essays, personal narratives, social science research, original art, and

reviews in print and multimedia formats. The goal here is to bring into conversation the broadest range of practitioners who are affected by the labor conditions characterizing higher education today.

We are actively seeking submissions on topics such as coalition-building in the academy, collective action and emergent strategy, governance in the academy, hidden labor and cultural taxation among faculty and staff, the place of labor in critical university studies, “labor of love” ideology in the academy, recruitment and retention, and topics pertaining to diversity and inclusion in the academy.

We see this inaugural issue as continuing and spurring on a conversation--a conversation that has taken place across a range of sites: in board rooms, senate hearings, campus hallways; in teachers’ union newsletters and newspaper editorials. *ALRA* exists as a forum for these conversations and for resource-sharing as issues of contingency are addressed on diverse college campuses.

Our inaugural issue explores academic labor from a multitude of fronts. You’ll find personal stories and firsthand accounts of how contingency influences professional identity and professional decision-making. You will also read about academic labor on a larger scale, as articles delve into economic factors surrounding the growth in contingency and the future of unions in higher education.

The scholarship presented in this issue offers a snapshot of some of the far-reaching ramifications of the precarity--affecting not only hiring and retention of faculty and staff, but also curriculum and scholarly output.

Shulman, in “Contingency in Higher Education: Evidence and Explanation” presents a data-driven analysis of casualized faculty hiring. A commonly heard story in higher education is that the increase in part-time and non-tenure-track labor is the direct result of state budget cuts and lower revenue from decreased enrollment. Steven Shulman debunks that myth in “Contingency in Higher Education: Evidence and Explanation.” In this detailed analysis, Shulman looks at the trends and economic factors surrounding contingent employment. Tuition increases have more than made up for budget cuts, and even the wealthiest universities have increased their contingent labor force. So if lack of money is not the cause, then what is? Shulman offers up several reasons for the growth in contingency.

Amy Lynch-Biniak, in her article, “Don’t Rock the Boat,” examines how curricular choices differ between contingent and full-time composition faculty. Lynch-Biniak finds that contingent faculty are more likely to use textbooks and writing assignments based on departmental recommendations. Due to lack of job security, less academic freedom, and feeling disconnected from departmental culture, contingent faculty are less likely to “rock the boat” in their curricular choices.

Kathleen Vacek offers an in-depth examination of what it means for a contingent faculty member to identify as an academic writer. In “It’s Not as Rosy as I’d Like It to Be,” we’re introduced to Elle, a recent Ph.D. grad who struggles to find time to pursue journal publications alongside the demands of a high teaching load, spread among three colleges. Despite her past publications and research distinctions, Elle

strains to find motivation to continue publishing, as it is not required of her as a part-time instructor. Each round of applications that doesn't result in a full-time position serves to further her self-doubt as a researcher and strikes blows to her professional identity.

In "Saying Goodbye to Unions in Higher Education: Labor Policy under the Trump Administration," Raymond L. Hogler offers an historical understanding of labor unions in the U.S. and how they have weakened in recent times. Policies under a Trump administration—including appointments to the National Labor Relations Board and the Supreme Court—are likely to further weaken unions and threaten the American labor movement.

And finally, in "The Labor of Scholarship: Rhetorical Advocacy and Community Engagement," Erik Juergensmeyer suggests that faculty ought to engage more with the community in order to bridge the gap between the academy and the larger world. Using Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* model to explain different types of scholarship, Juergensmeyer argues that faculty should participate in civic discourse and rhetorical advocacy, rather than limiting their expertise to within the college or university. In today's world, where people feel their rights being threatened, a call for the academy to advocate for peoples' rights seems more important than ever.

Please look ahead to our second issue which will focus on discussions of "the slow professor" and efforts by academics to (re)gain control of their professional and personal lives. We see this issue offering solidarity with other workers who are seeking a workplace that demands less than the proverbial pound of flesh--i.e., a workplace that respects one's boundaries and one's dignity. This issue will focus on how faculty, staff, and students persist under current academic conditions. Send us your manuscripts! We hope this issue will generate responses and will fuel a conversation that will take us forward.

We thank the writers appearing in this first issue for bearing with us as we worked out the kinks of the journal, and we also thank our generous peer reviewers. The labor of peer review so often goes uncelebrated but it is on the collegiality of reviewers that so much of academic scholarship depends. We hope you enjoy the inaugural issue of *Academic Labor: Research and Artistry!*

Dr. Sue Doe, Colorado State University

Dr. Janelle Adsit, Humboldt State University

*Jillian Wojcik, Assistant Professor, Social/Behavioral Sciences,
Broward College Online – Florida's Global Campus*

*Dr. Jessica Beard, Executive Director of the West Valley-
Mission Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 6554*

Mary Hickey, Colorado State University



Contingency in Higher Education: Evidence and Explanation

Steven Shulman*

*Department of Economics and Center for the Study of
Academic Labor, Colorado State University*

Abstract

This paper summarizes recent evidence on the trends in contingency in higher education. Contingent faculty employment, defined as the sum of full-time non-tenure track faculty employment and part-time faculty employment, increased both absolutely and relative to all faculty positions between 2002 and 2015, despite a modest downturn after 2011. The long-term growth of contingency since 2002 has primarily occurred in doctoral degree universities. The short-term decline in contingency since 2011 has primarily occurred in public associates' degree colleges and in private for-profit colleges. This short-term decline is due to the contraction of the for-profit sector combined with a one-time drop in public associates' degree colleges. The explanation of the long-term growth of contingency as an inevitable response to financial exigency is rejected. Contingency has increased due to the priorities of higher education administrators, not state budget cuts or other drops in revenue.

*The author is grateful to Adrianna Kezar, Joe Berry, Sue Doe and Maria Maisto for their very helpful comments and conversations.

Contingency has reached astonishingly high levels across higher education. Faculty members off the tenure-track teach most undergraduate classes at most colleges and universities. The tenure system and the protections it provides for academic freedom have been significantly weakened. These trends are one of the major forces

reshaping higher education,¹ and perhaps the most fundamental. Yet it can be difficult to document and interpret faculty employment trends, and to explain their causes.

This paper reports on recent research on trends in contingency from 2002 to 2015. It disaggregates faculty employment by college and university type. It shows that contingency has reached very high levels across all of higher education. It grew significantly from 2002 to 2015 despite a downturn that began in 2011. Its growth since 2002 has primarily taken place in doctoral degree universities. Its decline since 2011 has occurred primarily in public associates' degree colleges and in private for-profit colleges, following the pattern of student enrollments. It demonstrates that the long-term growth in contingency cannot be explained by state budget cuts or other revenue problems. Instead, it is driven by the priorities and choices of college and university administrators.

Trends in Contingency

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)² published by the National Center for Education Statistics is the most comprehensive source of data on faculty employment in the United States, covering all degree-granting colleges and universities as well as many other post-secondary institutions that award certificates in fields such as cosmetology or radiology. IPEDS data has been used to provide snapshots of faculty employment by tenure status in particular years. For example, the American Association of University Professors published a seminal report in 2006 (Curtis and Jacobe) showing that contingent faculty employment increased from 43% of all faculty employment in 1975 to 63% in 2005. Similarly, the Center for the Study of Academic Labor has started an annual series of reports using IPEDS data on faculty and graduate student employment in colleges and universities across the United States. The most recent report (Shulman) shows that contingent faculty employment increased to 65% of all faculty employment by 2014. These figures suggest that the increase in contingency has continued in recent years but at a slower pace. It may have reached a plateau with about two-thirds of faculty employment off the tenure track.

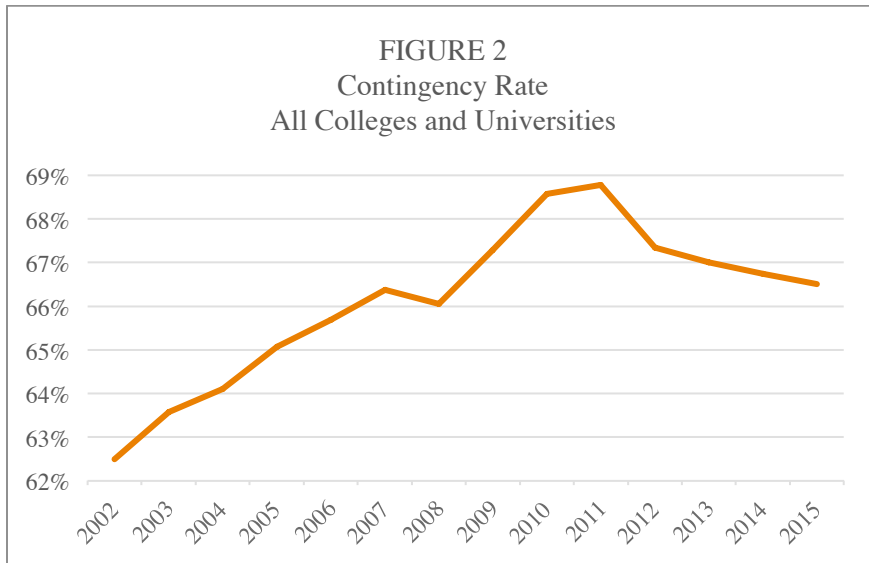
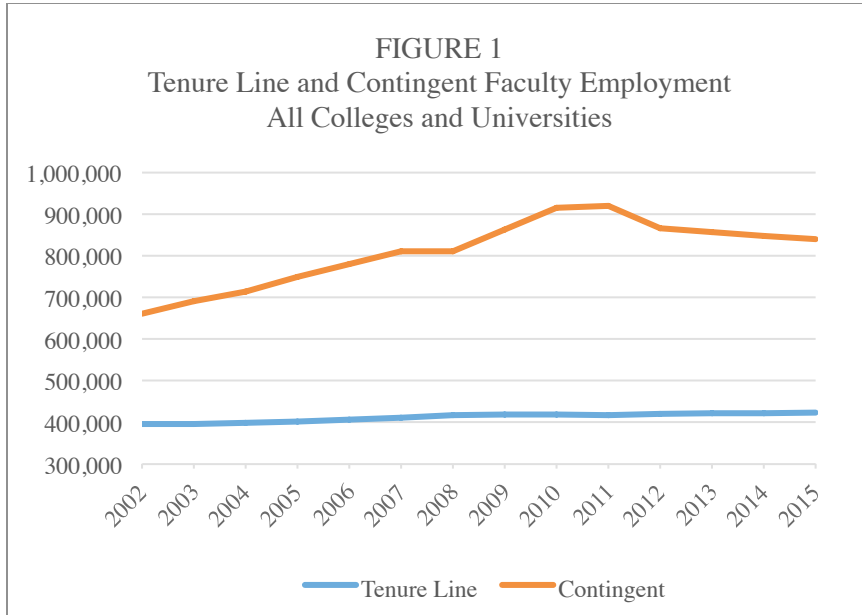
This paper is meant to add detail to these snapshot comparisons by providing consistent measures of contingency with annual IPEDS data since 2002. Prior to that year, IPEDS data on faculty employment varies in its definitions and consistency. The data since 2002 can be broken down by faculty characteristics such as academic rank, tenure status, and full-time/part-time, and institutional characteristics such as institutional type (defined in terms of highest degree granted) and sector (public, private non-profit, and private for-profit). Each year's sample is limited to non-medical faculty employment in degree-granting colleges

and universities.³ Contingent faculty employment is defined as the sum of full-time non-tenure-track faculty employment and part-time faculty employment, almost all of which is off the tenure-track. Contingent faculty positions vary widely with respect to responsibilities (teaching, research and/or administration), compensation, and work conditions. Full-time non-tenure-track positions are usually better-paid and more secure than part-time positions; however, like part-time positions, they lack tenure and the protections it provides for academic freedom. Consequently, the two are combined for an overall measure of contingency in academic labor markets.

Figure 1 shows the trend in contingent and tenure-line (tenured plus tenure-track) faculty employment across all colleges and universities from 2002 to 2015. Over the entire period, the number of tenure-line positions rose by 6.6% while the number of contingent positions rose by 26.1%. The more rapid increase in contingent positions is notable since it starts out on a much larger base than tenure-line positions; however, the increase has not been steady. The number of contingent positions peaked in 2011 and fell slowly thereafter. While it is impossible to know if the decline over these four years will continue, it suggests that contingency may have reached its feasible maximum.

Figure 2 shows the ratio of contingent faculty employment to total faculty employment, or what I will call the “contingency rate.” This ratio is typically used as a summary measure of the extent of contingency.⁴ The contingency rate rose significantly from 62.5% in 2002 to 68.8% in 2011, and then fell to 66.8% by 2015. Thus it reveals two trends: a substantial increase in contingency from 2002 to 2015, extending the long-term increase from the 1970s, and a more modest short-term decline since 2011.

A comparison of Figures 1 and 2 shows that the long-term and short-term trends in the contingency rate have been almost entirely driven by changes in contingent faculty employment (as opposed to changes in tenure-line faculty employment). The remainder of this paper will document and explain these trends.



Disaggregating Contingency

The IPEDS data make it possible to show the trends in contingent faculty employment by institutional type (defined in terms of highest degree offered – doctoral, masters, bachelors or associates degrees) and sector (public, private non-profit, and private for-profit). These breakdowns, shown below in Figures 3, 4 and 5, can provide more insights into the trends in contingency that we seek to explain.

FIGURE 3
Contingent Faculty Employment by Highest Degree Offered
Public Sector

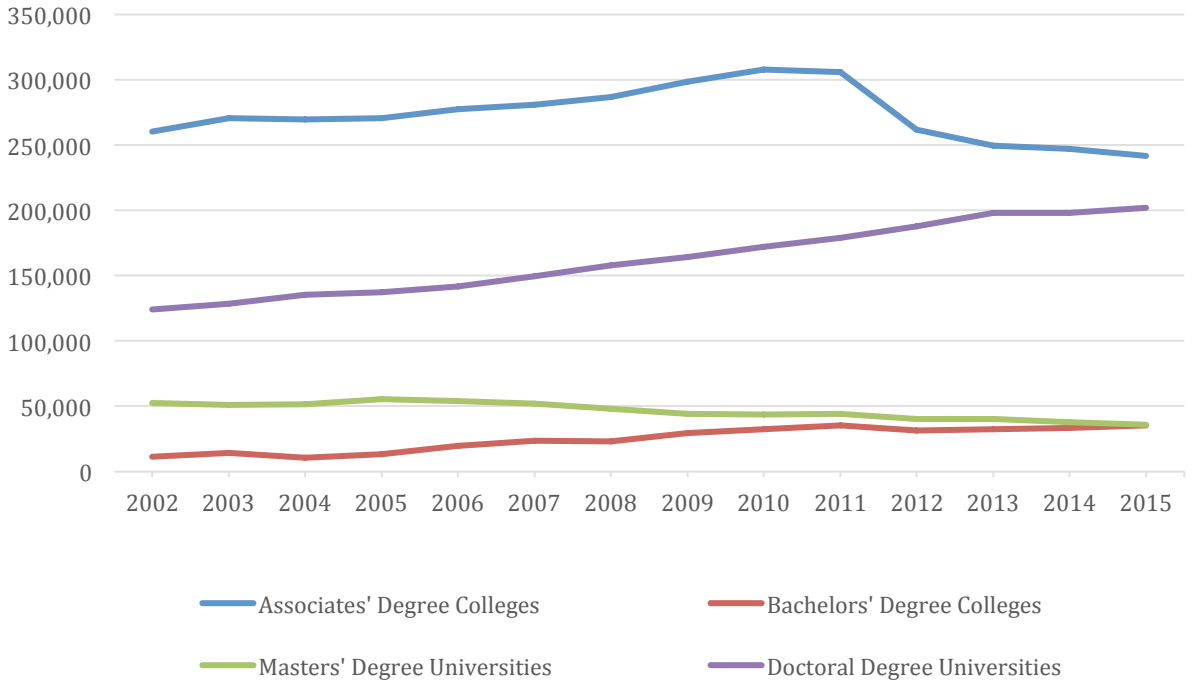


FIGURE 4
Contingent Faculty Employment by Highest Degree Offered
Private Non-Profit Sector

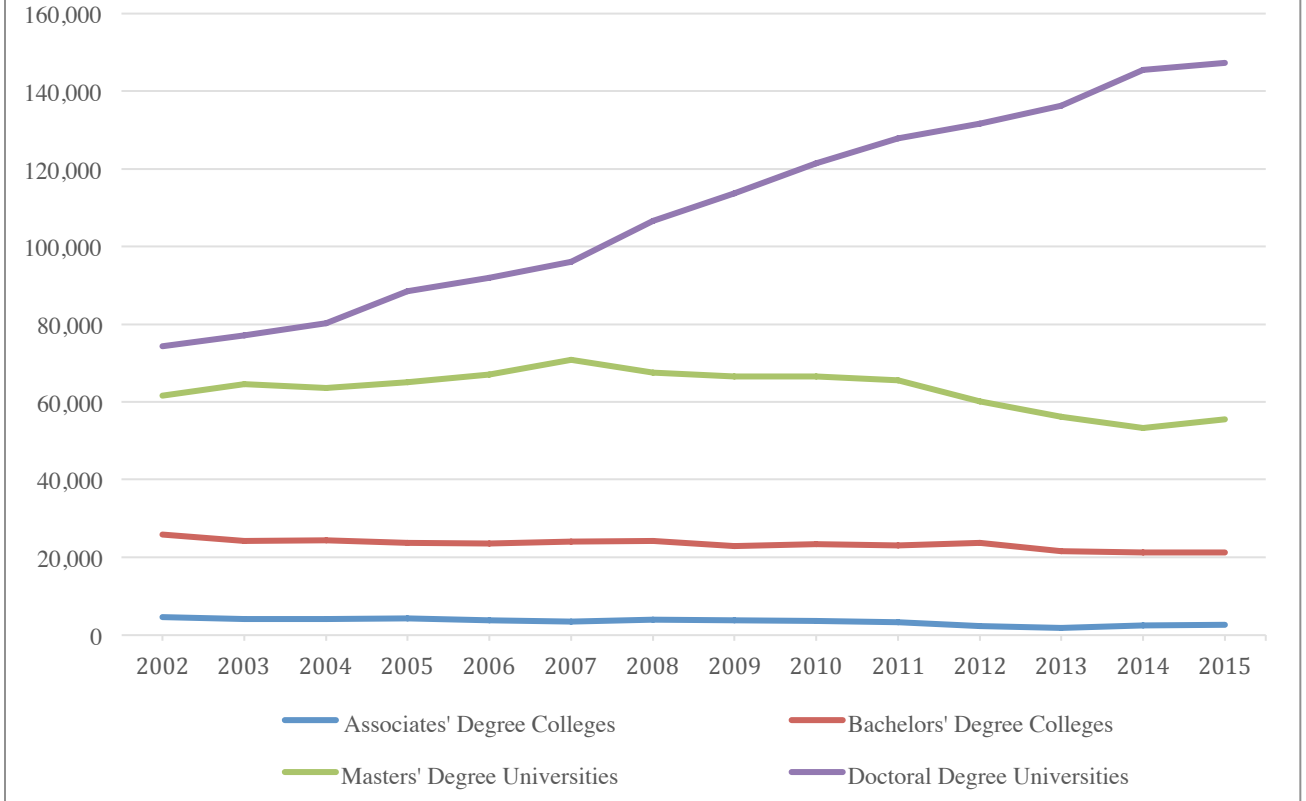
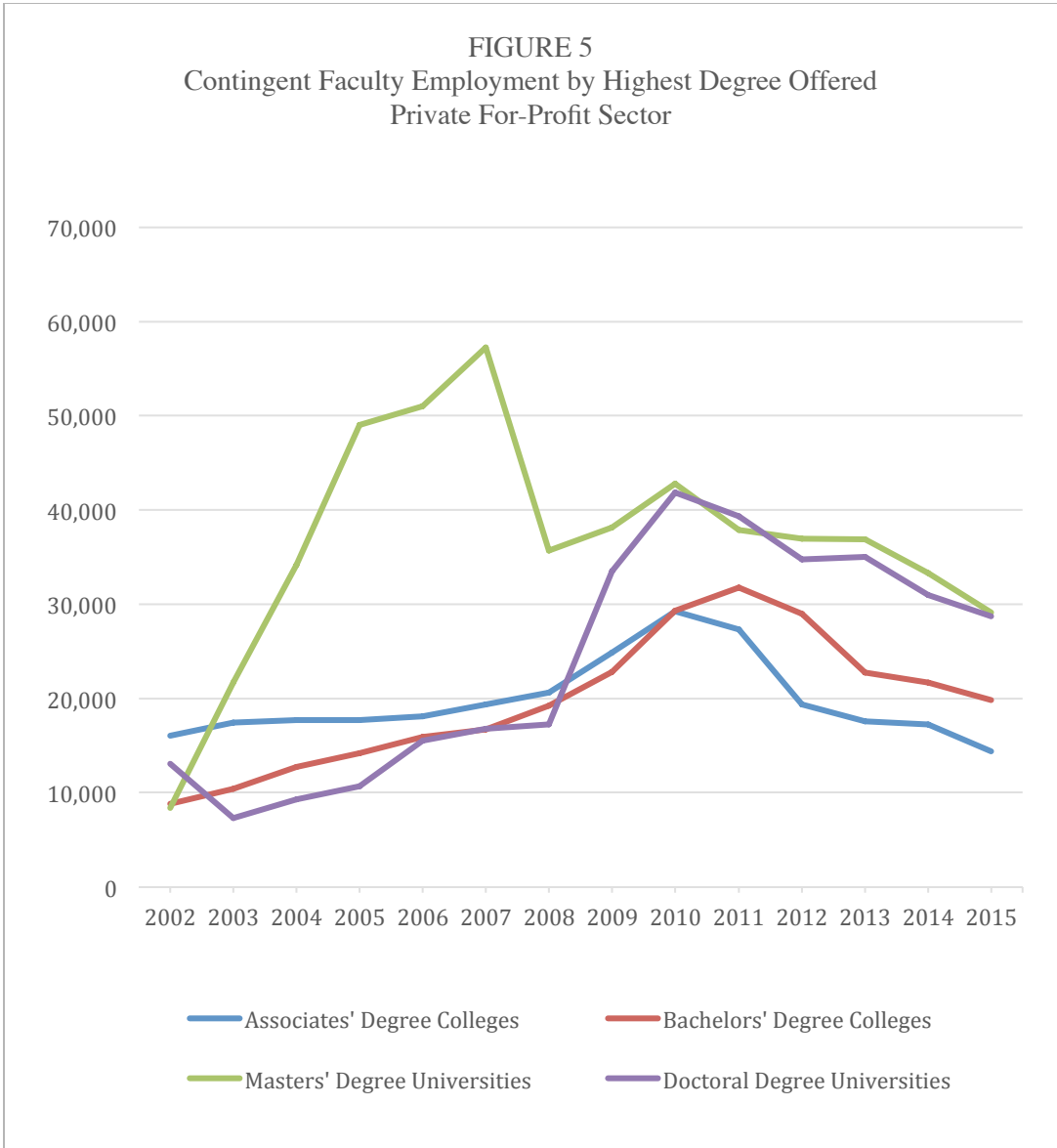


FIGURE 5
Contingent Faculty Employment by Highest Degree Offered
Private For-Profit Sector



Figures 3, 4, and 5 show considerable differences in the trends in contingent faculty employment when broken down by institutional type and sector. These breakdowns can help explain the long-term and short-term trends in contingent faculty employment.

First, the long-term growth in contingent faculty employment since 2002 has been driven primarily by doctoral degree universities in the public and private non-profit sectors. Contingent faculty employment grew much more slowly or declined at other colleges and universities in these two sectors. Contingent faculty employment also grew in the

private for-profit sector from 2002 to 2015 except in associates' degree colleges, but by much smaller numbers (note the differences in scale on the vertical axes when comparing Figures 3, 4 and 5). Contingent faculty employment at public doctoral degree universities will soon surpass its level at public associates' degree colleges if these trends continue. Contingent faculty employment at private non-profit doctoral degree universities has always been higher than its level at associates' degree colleges in the same sector. In terms of both levels and trends, doctoral degree universities now dominate the landscape for contingent faculty employment.

Second, the short-term decline in contingent faculty employment since 2011 is due to a one-time drop from 2011 to 2012 at public associates' degree colleges combined with an across-the-board contraction of the for-profit sector since 2010. Because contingent faculty employment has stabilized at public associates' degree colleges since 2012, and because it continues to rise at public and private non-profit doctoral degree universities, the drop in the aggregate contingency rate since 2011 may be coming to an end.

These trends in contingent faculty employment mirror the corresponding trends in student enrollments. Since 2002, only public and private non-profit four-year colleges and universities have shown consistent enrollment growth. Student enrollment at private for-profit four-year colleges and universities as well as student enrollments at all two-year colleges have been falling since 2011 (NCES, Table 303.25). Consequently, contingent faculty employment has grown at four-year institutions and declined in two-year institutions.

These observations begin to address the questions posed in the previous section. The short-run decline in contingency since 2011 is driven by a fall in the demand for academic labor as student enrollments declined in associates' degree and for-profit colleges. This is only to be expected since these institutions depend almost entirely on contingent faculty for their academic labor force. In contrast, the long-run increase on contingent faculty employment since 2002 is primarily a doctoral university phenomenon.⁵ These universities see expanding enrollments and a much stronger and more diverse financial base. They are non-profit educational institutions that should be, and that claim to be, devoted to the goal of student success. Yet excessive contingency weakens academic freedom and student-faculty relationships, making it more difficult for students to succeed in earning their degrees (Ehrenberg and Zhang; Bettinger and Long). As student enrollments have grown at these institutions, why have they chosen to hire additional contingent faculty rather than additional tenure-line faculty?

Explaining the Long-Run Increase in Contingency

The common story is that contingency has been forced upon unwilling colleges and universities by financial necessity. State budget cuts have decimated public higher education. At the same time, many private institutions are struggling to enroll enough students to fill their available seats. They have to cut back somewhere, the story goes, and since contingent faculty are much cheaper than tenure-line faculty, the shift toward contingency is inevitable, even if it is regrettable.

This story may be true at some colleges and universities, but in general it is false. Tuition revenues at public colleges and universities have risen by much more than state support has fallen. Private colleges and universities have also significantly increased tuition revenues, and even the richest have displayed the same inclination to substitute contingent position for tenure-line positions. The explanation for increased contingency in academic labor markets must lie elsewhere.

Let us begin with public four-year colleges and universities. As I have noted in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, total revenues at these institutions increased by one-third from 2007 to 2015, which includes the years of the worst state budget cuts, largely due to increases in tuition and fees. Colleges and universities are able to raise tuition and fees because they face an inelastic demand for their product: enrollments continued to rise despite increases in tuition and fees. The tuition increases may be excessive and a cause for legitimate concern, but since they more than offset state budget cuts, it shows that public four-year colleges and universities have not increased contingent faculty hiring due to revenue shortfalls. Something else must be driving this dramatic shift in the hiring practices of these institutions.

The same is true of private four-year colleges and universities. At these institutions, total revenues increased by almost 44% from 2007 to 2015. Harvard University, the wealthiest in the world, had 37.3% of its faculty off the tenure-track in 2014 according to the CSAL report, a higher fraction than many other less well-known and less well-endowed private universities, such as the University of Miami (32.5%), Mercer University (25.8%), and the University of Tulsa (25.2%). These observations suggest that the increase in contingency is being driven by factors other than sheer lack of money. If most colleges and universities have been able to increase their revenues, then the real question is not the amount of money at their disposal, but how they have chosen to spend it. Instructional expenditures add up to only about one-quarter of total expenditures at public four-year colleges and universities, and to only about one-third of total expenditures at private four-year colleges and universities (NCES: Tables 334.10 and 334.30). Contrary to common opinion (and perhaps also to common sense), higher education budgets are not mostly about higher education. Instructional expenditures have

grown more slowly than other expenditures, an unsurprising observation given the salary savings that the growth in contingency generates. In particular, administrative positions and salaries have grown more rapidly than faculty positions and salaries (Ginsberg 23-24; Vedder 44-45). Athletic subsidies have also increased markedly, especially due to football programs that are typically huge money losers (Wolverton, et al). Colleges and universities have also engaged in an expensive competition over dorms, student centers, recreational facilities, and other student amenities. The reason that colleges and universities have increasingly turned to contingent faculty to staff their undergraduate classes is not because they have to, but because they can. The central problem is college and university priorities, not state budget cuts or other financial constraints.

Of course, there are other reasons for the growth in contingency aside from spending priorities. For example, the availability of contingent faculty members to teach undergraduate classes frees up tenure-line faculty members for other more prestigious and remunerative responsibilities. In this sense, it could be concluded that tenure-line faculty members benefit from the spread of contingency. Contingency also undermines shared governance and serves as a “divide-and-conquer” strategy for administrators. Contingency provides more flexibility for department chairs and other administrators who cannot fire or move around tenure-line faculty members as student demands for particular courses change. Contingent faculty members make it possible for a wider range of courses to be offered, and for faculty members with “real world” experience rather than traditional credentials to be hired to teach particular classes. It is also notable that the spread of contingency has coincided with the growth of female and minority Ph.D.s since the 1970.

As the professoriate has become less exclusively white and male, contingency has driven down faculty salaries and employment opportunities.⁶ It seems clear that the spread of contingency is an administrative strategy to reduce instructional costs and to use those resources for other priorities: to free up tenure-line faculty from undergraduate teaching and to maximize administrative flexibility and control (Berry 4, 12-16; Ginsberg 163-4; Moser 79-82; Hacker and Dreifus 50-51).

Conclusions

Academic labor markets have undergone a sea change over the past few decades that is fundamentally altering the way that colleges and universities fulfill their educational mission. This worrisome change has occurred despite the fact that college and university revenues have been rising overall, even during the years of the worst state budget cuts. Some colleges and universities face genuine financial difficulties that force

them to economize in every possible way, but most have increased contingent faculty employment out of choice rather than necessity. The problem is not financial constraints, but the priorities and values of administrators who ultimately drive hiring decisions.

By all accounts, contingent faculty members do a remarkably good job teaching undergraduates given all the forces arrayed against them (Hacker and Dreifus 58). Nonetheless, the predominance of contingent faculty in undergraduate education is a legitimate and significant concern. Students taught by part-time faculty members display lower levels of achievement because their instructors are often denied basic resources and are not paid or treated like professionals (Baldwin and Wawrzynski). Contingent faculty members lack academic freedom, the bedrock of educational independence and quality. Their transient status prevents them from building long-term relationships with students or serving as their mentors. The low pay, job insecurity and the absence of professional development opportunities that define too many contingent faculty careers sends a chilling message to undergraduates contemplating graduate school. Their all-too-frequent invisibility in the departments that employ them freezes them out of academic communities and deprives these departments of their expertise and experience. They are hired on the cheap, as though education can be provided on the cheap, and as though that is the message about education that undergraduates should learn.

Colleges and universities can be many things, but first and foremost they are schools. Businesses are supposed to maximize profits. Schools are supposed to maximize learning. Of course, costs have to be kept within reasonable limits, but driving down instructional expenditures to rock bottom while paying football coaches or university presidents seven figure salaries is contrary to the mission and values of higher education. Like all workers, non-tenure-track faculty members deserve fair pay and fair treatment. Students deserve instructors who are treated with respect and whose academic freedom is protected. Expanding the tenure system may not be the only way of achieving these goals, but alternatives need to be explored⁷ if higher education is to live up to its own ideals.

Notes

¹ Other forces reshaping higher education include the explosion of student debt, the rapid growth of online alternatives to traditional residential instruction, the drop in state support to public colleges and universities, the domination of administrative/corporate/donor interests, and the weakening of the liberal arts. See Hacker and Dreifus for a lively overview.

² IPEDS is run by the National Center for Education Statistics within the U.S. Department of Education, online at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/home/usetheedata>.

³ The AAUP report using 2005 IPEDS data further restricted the sample to regionally accredited institutions, excluding tribal colleges, special focus colleges and unclassified institutions. These restrictions were based on Carnegie data that the AAUP researchers merged with the IPEDS data. However, the Carnegie data set stopped including the accreditation variable in its 2015 version. Consequently, it is not used in this paper. The institutions that form the sample in this paper are limited to those that offer an associates' degree, a bachelors' degree, a masters' degree and/or a doctoral degree.

⁴ The contingency rate shows the distribution of faculty positions in a simple and intuitive fashion. However, it does not accurately measure the distribution of faculty resources because it counts part-time faculty positions equally with full-time faculty positions. In order to get a better picture of how higher education is distributing the resources it puts into faculty positions, part-time positions must be adjusted to "full-time equivalents." The average part-time faculty member teaches two courses (calculated from CAW, Table 16), which would typically be defined as half-time employment. Part-time faculty employment thus is weighted by 0.5 to compute its full-time equivalent. A full-time equivalent contingency rate can then be calculated as full-time equivalent contingent positions relative to total full-time equivalent positions. Its pattern is similar to the simple contingency rate, though its level falls about ten percentage points below it. By 2015, 57.0% of full-time equivalent faculty positions were contingent.

⁵ If anything, the figures presented in this paper understate contingency in doctoral degree universities because they do not account for graduate student employees. According to the CSAL report, graduate student employees whose primary responsibility was instruction outnumbered part-time faculty members whose primary responsibility was instruction. Graduate student employees who serve as teaching assistants should not be counted as faculty, but those who teach their own classes are performing the same instructional functions as faculty. The data on graduate student employees do not allow us to distinguish between those who work as teaching assistants and those who teach their own classes, but it is clear that including graduate student employees would increase the measures of contingency at doctoral universities. (The impact is much smaller at master's degree universities, and is negligible at bachelors' and associates' degree colleges.)

⁶ Academic labor markets are like other labor markets insofar as a rising female share of employment within occupations drives down average pay and devalues work (Levanon, England and Allison).

⁷ See Kezar [2012] for examples of models of positive treatment of non-tenure track faculty members.

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Don't Rock the Boat: Curricular Choices of Contingent and Permanent Composition Faculty

Amy Lynch-Binieik
Kutztown University

Abstract

Academic freedom is a keystone of professionalism in higher education, perhaps most immediately in curricular design: the autonomy to create and choose materials for our classrooms. Yet the contingent professoriate majority may lack this freedom in practice, dependent as they are on the approval of students and permanent faculty for continued employment. More concrete data is needed documenting this assumption, as it may carry weight with administrators and aid labor reform efforts. In a case study of an English department in a public university, I examine the textbook choices and sources of writing assignments of contingent and permanent faculty teaching first-year composition. I further inquire into teachers' perceptions of both their freedom to choose materials for courses and their inclusion in the departmental community. I posit that a lack of security and exclusion from departmental culture may result in contingent faculty being less likely to exercise curricular freedoms than their permanent counterparts. Treating contingent faculty as less than professional has limiting effects on curricular decisions.

II began my academic career as an adjunct. In fact, I could have been the poster girl for the freeway flyer: at one point driving among three institutions, working in bullpen offices, and teaching upwards of five courses a semester. Today I have a Ph.D. in Composition and a tenured teaching position in an English Department, but then I had an M.A. in English with a focus in medieval literature and no job security. Like most literature M.A.'s working in higher education, I was mostly teaching first-year composition (FYC). Early on, with little preparation for or understanding of the teaching of writing, I turned to my textbooks to guide me in structuring the courses and their assignments. My initial assumption was that the textbooks' authors knew best; and if they were further recommended by the Writing Program Administrators (WPAs),

they must represent the best textbooks for my contexts. As I gained more experience teaching writing, I began to see the limitations of some of these texts and their assignments, yet I fretted over rejecting them. My classroom experience taught me a great deal, but I doubted it would be as well respected as a curricular rationale compared to the textbooks or the choices of the WPAs. Whether I used them much or not, I dutifully ordered the departments' textbooks each semester.

Textbooks have long held sway in composition. In *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*, Lester Faigley observes that “Teachers answer with the name of a textbook when asked how they teach writing” (133). It is not simply the pedagogical trust some put in textbooks, however, that lend them their influence over curricular choices, including the assignments professors use. At many institutions, contingent faculty are not permitted to choose their own materials, but are given a syllabus, textbook, and list of assignments by the WPA. Others have more ostensible freedom, but are provided with guidance and recommendations. Given such choice, however, do contingent faculty feel that they are pedagogically free in their classrooms?

The potential negative effects of contingency on teachers' curricular choices have long been a part of institutional critiques. For instance, Gwendolyn Bradley contests that, “Largely unprotected against sudden termination of their employment, contingent faculty have every incentive to avoid taking risks in the classroom or tackling controversial subjects” (30). Similar assertions are made by Marc Bousquet (4) and Karen Thompson (45), among many others. While rich in argument and anecdotes, these commentaries often lack the systematic data that would hold greater rhetorical weight with data-driven academic administrators.

Contingency's effects on curricular choices are perhaps particularly pressing in English Studies; contingent faculty teach almost 70% of composition courses housed within English departments ([ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing](#) 50). This is despite a history of fervent critique of the academic labor system from English scholars like Bruce Horner, Eileen Schell, and Bousquet. With so many teaching under the constraints of contingency, it is well worth investigating whether our arguments and assumptions about the effects of labor conditions on curricular choices bear out.

The great variety of contexts under which contingency is enacted makes getting a big picture of the relationship between labor and curriculum especially challenging. For example, as an adjunct, I taught at a university where I was included in departmental discussions of curriculum, and another where I felt obligated to use assignments I had no part in choosing. At one, I had access to regular faculty who could help me in designing my syllabus; at another, I never spoke to tenure-line faculty beyond administrative interactions with the WPA. Cross-disciplinary and multi-institution surveys do not necessarily allow us to see how the specific culture of a campus or department affects faculty's perceptions of their curricular freedom.

For this reason, this study employs case study methodology to investigate whether contingent instructors and permanent faculty make

curricular choices differently in the Composition Program in a single public university. My expectation is that the smaller scale may allow for a deeper consideration of context while also allowing for replication at other sites. Moreover, my intent is *not* to discredit the work of contingent composition teachers, but rather to challenge a labor system that puts them in tenuous employment positions, often out of their disciplines, and with limited resources.

The main points of inquiry are:

- Does employment status influence the curricular choices of composition teachers?
- Do perceptions of inclusion in the academic community intersect with employment status and curricular choices?

What we do know about contingency in higher education reveals faculty and campuses under stress. In June 2012, the Coalition on the Academic Workforce released some of the most revealing, systematic surveying of the workforce in higher education. [The Coalition found](#), in part, that 75.5% of post-secondary faculty are “employed in contingent positions off the tenure track, either as part-time or adjunct faculty members, full-time non-tenure-track faculty members, or graduate student teaching assistants” (1). The Coalition’s survey of the academic workforce joins a handful of systematic, scholarly studies of contingency, many focused on working conditions or student persistence. Analyses of surveys and institutional data reveal hiring trends (Reichard; Benjamin); difficult work loads of faculty and the many obstacles to teaching with contingent status (Baldwin & Chronister; Gappa; Benjamin); and a negative correlation between a school’s number of contingent teachers and student retention and graduation rates (Bettinger & Long; Harrington & Schibik; Eagan and Jaeger; Ehrenberg & Zhang; Jaeger and Eagan; Jaeger). Doe et al. analyze teaching logs of contingent faculty, revealing that teaching, planning and grading dominate their very full work days (435). Contingent faculty in their study also completed quite a bit of scholarship and service, which often went both unsupported and unreported in their departments (438-442). None of this data suggest that adjuncts are poor teachers, but that their working conditions make teaching significantly more difficult. In fact, a 2013 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research “found that new students at Northwestern University learn more when their instructors are adjuncts than when they are tenure-track professors” (Figlio, Schapiro, & Soter, cited in Jaschik).

A large body of research does exist surrounding the concepts of teacher-choice on the secondary education and elementary education levels, considering, for example: teacher-efficacy’s relationship to student achievement (Moore & Esselman); teacher reflection (Marcos, et al; Britzman); teachers’ mediation of texts (Null); teachers’ cultural beliefs about instruction (Duffy); and teachers’ negotiation of educational policies in their classrooms (Coburn).

In higher education, however, teacher choice has not often been the specific subject of review. A closer examination of teachers' choices may lend further weight to the commonplace that our working

conditions, as framed by employment status, directly affect students' learning conditions.

Case Study Design

I examined the textbook and writing assignment choices of three contingent and three permanent faculty teaching FYC in the English Department of a public university (note: the institution under study will be referred to as Public University). Given the history of critique made by Bradley and others, I further inquired into the teachers' perceptions of both their freedom to choose materials for their courses and their inclusion in the departmental community. I did not document their performances or effectiveness in the classroom.

My case study underscores the effects of labor's material conditions, suggesting that contingent faculty have a different course development process that is less disciplinary. The data suggests that, regardless of their often significant experience and expertise, a lack of security and exclusion from departmental culture may result in contingent faculty being less likely to exercise academic freedom in their choices than their permanent counterparts.

The contingent and permanent faculty under study teach FYC in a Mid-Atlantic, public university, one of many in a state system, and located near a large metropolitan area. While the circumstances of contingent and permanent faculty are far from identical at Public University, this site provides both contingent and permanent faculty with ample choice and support under good conditions, and is thus a suitable place to see the impact of job status on curricular choices. The state system pays contingent workers above the national average and provides health care benefits, as well as the shared protection of all faculty by a state-wide union. Moreover, the English Department at Public University frequently hires contingent faculty on full-time contracts, teaching a full schedule of four classes each semester, the same course load as the permanent faculty. To be clear, a full-time contract may last one or two semesters. Faculty may also be hired part-time, meaning that they teach three or fewer courses in the semester for which they are hired. Faculty may be on a full-time contract one semester and part-time the next, depending on departmental need. Yet a disparity persists in how courses are assigned: as in most other institutions nationwide, contingent faculty teach the lion's share of general education composition. In Fall 2013, out of 62 sections of the general education composition courses (Gen Ed Comp), approximately 46 were taught by temporary faculty. All 20 sections of the non-credit bearing Basic Writing course (BW Comp) offered were taught by contingent faculty.

As is common in many FYC programs, the faculty represent a variety of degrees and specialties. The composition director estimated that none of the temporary faculty hold degrees in composition and Rhetoric, that some have M.F.A.'s in Creative Writing, but most hold MAs or Ph.D.'s in Literature. Some of the permanent faculty teaching FYC hold degrees in composition, but many have specialties in Literature.

The six participants in this study are faculty teaching composition at a public university during the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 semesters. Three participants are full-time, contingent faculty, each with the rank of Instructor. Three are permanent faculty, two with the rank of Full Professor and one Associate Professor. All names are pseudonyms.

The temporary faculty:

- Susan, M.F.A. in Creative Writing
- Mindy, M.A. in English Literature
- John, Ph.D. in Curriculum Instruction with a focus in English Education.

The permanent faculty:

- Paul, Ph.D. Composition
- Tom, Ph.D. Composition
- Laura, Ph.D. in English Literature.

My aim was to document the curricular choices of these faculty, choices made possible in a department encouraging of academic freedom. Faculty teaching FYC are not issued standard syllabi, assignments, or textbooks, but instead are provided with a list of recommended texts, sample syllabi, and a guide for constructing syllabi for each level of composition, plus an overview of goals and approaches one may take.

To elucidate the decisions made by my participants, I conducted semi-structured interviews, using [Rubin and Rubin's responsive interview techniques](#). This approach "relies heavily on the interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews" (30). According to Rubin and Rubin, "Constructionist researchers try to elicit the interviewee's views of their worlds, their work, and the events they have experienced or observed" (28). Responsive interviewing is appropriate for this study, concerned with understanding participants' views of a few of their choices made in the context of Public University. Further, critical researchers do not claim "neutrality," and instead "emphasize action research, arguing that research should redress past oppression, bring problems to light, and help minorities, the poor, the sidelined, and the silenced" (Rubin & Rubin 25). Indeed, I don't claim neutrality: I am critical of the current labor system and hope to be an ally for contingent faculty.

I asked faculty to describe the following: the reasons behind their choices of texts in BW Comp and Gen Ed Comp; the origins of the writing assignments they used in these courses; their perceptions of their freedom to choose curricular materials; and their inclusion in departmental culture. I collected syllabi from each participant, cross-checking their references to assignments and texts. Participants were invited to review and revise their statements during drafting.

I applied procedural coding schemes to interview transcripts in order to document the sources of the professors' curricular materials. Codes were revised in collaboration with two additional readers and in response to continuous reflection on the data. Six categories emerged:

publisher-driven; textbook; interactions with students; disciplinary knowledge; colleagues; and administrative recommendation.

References were coded “publisher-driven” when a speaker remarked on the influence of a publisher's representative or loyalty to a specific company when choosing a text. The code “textbook” was used when a professor noted that he or she used an assignment provided in a textbook. When speakers noted choosing or changing a textbook or assignment after students commented on course materials, “interactions with students” was applied. Overt emphasis of disciplinary criteria or specific pedagogical rationales used in selecting materials was coded “disciplinary knowledge.” References were coded “colleagues” when the speaker emphasized that the texts or assignments were used or recommended by respected colleagues. “Administrative recommendation” was applied when teachers noted that they used the text suggested by the department. Readers collaboratively revised coding schemes for reliability until a minimum [Cohen's kappa](#) of 0.70 was reached for each.

I further coded the data, identifying participants' statements about their academic freedom; access to professional development opportunities; their relationship to the department; and their disciplinary expertise. Comparison of variables allowed me to theorize on the relationships between employment status and curricular choices.

Analysis: Curricular Choices and Employment Status

Both permanent and contingent faculty in this study acknowledged their freedom to choose textbooks and assignments and to design their courses within the parameters laid out in the official course description, such as course objectives and the minimum number of written pages required of students. Despite this policy, contingent and permanent faculty exercised their freedom differently, and chose curricular materials for very different reasons.

The Contingent Faculty's Choices of Texts

Contingent faculty most often referred to recommendations from colleagues or from a department administrator when describing their choices of course texts. The influences of publishers and feedback from students were present, but not as prominent. Only one of the three contingent teachers referenced disciplinary knowledge, and he still used the departmentally recommended texts in his courses.

For example, Susan often referred to consulting with colleagues in our interview: “I chose the text [for Gen Ed Comp] because other faculty members recommended it. I compared it to another recommendation and found it more engaging to read with better questions and writing prompts.” Susan emphasized the community that forms among contingent faculty in the department, especially when four or more of them may share a single office, and underscored the way colleagues become resources for each other. She says, “We're coming from different backgrounds. So we've gotten together at times or we've informally exchanged, ‘Here's an assignment that I give that does this,’ or ‘Here's a textbook recommendation,’ or something like that. But that's

been pretty organic, and that's been from us expressing a need for help with different things and reaching out to each other.”

For Gen Ed Comp, Mindy used the department-recommended text “for many years and never really loved” it. Despite this, only in her *seventh* year working at Public University did she choose a different text, prompted by feedback from students.

John uses the recommended texts in each writing course, but supplements them with texts of his own choosing. Among the contingent faculty I interviewed, only John overtly explained his choices of texts in disciplinary terms. For example, describing a supplemental text in Gen Ed Comp, he explains that he chose a *New York Times* non-fiction bestseller “because that’s really like the exact model that I want them to do, where [the author is] in the writing and she’s really participating in it. But she’s using research to support what she’s seeing.” Despite John’s disciplinary reasoning for choosing these texts, he clearly feels obligated to include the department’s recommended texts in his courses, saying, “Now, we can choose the books that we want, but those are recommended. So coming in here, I’m not going to rock the boat.”

In each case, interactions in the college community most influence contingent faculty’s choices of text, whether taking the advice of trusted colleagues, responding to student needs, or shielding oneself from the judgement of tenure-line professors.

The Permanent Faculty’s Choices of Texts

In stark contrast to their contingent colleagues, permanent faculty all referred solely to disciplinary knowledge when discussing their choices of texts, with no overt mention of feedback from students, suggestions from colleagues, departmental recommendations, or the influence of publishers. Tom, however, does use the recommended text for the first level of Gen Ed Comp. Initially, he served on the committee that chose this text for recommendation. It’s not surprising then, that Tom explains his use of the text in terms of its pedagogical approach, using disciplinary language: “it’s got a pretty progressive critical consciousness as far as understanding rhetoric in the world, multiple genres involved, and also it approaches writing with the assumption that communities of discourse and genres matter.”

Of the two permanent faculty who did not use the recommended texts, neither used a conventional textbook. Instead, they use nonfiction texts not composed specifically for classroom use. For example, Paul explains why he chose to work with a memoir for the second level of Gen Ed Comp: “I can teach research methods better than any of the textbooks I know of. I assign [a memoir] because I want them to read one long text in the course and it fits the theme of the course really well.” Here, Paul is relying on his professional and disciplinary expertise.

Laura cites her research interests in accuracy (regarding how, and why, and to what extent writers document their research) as one reason for choosing a nonfiction text, which her students partially fact-check. She also describes choosing the book for pedagogical reasons, negatively assessing conventional texts in the process: “When I teach the research writing course, I don’t like the textbooks that are usually used

because they don't show documentation and the type of research that we're asking our students to do. So I'm always looking for nonfiction work that has lots of footnotes and lots of research so I can say, 'Here's how it actually works in the world.'"

Given that Tom helped to choose the recommended text he uses, we can say that the permanent faculty each display a greater autonomy in text selection than their contingent counterparts; they rely less on input from students, colleagues, and the department.

The Contingent Faculty's Sources of Writing Assignments

When discussing the sources of their writing assignments, contingent faculty in this study were more likely to cite colleagues, textbooks, and feedback from students as influential. In fact, none of the three directly referenced disciplinary knowledge when discussing their choices of assignments.

As with her discussion of textbooks, Susan values input from colleagues in her choices of assignments. When asked about the sources of the specific assignments listed on her syllabus, Susan noted that she adapts and revises assignments that she exchanges with colleagues: "I looked at what other instructors do, at [Public University] and other schools, and then used those for inspiration as I created my own assignments." In addition to personal exchanges with colleagues, Susan uses materials provided as models by the department as well.

When asked to describe her assignments, Mindy referenced the writing modes listed in her textbook's table of contents. But Mindy does not limit herself to the textbook's offerings, relying as well on exchanges with colleagues in her decision making. For example, in describing the sequence of work in one course, Mindy notes that she might omit the profile assignment after conferring with her officemates and finding that her students may have already completed a profile during the previous semester. Further, students create a magazine in her course, an assignment she got "from a colleague."

Likewise, John uses a combination of assignments from the recommended textbooks and those adapted from colleagues' work. He does occasionally use an assignment of his own design, as in a Letter of Introduction project in BW Comp. Similar to some of Susan's and Mindy's methods, John constructed this piece to allow him to better address students' instructional needs: "I originally did that when I started teaching, because we were new to the area and I just wanted to kind of find out more about my students and where they were coming from and what their motivations were. ... And it brings out some of those kinds of themes that you as a teacher can then shape instruction based on what their needs are."

As with textbooks, a web of considerations influences the contingent faculty's choices of assignments, yet their confidence in their freedom to create assignments of their own from scratch seems limited.

The Permanent Faculty's Sources of Writing Assignments

When asked to explain the sources of their assignments, each permanent faculty member described the disciplinary knowledge behind the design or adoption of materials. For example, Paul explains his use of ethnographic assignments with references to Nancy Mack's "Writing for Change: When Motive Matters," describing Mack's pedagogical approach and its influence on his own: "students do ethnographic research on issues of local ... concern so that they can develop primary knowledge that helps them contest, disagree with, respond to the 'sages...'. That essay is probably as fundamental to my thinking about research writing assignments as they get." At one point, Paul notes that his graduate thesis and dissertation were "about ethnographic writing pedagogy." He also comments on the freedom he has in the department to use this approach in his assignments: "So I don't mean to say that it's an obvious or even a good choice; it's one that intuitively works for me, and I'm fortunate to work in a place where I can have that option."

Laura also feels the freedom to design coursework according to her own training and research interests in accuracy. When describing the theme of other assignments she designed for Gen Ed Comp, Laura emphasized her desire for students to connect to the projects, specifically with one inviting them to explore issues within their majors. She wanted them to avoid work that "they feel is just an exercise for the class." Instead, "it should have something to do with them." Feedback from students, in which they express the relevance of the writing they produce in the course, plays a role in her choices as well.

When asked about the source of a letter of argument assignment, Tom explained that while a version of it does appear in the department-recommended text, he has disciplinary reasons for adapting the text's assignment. He sees a textbook as a source of authority beyond the teacher and the classroom, one the students need in order to feel secure in making decisions: "I know students do need some securities, and a textbook, I think, gives them some security. It tells them I'm going to push you hard, but this is, after all, a class. It is within the university. ... I am preparing you to be successful in that institutional context. So yes, we have a textbook." Tom's reasoning implies that he sees the textbook as a totem and a rhetorical tool that helps students to position composition within their existing understanding of academic study.

Discussion

While they are technically free to choose any text, contingent faculty in this study each used at least one conventional textbook. This may be an indication that those with contingent employment status, despite assurances to the contrary, do not perceive their curricular freedom as absolute. Working on a yearly contract, contingent faculty may be wary of seeming unconventional or out of line with departmental expectations. As a result, they may make some choices with the additional motivation of not "rocking the boat," as John indicated, avoiding scrutiny.

This pattern may extend to assignment choices as well. Even while each contingent professor described remixing the assignments of colleagues, they each also relied on the authority of the textbook, using

some of their ready-made assignments. When contingent teachers did risk making a change, as in remixing assignments from textbooks or other faculty, they did so with the impression of their students' needs in mind—indeed, contingent faculty in this study were very much concerned with their students' learning.

In contrast, permanent faculty in this study referenced disciplinary knowledge exclusively when choosing their texts, and dominantly when describing the sources of their assignments. The disciplinary expertise of Paul and Tom, both with degrees in Composition and Rhetoric, may certainly explain some of their curricular independence. However, Laura, with a degree in Literature, demonstrates the same autonomy. This suggests that the teachers' permanent employment status may also afford them a greater sense of freedom and safety from which to choose materials.

Other factors may affect teachers' choices of texts and assignment design beyond expertise and employment status. For example, the allocation of office space may play a role in contingent faculty's extensive reliance on colleagues. At Public University, permanent faculty are usually assigned two to an office and may arrange schedules to give each other private access. On the other hand, contingent faculty are often in offices housing four or more colleagues, making time alone in the space scarce. Susan's office holds six professors, and Mindy's four. John is situated in a large open room filled with at least a dozen cubicles. Yet the contingent faculty each expressed contentment with their proximity to colleagues, if not with the state of the facilities. They liked being able to discuss work with officemates. Of course, faculty are put in these "bullpen" offices because they are contingent and are housed only with other temporary instructors, so ultimately this increased networking connects to employment status.

While contingent faculty did not frequently reference disciplinary knowledge, they may indeed have disciplinary reasons for choosing methods and materials. They may not have the disciplinary *language* to describe their choices: without specific or extensive training in composition, they may rely on the language of *lore* to explain their practices. *Lore*, coined in this context by Stephen North, is "the accumulated body of traditions, practices, and beliefs in terms of which Practitioners understand how writing is done, learned and taught" (22). North positions *lore* in contrast to *theory*: knowledge gained via systematic, disciplinary study and analysis rather than through teaching practice alone. I am relying on the interview transcripts and participants' syllabi to categorize their reliance on disciplinary knowledge; while revealing, these sources are not necessarily panoptic. As George Hillocks notes, teachers' "performance may reveal what they know more than what they say" (22).

Further, my interpretation of available data is not meant to suggest that contingent faculty don't think in disciplinary terms, only that that they did not reference disciplinarity as the impetus for their choices. Significantly, the interviews suggest that even if teachers have pedagogical reasons to reject a common text or assignment, they may, like Mindy, continue using it for years, or, like Tom, still order and use a

departmental text alongside those they prefer. They are cautious of exercising their academic freedom.

Further analysis of the interviews suggest that teachers' methods and materials are shaped by their perception of freedom, security, and community, all relative to employment status. While contingent faculty in this study made connections with individual colleagues, they did not seem to feel connected to the department community at large. Each described their place in the community in outsider terms, even while noting that their conditions are better than at other institutions.

For example, Susan commented on the term I chose for temporary employees in this study, *contingent*, saying, "It makes us feel like we're floating off, not connected to everything, which is pretty representative I would say, a lot of times of how we are." Mindy emphasizes that Public University treats adjuncts better than some institutions she worked for previously. Despite the better circumstances, Mindy admits that the culture of the campus is not perfect: "The conversations, you know, 'What do we do with those adjuncts?'... I mean, there's a lot of gossip down here. We all hate it because there's no security. We just feel like our jobs are constantly up in the air."

The contingent faculty's sense of disconnection from the department, of being treated as a separate and distinct group of faculty—"those adjuncts"—rather than as equal colleagues, may be exacerbated by their exclusion from department meetings. Tom explained that temporary faculty are "allowed to" attend and are always informed about department meetings. At the same time, these teachers contractually don't have a vote on some issues discussed at department meetings and aren't consulted on others; Tom noted that the "only relevant issues" that temporary faculty would encounter at these meetings are "policies to be applied *to* them." My interviews with contingent faculty suggest that they have come to believe that these meetings are indeed not for them, that their attendance is not encouraged or particularly wanted. Moreover, most permanent faculty are not perceived as helpful in providing the context necessary for contingent teachers to follow the discussion in meetings.

Mindy offered that, "I've been to a couple, but I really don't know what they're talking about. So I sort of leave because it really does feel like it's a different kind of clock." John described occasions when he attended department meetings, during which he and other contingent faculty were not treated as colleagues, often spoken about as if they were not in the room. John also noted that if they aren't actively encouraged to attend meetings, it may be because "we're not expected to do anything but teach."

While the state-wide contract does in fact indicate that temporary faculty should be evaluated on teaching, service, and scholarly growth, contingent faculty in the English department at Public University do not seem to be held to these obligations, including attending department and committee meetings. Rather than simply creating a sense of freedom to focus on teaching, however, the result is, in part, a sense of disconnect from the departmental community. The stress of working on semester-to-

semester contracts may contribute to this disconnect. Mindy observes, “we just want two year contracts. One year contracts, even!”

Tenured faculty member Tom believes that the above-average pay and benefits for contingent teachers at Public University, coupled with his sense of the faculty’s community, are resources that can lead to better work: “Again, there is that sense of community. That itself is a resource. ...the fact that you’ve got good pay with a union contract, and people know they’re going to be evaluated fairly, that politics in terms of disciplinary positions aren’t going to play into things, that itself is a resource.” Certainly, each contingent teacher I interviewed commented on the superior conditions at Public University as compared to other institutions that employed them. Yet those circumstances don’t seem to have created a sense of belonging among the temporary faculty, and this disconnect may affect their choices. Contingent faculty in this study did not exercise their academic freedom to choose texts and design assignments in the same ways as permanent faculty. The knowledge that they can be let go at the end of any semester, that they may lose health benefits, that, essentially, the institution has not committed to them, may lead contingent faculty to make safer, more conventional curricular choices which are less likely to come under scrutiny.

Participants’ discussion of professional development (teacher training) further suggests that inclusion in the community affects curricular choices. That is, faculty who are well informed about departmental policies and resources, and who feel included in the departmental community, might be better able and willing to access professional development resources that may affect their work. I posit that as they were treated as a separate class of faculty, distinct from the permanent faculty, they were disinclined to take advantage of campus-wide resources intended for all teachers. Instead, they expected that contingent teachers would be offered some class of assistance specifically for them. In the absence of such, they didn’t often participate. They also noted the need for mentoring from permanent faculty.

For example, I asked John if he felt that he had a professional support system in the department. He responded, “I’ve learned that you want to stay off the radar,” further explaining, “you just kind of figure it out on your own.” Mindy, too, expressed the need for mentoring when she first arrived, and described taking it upon herself to learn what she needed to perform her job.

When I asked Susan if the department offered her professional development, she said, “The short answer is no, not really. The longer answer is sometimes things are offered, but, as adjunct faculty, we are either not required to participate, or sometimes, we’re not even encouraged or supported.”

On the other hand, permanent faculty felt more connected to the departmental community and its resources. For example, Tom explained, “it’s a fact that I’ve got a fantastically, scholarly, energetic, supportive, and collegial group of friends...there are about fifteen of us who are Ph.D. trained composition specialists, tenured, or on the tenure-track. And we approach each other with projects in mind.” In stark contrast,

contingent professor John is wary of approaching permanent faculty for support in the same way Tom does: “I just don’t want to bother anybody. Their time is precious.” In fact, Tom admitted that he does not have strong ties with the contingent faculty, due to time, limited space, and the size of the department: “the truth is, I don’t know them all so well.”

The contingent faculty who participated in my study like their jobs, work hard, and excel. They also know that the pay, benefits, and culture at Public University are better than what adjuncts find at many other institutions. Even so, their employment status clearly affected their work.

Several limitations to this study exist. First, the participants may have reasons for their choices of methods and materials above and beyond those stated and implied during the interviews. Moreover, I did not attempt to gauge the actual effects of employment status on professors’ teaching; each may have successes and challenges in the classroom and in the campus community unaccounted for, beyond the participants’ perceptions of their own work and positions. In the same vein, correlating employment status with actual student outcomes in the form of grades or other assessments is beyond the scope of this study. Finally, more case studies in more sites and contexts are needed to test the theories I have offered. To begin, I hope to replicate this study at a community college and a research-intensive university. I encourage other researchers to adapt my methodology and conduct similar studies at other sites as well.

Conclusions

In *College English*, Monica F. Jacobe (as cited in Doe and Palmquist) observed:

If we combine the facts of contingent academic labor conditions made clear by statistical data and anecdotal evidence (like that of Schell and Vincent Tirelli) with theories about how the human mind shapes an identity, we can begin to see that the isolation and exile of contingent faculty common across the disciplines and across institution types create a body of faculty who are likely to see themselves as outsiders and outcasts, taking on and expressing all of the psychological traits thereof (380).

My case study suggests that this may indeed be true. Exclusion from the departmental community may result in faculty being less likely to exercise academic freedoms and participate in professional development. This exclusion need not take the form of open animosity, as this case study demonstrates. The contingent faculty I interviewed did not see malice in the permanent faculty’s behavior, but poor communication and lack of encouragement go a long way to make teachers feel like outsiders. Moreover, simply being *allowed* to attend department meetings is not sufficient to establish a sense of mutual respect and inclusion—something contingent faculty want and deserve. Permanent faculty might better demonstrate both if they not only talked *about* contingent teachers, but made much greater efforts to talk *to* them, both

during and after department meetings. Contingent faculty should be made a part of the discussions of issues facing the department as a whole, even when they do not have the right to vote on policy. If their opinions as professionals in higher education and classroom teachers are treated as valuable to the departmental community, they may be more likely to act more freely as professionals and teachers. Indeed, departments are surely less informed and less rich when they ignore the insights, study, and experiences of a significant portion of their faculty. Considering the community beyond the department is just as important, of course. Even if tenure-track and tenured faculty did not make them feel like outsiders, the larger university system consistently reinforces that contingent faculty are different, too often with the implication that they are therefore also *lesser*.

Importantly, the lack of security that accompanies contingency may result in the perception that curricular freedom is not absolute. Temporary employees may want to avoid scrutiny, making “safe” choices. While successful teaching and learning can happen under these circumstances, the practice is not equivalent to teachers with disciplinary expertise, confidence in academic freedom, and secure positions applying their knowledge to course design. Given that higher education places a great deal of significance on the literacy learning of students, it makes much more sense to employ and provide teachers with the expertise, security, respect and support needed to excel. Our students and our teachers—all of them—deserve it.

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“It’s Not as Rosy as I’d Like It to Be”: A Literacy-and-Identity Case Study of a Contingent Academic (Not) Writing for Publication

Kathleen Vacek
University of North Dakota

Abstract

For academics hovering between contingent and permanent status, getting publications on the CV can make the difference—or can it? Looking closely at engagement with professional academic literacy practices offers meaningful insights into academic labor. This article considers the case of a newly-minted Ph.D. working a collection of contingent jobs while aspiring to publish and obtain a permanent position. In the face of a heavy teaching load and disheartening job search, Elle Stewart (a pseudonym), decides to put off writing. She disidentifies with the discourse of being an academic and disengages from professional academic literacy practices, despite a life history full of success with academic writing. This case study takes an academic literacies approach and uses a framework of discursively constructed writer identity to consider how Elle’s literacies and identities mediate one another. While personalizing many of the dilemmas of contingent labor, the case study also considers Elle’s painful disconnection from research and the structural factors that lead her to feel shut out of professional academic writing.

For some academics, publications are a ticket out of a contingent position into a tenure-track one. Once on the tenure-track, additional publications become the ticket to tenure. For departments and institutions, counting publications by faculty members is a way to quantify the labor force’s research productivity. But before any of those texts can be counted, before they are published and enshrined on the CV or institutional document, they must be researched, drafted, revised, submitted, revised, and resubmitted. How—and whether

or not—an individual academic engages in professional academic writing practice is a dynamic process that is itself the result of countless other processes in the writer’s past and present, and in her sociocultural world. Looking closely at professional academic literacy practices in unique contexts offers meaningful insights into academic labor. For example, examining how departmental practices factor into an academic’s decisions about writing for publication inspires reconsideration of the effects of those practices and reflection on a department’s goals for its labor force.

This article offers a case study of Elle Stewart (a pseudonym), a newly-minted Ph.D. who is working a trio of contingent jobs while on the market, hoping for something permanent, benefitted, and, ideally, with resources for research. Elle’s case study is of interest because it illustrates what leads her to defer writing. While personalizing many of the dilemmas of contingent labor, the case study also considers Elle’s painful disconnection from research and the structural factors that lead her to feel shut out of professional academic writing. Analyzing Elle’s case study through Roz Ivanič’s framework for writer identity shows how Elle’s negative experiences in the academic labor market lead her to disidentify with professional academic discourse and disengage from professional academic literacy practices. Because Elle perceives mixed signals about the value of a publication record for the various jobs she is applying to, and therefore feels conflicted about publishing, her case study offers hiring departments an invitation to consider how their practices either encourage or discourage publications by non-tenure track faculty, and what may be gained or lost for both the department and the individual.

Literacy, Identity, and Academic Labor

Moje and Luke define *literacy-and-identity studies* as “the move to study identity’s relationship to literacy and literacy’s relationship to identity” (416). According to Moje and Luke, this move has been motivated by interests in: 1) the actor’s role in literate and social practices, 2) the ways identity labels privilege and marginalize readers and writers, and 3) how people demonstrate agency and power when engaging with texts. Moje and Luke also observe that researchers conceptualize both literacy and identity in many ways, even when they are all coming from a sociocultural perspective—that is, a perspective aimed at understanding people’s interactions, activities, or practices within social and cultural contexts.

The conceptual frameworks used in this research grow out of New Literacy Studies (Gee; Street), a body of research which re-conceptualized literacy from an autonomous skill to socially situated uses of reading and writing. Street distinguished between the *autonomous* and *ideological* models of literacy, two different stances he observed in research on literacy. Researchers subscribing to the *autonomous* model viewed literacy as a neutral, technical skill. Literacy was something people had or didn’t have. But, as Street pointed out, the literacy people supposedly had or didn’t have was actually just one particular way of using reading and writing (usually a dominant,

Western, school-based way). In contrast, researchers subscribing to the *ideological* model “attempted to understand literacy in terms of concrete social practices and to theorize it in terms of the ideologies in which different literacies are embedded” (95). From this social practice perspective, literacy is something people do and what they think of what they do. It is social, it is purpose-driven, and it happens in specific contexts. Seeing literacy this way, it quickly becomes apparent that there are many different ways of doing reading and writing—many different *literacies*—and that different literacies are valued differently depending on the values of the social contexts in which they occur.

Taking that reconceptualization to higher education settings is the academic literacies approach: “a critical and social practice perspective on writing and reading in the academy” (Lillis, et al. 6), which emphasizes practice over texts, is rooted in participants’ perspectives on their texts and practices, and views options for meaning-making as contested (Lillis and Scott). Since first described by Lea and Street, academic literacies research has placed identity at the center of understanding reading and writing in academic contexts. As Lea and Street put it, the academic literacies approach “views student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialization” (“Academic Literacies,” para. 5). Participating in the social context of higher education involves practicing particular ways of knowing and enacting particular identities.

Within the New Literacy Studies framework, a way to conceptually link literacy and identity is through Gee’s notion of *Discourse*, which is:

a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (143).

Understood this way, a *Discourse* is an “identity kit” (Gee 142). According to Gee, everyone acquires a primary *Discourse* at home, and multiple secondary *Discourses* in social contexts outside the home. Literacy is mastery of a secondary *Discourse*. Particular ways of using reading and writing may be included among the ways of using language in an identity kit.

Given this focus on identity, academic literacies researchers need a robust conceptual framework for identity. In her book, *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*, Ivanič synthesized work from New Literacy Studies, discourse studies (including Gee’s ideas described above), and studies of social interaction (such as Goffman’s work on everyday social interactions) to develop a multifaceted framework for writer identity, which she further detailed in a set of case studies of mature students in higher education. In this framework, writer identity is “constructed in the interaction between a person, others, and their sociocultural context. It includes the ‘self’ that a person brings to the act of writing, the ‘self’ she constructs through the

act of writing, and the way in which the writer is perceived by the reader(s) of the writing” (Burgess and Ivanič 232). Using Ivanič’s approach, a researcher can focus in on any of the multiple facets of writer identity and consider how the elements interact. Two of Ivanič’s aspects of writer identity proved to be particularly salient in this study. First, the *autobiographical self* is “the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discursal history” (Ivanič 24). Second, *possibilities for self-hood* are “abstract, prototypical identities available in the sociocultural context of writing” (Ivanič 23). Elle’s case study renders elements of a life story taking place in personal and academic settings; analysis of the case study draws on both of these aspects of writer identity to consider how and why Elle disengages from professional academic writing practice.

A few other researchers have successfully used the academic literacies approach and Ivanič’s writer identity framework to study professional academic writers. Lea and Stierer explore academic identities through interviews about everyday workplace documents. Taking an academic literacies approach and viewing writing as central to the discursal construction of identity, Lea and Stierer asked their participants, 30 academics from three different UK universities, to select “three documents they had recently written, contributed to or worked on” (“Lecturers’ Everyday Writing” 422), which would be the focus of an interview. The aim was to understand academic practice—and from there identity—through discussion of everyday documents. “In order to gain an understanding of writing as professional practice, we needed to examine the texts in detail ‘close up’ with their authors – not just because the texts carry the meaning along, but because they instantiate practice” (“Lecturers’ Everyday Writing” 422). Lea and Stierer found that “considerable ‘identity work’ is involved in producing and working with everyday documents” (“Lecturers’ Everyday Writing” 426). Their participants used writing “to maintain power and authority and assert their own identities in the changing context of higher education” (“Changing Academic Identities” 612). Additionally, Lea and Stierer’s analysis challenges the primacy of disciplinary writing in academic identity construction: “academic identity also involves becoming adept at engaging in a range of written genres which are often far removed from such traditional academic writing” (“Changing Academic Identities” 615). Lea and Stierer’s work presents professional academic writing as workplace writing while highlighting academic workers as empowered individuals.

In her academic literacies study of how researchers negotiate between conflicting demands, Nygaard develops a theoretical model of research productivity as an interaction of identity and environment. She argues that “productivity will depend greatly on the researcher’s subjective understanding of their own identity (including abilities, desires, and fears); their subjective interpretation of their institutional environments (including expectations and values); and their own (perceptions of) agency within these constraints” (Nygaard 10). In Nygaard’s model, identities incorporate experiences of practice and their impact on beliefs about the self: “the experience of publishing (or not

publishing), and whether this output is valued (or not valued), will feed back into the researcher's beliefs about themselves (e.g. competent or incompetent)" (Nygaard 11). The reciprocal relationship continues as researchers weigh institutional demands and their own goals and "the concrete practices that result depend on what kind of ideas they have about themselves" (Nygaard 12). Nygaard's model captures the mediating relationship of literacies and identities in a particular context of academic labor.

Contingency and College Writing Teachers; A Division of Teaching and Research Labor?

The research reported in this article is situated in a U.S. higher education context, that of the college writing teacher. In the U.S., most faculty in English departments are part-time and non-tenure-track (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing). In fall 2006, English departments surveyed indicated that 36.2% of the faculty were full-time tenured and tenure-track, 12.6% were full-time non-tenure-track, 23.9% were part-time, and 27.3% were graduate student TAs (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing 30). While this faculty labor distribution reflects U.S. higher education as a whole—in 2011, over 70% of faculty in U.S. higher education were off the tenure-track (Laurence)—it is a much-discussed issue in English Studies and in Composition specifically. At doctoral/research universities in fall 2006, 98% of all first-year writing courses were taught by faculty off the tenure-track; at master's institutions, it was 87% (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing 51).

So most writing teachers, and most faculty in English departments, are *contingent* faculty, "those who teach without the job protections and material and economic privileges of tenure" (Schell 172). Full- and part-time non-tenure-track faculty members are "often invisible to the public and policy makers, as well as to colleagues and administrators in the institutions where they are employed" (Laurence 6). English Studies' professional organizations, greatly concerned by the marginalization of contingent faculty since at least the 1980s, have responded to the situation with an "evolving discourse," as Doe and Palmquist relate: the initial response was to argue for the importance of tenure (unfortunately, disparaging contingent faculty along the way), then to promote ethical treatment for contingent faculty, and, most recently, to advocate for some kind of tenure or job security for part-timers. Doe and Palmquist propose that a new kind of tenure would focus on just teaching or just research. This split would reproduce what the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing points to as the source of the two-tiered system: a separation of the functions of research and teaching. As Bartholomae elaborates, "the use of a multitiered faculty is part of the history of English instruction in the United States [...] it is hard to see an end to a differential investment in teaching and research" (Bartholomae 26). These arguments make it seem that 'the haves' and 'have-nots' in English Studies are simply divided by teaching or research functions. However, even if institutions separate teaching and research roles, these activities aren't necessarily separated in practice. Through an activity system analysis of work-logs, Doe et al. found that contingent faculty

participants took part in all of the same activities (research, service, outreach) that tenure-line faculty pursue, even when their annual evaluations did not reward them for such work. And Poe argues that “the erosion of tenure has not merely meant that more faculty work off the tenure track but also that those non-tenure-track faculty are increasingly expected to produce research—an expectation rarely stated officially in writing” (508).

Methods and Data

The case study presented in this article is one of four case studies of new Ph.D.'s working in composition, which I carried out for my doctoral dissertation (Vacek). Like other academic literacies researchers, specifically Ivanič and Lea & Stierer, I found it helpful to approach my identity-focused, academic literacies research as a set of case studies. At its core, case study research is about understanding the complexity of a case in its context (Stake *The Art of Case Study Research*). Data collection created opportunities for participants to discuss their perspectives on their identities and literacy practices. The primary data sources were: 1) a one-hour semi-structured interview about the participant's background and current contexts and 2) a one-hour discussion of an in-progress text of her choice. The importance of the literacy history interview for understanding participants' views on their texts is stressed in literacy as social practice and academic literacies research (Barton and Hamilton; Lillis "Ethnography as Method"), and such a historical view was essential for exploring each participant's autobiographical self. I combined the literacy history interview with discussion of present work and personal contexts. The second meeting, the manuscript discussion, is an example of *talk around texts*, a method developed by Ivanič, which is defined as “talk between the researcher and the writer-participant about a text that the writer is writing or has written” (Lillis "Bringing Writers' Voices" 171). To gain a sense of how my participants' identities shaped their day-to-day literacy practices, it was essential to focus on a real text that they were actively working on. For Elle, the interview took place in August 2014, and the manuscript discussion took place in October 2014.

Analysis began as soon as I began data collection, so the two proceeded concurrently. Immediately after each interview and manuscript discussion, I recorded my initial impressions in my researcher journal, which served as preliminary analysis. The remaining analytical steps on the way to each final case report included transcribing the recordings, annotating the transcripts, drafting the case report, and incorporating participant feedback into the revised case report. Cross-case analysis was based on the completed case reports, and entailed steps of reading the reports with the research questions in mind, rating the importance of the cases and each case's findings for understanding the research questions, and developing assertions for the multi-case study (Stake *Multiple Case Study Analysis*).

The four participants in the multi-case study were college writing teachers holding different kinds of positions at four different institutions across the United States. Elle's case study is worth looking at

on its own because she was the only participant who chose not to write. After earning her Ph.D. in English in 2014, Elle moved across the country to be closer to family and to find a lower cost of living. While on the job market, Elle took on a combination of online and face-to-face teaching at three different institutions. She desired a tenure-track faculty position but was open to non-tenure-track opportunities. Elle had published one peer-reviewed journal article at the time we met for data collection. The text she initially planned to discuss with me was the outline of an accepted conference presentation, which she planned to later turn into a journal article. However, by the time we met to discuss the text, she had shelved that project and was planning a new article on a different topic.

Case Study of Elle Stewart

Elle's family moved around a bit as she was growing up, but reading and writing were a constant part of her life wherever she was. As a child, Elle saw her mother as an avid reader. In school, Elle was rewarded for reading and writing, whether it was winning a spelling bee, being made a peer tutor in elementary school, or earning prizes for reading a certain number of books. She recalls going to the public library as the main activity during summers spent with her grandparents. In high school, Elle participated in a creative writing program, where she was given two hours a day to sit in a room with other writers and just write.

Elle studied literature in college. After graduation, she bounced around geographically, moving back and forth across the country as she tried to sustain both a relationship and a livelihood. She eventually settled on the west coast, got married, and took on a job coordinating a community college tutoring center. This job shaped her career trajectory. On her first day of work, her supervisor told her to hurry up and get her master's degree. Elle complied. She also dove into her work in the tutoring center, both managing the center and tutoring. Working closely with a small group of students, Elle felt she was able to develop relationships with them that she valued as part of her tutoring practice and, later, her teaching:

Really being able to develop those very individual personal relationships with, I don't know, fifteen or twenty people per semester, just based on the schedule and seeing kinda what they struggled with, has helped me when I go into the classroom. I'm like okay, so I know that even though this seems really easy for me, some of you, you know that being acclimated to the college setting is not that easy. (interview 8/4/2014)

The tutoring center was also where she started becoming an ESL teacher, since she worked with many multilingual students one-on-one.

After completing her master's degree, Elle continued managing the tutoring center and began taking on college teaching jobs as well—which meant working more than full time. As she began seeing her career path as a teacher, she wondered if she should leave the tutoring center, but the full-time job had a particular economic hold on her:

I started teaching part time in addition to that, and I definitely went through some periods where I was like what am I doing? I need to be in the classroom. I need the teaching experience. I should quit this full-time gig so that I could take more teaching jobs and get more connections and meet more people and have more chances of being the person for the full time teaching job. But I never gave that job up until now because of the benefits. (interview 8/4/2014)

The need for benefits, particularly health insurance, is an ongoing issue for Elle, which plays a role in her decisions about work.

Elle pursued her Ph.D. while continuing to work full time at the tutoring center and teaching part-time. She chose a doctoral program that allowed her to take her coursework only in the summers, when she wasn't teaching or tutoring. During her Ph.D. program, she fell in love with research, feeling suited to the work. She says, "I'm interested, and I'm good at reading stuff and synthesizing stuff and organizing stuff, and I think that's why research appeals to me" (interview 8/4/2014). Elle feels she thrived in her Ph.D. program because the structure of the program—summers only when she was not teaching—allowed her to focus just on being a scholar. This undivided attention to research was powerfully appealing for her:

When I'm teaching I'm a hundred percent teaching. When I have time, like when it was [doctoral institution] and school, it's like, no. I could totally do this all the time. I'm totally into this. I could totally do this forever. I don't have to choose. (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)

While in her Ph.D. program, Elle submitted her first manuscript to a peer reviewed journal, a manuscript she had written for a doctoral program requirement. Knowing that she was prone to doubting herself, she decided to shortcut her fear about submitting a manuscript for the first time. She recalls thinking, "I'm gonna send this out immediately before I talk myself out of it" (interview 8/4/2014). She received an acceptance letter from the journal: "It wasn't even revise and resubmit. It was like we accept this when you add this" (interview 8/4/2014). To receive such a positive response to her first scholarly manuscript was thrilling. Looking back, she says the first publication experience was "so easy, and I was shocked. And I don't expect it ever to repeat itself" (interview 8/4/2014). Even with an immediate acceptance, Elle feels she took more than an acceptable amount of time to turn the manuscript around because, by then, she was back to teaching for the academic year.

Elle completed her Ph.D. in 2014, passing her dissertation defense with distinction. Her early success with reading and writing has continued through her adult life, as evidenced not by mere acceptance but singular approval of her work by a professional journal and her dissertation committee. Still, Elle doubts herself. When I interview her, she has recently moved from the west coast to a southern state in search

of a lower cost of living and a chance to be nearer to family. The ensuing job hunt tests her sense of self-worth. At such times she tries to remember that she has valuable talents when it comes to literacy. As we wrap up our talk about her childhood literacy experience—one full of gold stars—she says,

I don't know. I think sometimes I feel—especially when I'm not getting a job, a full-time job that I want—it's like I have a hard time finding things that I'm good at. So it's like, okay, I'm good at that. I'm good at that. Yay! Let me remember that I'm good at that! So I don't suck at everything. (interview 8/4/2014)

The as-yet-unsuccessful job search is looming large for Elle at the moment. Elle has had no trouble finding part-time teaching jobs in her new city: “I have no shortage of work here,” she says (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). But she doesn't have *the* job—the one, full-time job with benefits. For now, full-time and benefits would be good enough, though she'd really like to add “tenure-track” and “research requirements” to that list of attributes.

Elle has submitted plenty of applications and had plenty of interviews for full-time jobs; she's even been a finalist several times. Despite coming so close, she hasn't landed a full-time job, so she has taken multiple part-time teaching jobs. She teaches a combination of face-to-face and online courses at three different institutions. That means several different preps, since the different composition programs don't take the same pedagogical approach, don't use the same textbooks, and therefore don't use the same assignments. Elle is putting a lot of time into designing assignments, time over and above the already intensive work of responding to and grading students' papers.

It's especially time-consuming work for Elle because she's still new to teaching composition. Her previous teaching experience was in ESL and developmental reading, so while she is an experienced teacher, she can't necessarily fall back on her old toolkit. Elle feels her doctoral program gave her the expertise she needs to be a successful writing teacher—“I've got the skills, I have the information, I've got the ideas, I've got the books” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)—yet the work still takes time. She might have saved some time by using someone else's syllabus, but that is not the kind of teacher Elle is: “I had a couple of syllabuses for them, and it's like, no, I don't want to do that. I don't want to have that. I don't want to do this. And it's like, you know, I have to create it” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle is conscientious about putting her own mark on her courses, so she chooses to put in more time to do so. That choice doesn't come without sacrifice.

When I interview Elle in August, the fall semester hasn't yet begun, and she is teaching just two online sections of a composition course. For Elle, this is a light teaching load. She and her husband are living with her brother until they can find their own place, and she wants to help out and have a closer connection to her brother and his family, so she is conducting “Camp Stewart” for her young nephews, coloring, making shrinky-dinks, and watching movies: “they're five and nine and,

you know, I don't have any kids, so this is all kind of new to me" (interview 8/4/2014). Additionally, Elle remarks that, for the first time since starting her dissertation, she feels she has a little time for some pleasure reading, and she's reading a young adult fiction series. She also has a chance to help her husband, an artist, at a music festival, where he is selling some of his work. Even these activities may be circumscribed when the demands of teaching ramp up: "last week we didn't do much because I had so much to grade" (interview 8/4/2014). And by the time the fall semester is in full swing, Elle has taken on jobs at two additional schools, and work feels all-consuming. When we meet for the manuscript discussion in October, Elle and her husband have rented a house, and now she talks about wanting to see her brother "at least once a month" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), and I'm not sure that's happening. Elle doesn't tell me about family or personal activities this time. She's in her home office when we meet, and after describing her teaching load she says, "so I spend a lot of time in this room with perfume bottles in it" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)—she hasn't even had time to unpack.

The receding of family and free time into the background is not the only change from August to October. In August, Elle tells me about her current writing project, a project which has already been accepted for a national conference presentation and which Elle plans to turn into a journal article as well. The call for proposals for the conference caught Elle's attention because it engaged directly with the research methodology she used for her dissertation. The process of writing a proposal in response to the call helped Elle clarify some observations and questions she had about her relationship with her dissertation research participants. Her abstract was accepted for the November conference. When we talk in August, she has done some outlining. She has thought a little bit about where she might submit the manuscript, naming a few different methodology-focused journals. As we talk, she identifies her next step as clarifying the research questions. After doing that, she can outline the conference presentation, and then use that outline to draft an article manuscript. I ask her when we might meet again to talk about the project, once she has had a chance to do some more work on it. Because the fall semester and more teaching will begin soon, Elle decides she can't work on it again until October.

When we meet in October, however, Elle tells me that she has canceled her conference presentation. She is now working on a different piece, a reflective essay about her experience transforming from an ESL teacher to a writing teacher. On one level, she creates this new project for me—because we have a meeting to discuss a work in progress, and she has stopped progress on the other project we were going to talk about. She says, "I wouldn't be writing about it if I didn't know that I needed to produce something for you" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), but also "I want to have something to say, not just for you, but for me, too" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). For this new project, she has started an outline. We talk about where it might go. When I offer some suggestions of journals that might be appropriate, Elle responds with doubts. She's not sure there is an audience for the piece, saying "I don't

want to bother if it's not that interesting" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She also feels "kind of removed from what's going on journal wise" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). When I press her to identify a time when she can read through some journals to select one as a venue for her new piece, she says it will have to be when the semester is over: "I have hopes that I'll be able to do some work besides teaching and planning in December and in the summer. I just—I can't imagine it happening before then or outside of those times. Like I just—there's no way" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle puts off writing because she just can't find time to do it alongside the demands of her teaching load. At the same time, she is limiting the content of what she might write by deciding that her dissertation data is off-limits.

Elle's dissertation involved in-depth interviewing with a small number of participants. Her participants were people with whom she already had close relationships, and the research process deepened the intimacy they already shared. For Elle, engaging in that research experience with her participants carried a great deal of meaning, shaping how she has come to see herself as a researcher. She expresses two main reasons she doesn't want to work with her dissertation data at this point. First, she feels it is unfair for her to gain from the data now that she has moved away from her participants and can't continue helping them as she once did: "I can't be there for them anymore other than providing some kind of emotional support, so I don't know if I—but it feels a little bit weird to me to be using them to make research publications" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Secondly, the distance has also led Elle to feel uncomfortable speaking for her participants: "I think maybe because I'm far away physically and emotionally, I felt like I didn't want to—I was no longer able to be the mouthpiece" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Additionally, Elle won't pretend to be anything she's not. When I suggest that publishing her participants' stories for a wider audience might be a way to honor their research relationship, she agrees but also says, "Sometimes I worry about being a fraud. I worry about just being a fake" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She can't pretend to be still involved in the lives of research participants who are now on the other side of the country, and she also can't bring herself to write just for the sake of getting published. "It feels a little weird to kind of then be like, well, I'm gonna use what we did just so I can have something to say" (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). With the combination of time pressure from teaching and discomfort about writing from her existing work, Elle is not writing and not publishing.

And why should she be? None of her jobs requires her to publish—but then, she is looking ahead. She is trying to position herself to be competitive for a full-time job. Right now, though, she's feeling discouraged. She thinks she lost one of the full-time jobs she interviewed for when she brought up research as something she could add to the position. Elle thought that would make her a stronger candidate for a tutoring center administrator position, but she tells me, "I think what it really came off as is: Are you sure you want this job? Because it doesn't require research" (interview 8/4/2014). She also feels she is getting mixed signals about what's required for the full-time teaching jobs she

wants to apply for. For example, for one advertised position at a teaching-focused institution, “there’s not a requirement to produce research. But then in the frickin’ job ad it said have an active research agenda! I’m like, what do you want from me?” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Elle is frustrated with the job search. She wants to do research, but she says, “Even with a Ph.D. and thirteen years of experience, they’re not really putting me in a research position right now” (interview 8/4/2014). She is wondering if she should just give up on research altogether and give up the idea of ever working one full-time job.

Should she continue trying for any kind of full-time academic job in the region? Should she expand her search to other areas, possibly moving again? Should she settle for what she’s doing—a collection of part-time teaching jobs? These are the questions she tries to sort out, thinking about who she is and who she wants to be. On the one hand, she thinks acceptance of a multi-institution, adjunct life might help her feel better about herself and to be comfortable just living life. She says, “I’m at this point where I want it to be good enough” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). She doesn’t want to feel like she is perpetually waiting for a full-time job. On the other hand, the adjunct life is not easy. While she believes it is economically feasible as long as she can get work at multiple schools, it means a very heavy teaching load: “I don’t think I want to teach six classes a semester part time” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). Yet that seems to be what it would take to earn the income she wants to contribute to her family and be able to buy health insurance. Elle’s husband recently asked her if he needed to work more so she could work less—for now, she said no. She’s willing to work hard at several part-time jobs, hopeful that it may be a temporary situation. Elle is critical of the system that privileges tenure-track jobs over adjuncts, but still:

No matter what my stance is on the problems in administration and issues with the tenure system, it would be very silly for me to not try to get a job where I could just have one job instead of four. That is dumb. That is not healthy radicalism, you know? Why would I hurt myself more? (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014)

Part of Elle is resolved to keep trying for the full-time job, and so she is trying to prepare emotionally for another round of applications. Given the mixed signals she felt she got about research in her first round, she is unsure how research and publishing fits in with any of these three choices. Even in August, when she was a bit more optimistic, she felt shut out of research and unsure of a way back in:

I want to get back into it. When I’m into it, I’m really into it. It’s just hard to do it without it being a requirement because I feel like I’m trying so hard to do what everybody else wants me to do. I need a job. I am not independently wealthy. So right now none of these things require research. I’m hoping that even a

part-time position that I have will give me some travel funding or be interested in it, in some way, to maybe lead into a full-time thing. But I think I'm a little bit—I'm not disillusioned, I'm not hopeless about it, but it's kind of like—it's not as rosy as I would like it to be. (interview 8/4/2014)

Elle is hoping for a future in which her professional identity allows her to be in a place she wants to live and to contribute income to her family without feeling like she is scrambling. And she longs for dedicated research time. Because, as she says, “When I'm in research mode, I feel so like I know what I'm doing. Like this is my thing. This is my jam” (interview 8/4/2014).

Processes of (Dis)Identification with Professional Academic Literacies

For Elle, the dominant discourse (in Gee's sense of Discourse as an “identity kit” [142]) of being a professional academic involves both teaching and research. Elle tries to take up this discourse through her strong desire to do more than just teach. Teaching-only positions, like the three jobs Elle holds, are among various possibilities for selfhood inscribed within the discourse of being an academic, and they are afforded lower status. A simple way to view the positioning of these possibilities is through the privileging of tenure-track positions over non-tenure-track positions, but Elle shows us that individuals orient to these differences in more complicated ways. Elle sees “problems in administration and issues with the tenure system” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014), and what's more important to her than a tenure-track job is a full-time job with sufficient compensation so she can “have one job instead of four” (manuscript discussion 10/12/2014). While applying for non-tenure-track jobs, she perceives mixed signals about the value of research for these positions. She fears that expressing her interest in research hurt her in an interview for a tutoring center director job—that by presenting herself as a professional academic with a research agenda, she presented an overreaching combination of interests for a staff position. At the same time, she questions why an advertisement for a teaching position that does not require research states that candidates should have an active research agenda. This is a concrete example of Poe's concern about unwritten expectations for non-tenure-track faculty to produce research.

While the discourse of being an academic is not monolithic, but contested, Elle's case study illustrates how one college writing teacher is positioned among possibilities for selfhood in the higher education workplace. From a social practice perspective, “the literacy practices in which people engage cannot be separated from the processes whereby they identify with or resist particular social positionings” (Burgess and Ivanič 232). Elle identifies and disidentifies with being an academic in complex, sometimes contradictory ways, and these processes of (dis)identification shape her sense of (dis)connection to professional academic writing. Two distinct processes of (dis)identification play out in Elle's case study. First, particular aspects of Elle's autobiographical

self make her feel either connected or disconnected to professional academic writing. Elle's early literacy history as a successful student writer would seem to position her as a successful professional academic writer. Yet now that Elle has completed her Ph.D., and her teaching positions do not require her to produce research, she feels disconnected from research, which blocks her from writing. Her disconnection is all the more striking because research is so important to her and she has had success doing it. For example, Elle has a strong intrinsic desire to do research and has experienced herself as a competent researcher. But even with that strong previous connection, she hasn't found a way to carve out time for writing amidst her teaching duties and job search. In fact, the job search has been such a negative experience that it has taken a toll on Elle's sense of self-worth. One way to understand why Elle does not write comes from Burgess and Ivanič's discussion of how the autobiographical self shapes the discursive self and the authorial self:

If the socially available possibilities for selfhood a writer has experienced are ones in which she is treated as inferior and does not have an authoritative role, she is likely to incorporate a sense of inferiority, and possibly feelings of indignation at having been treated in this way, into her autobiographical self. Her sense of inferiority is likely to have a strong influence on the kind of authorial self she constructs and may lead her to be hesitant about engaging in writing at all, as writing is by its nature an agentive social act. (Burgess and Ivanič 246)

Feeling stuck in contingent positions has disrupted Elle's sense of what is possible for her as a writer.

The second process of (dis)identification at work in Elle's case study centers on the meanings she ascribes to research and professional academic writing. While Elle primarily emphasizes her teaching load as the reason why she disengages from academic writing, she also discusses her disidentification in terms of strongly held research ethics. Having been immersed in feminist research ethics while conducting her dissertation research, Elle has incorporated values of reciprocity and authenticity into her researcher identity. In feminist research methodologies, reciprocity, the "give and take of social interactions" (Harrison et al 323), is central to empowering participants and establishing a more equal, less exploitative relationship between the researcher and the researched. Attention to reciprocity is a way to judge a qualitative study's trustworthiness, along with other signs of authenticity (Lincoln), such as disclosure of the researcher's positionality. Now that her dissertation is complete, Elle feels her cross-country move has broken the reciprocity she established with her participants; she feels her potential gain from publishing about them is exploitative if she can not provide them with some benefit in return. Additionally, writing about her dissertation research from her new position as a contingent writing teacher in a completely different community feels inauthentic to Elle.

These two processes of (dis)identification are specific ways one writer's identities mediate her literacy practices. In their discussion of

how socially available possibilities for selfhood shape the autobiographical self, Burgess and Ivanič state that writers do not simply reproduce possibilities for selfhood when they take them up, but rather they integrate these possibilities with other resources they have adopted, resulting in combinations unique to each writer. Burgess and Ivanič also observe that the writer's autobiographical self includes "interests, views of the world, values and beliefs, and his or her sense of authoritativeness and agency" (Burgess and Ivanič 239). Elle is incorporating a *contingent labor* identity and an *unsuccessful job seeker* identity into her autobiographical self, and these identities are overriding her past positions as a successful researcher and writer. The result is that she lacks a sense of agency in professional academic writing and ends up deferring the work of writing.

The meanings Elle ascribes to professional academic writing can also be understood as *values* in the sense that Burgess & Ivanič describe values as being part of the autobiographical self. Again, everything a writer has experienced in life up to now shapes how she sees professional academic writing as personally meaningful (or not). Elle's experience stands out in that she attaches a strong personal meaning to research, but uses specific values of reciprocity and authenticity to limit her opportunities for writing.

Considerations for Academic Practice: College Writing Teachers' Labor

Elle's job search struggle illustrates how departments can send mixed messages about research expectations. Since concern about unofficial research expectations for non-tenure-track faculty has been raised before (Poe), and since the very existence of non-tenure-track positions has been explained as a result of the separation of teaching and research functions (ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing; Bartholomae), this is an issue worth addressing. In response, departments hiring non-tenure-track faculty might consider whether or not they currently expect research in these positions—either formally or as an unwritten expectation—and how they make (or don't make) their expectations transparent. Can the presence or absence of research expectations be made clear in the position advertisement, in the position qualifications, the job description, and in any reward system in place? Is any expectation for research accompanied by support for it in terms of time, resources, and recognition?

Professional organizations in Composition, and in English Studies more broadly, have been advocating for the needed transparency described above. The Conference on College Composition and Communication has position statements which stipulate the need for clear expectations and support for expected activities ("CCCC Statement on Working Conditions"; "Statement of Professional Guidance"), as does the Modern Language Association. Elle's experience shows why these guidelines remain important.

Conclusions

In this article, I have shared Elle's story, and I have pointed out ways I see her case study contributing to literacy-and-identity studies and to studies of college writing teachers. Case studies, like this one, that illustrate processes of (dis)identification with particular uses of writing, deepen our knowledge of how literacy and identity mediate one another. Case studies also invite reconsideration of day-to-day practices - in this example, labor practices in a discipline relying heavily on contingent labor.

But in addition to these disciplinary contributions, it is my hope that the case study and analysis I've presented here spark meaningful insights for individual readers. As Stake points out of case study research, "a personal valuing of the work is expected" (*The Art of Case Study Research* 135). In addition to generating ideas about the broad concepts of academic labor, contingency, and academic publishing, this research provides an opportunity for individual academics to reflect on their own journeys. Ivanič's framework for writer identity serves as a heuristic to consider one's own life experiences and academic workplace contexts. How does writing for publication fit into their own academic labor, if at all? If they aspire to publish but feel shut out of professional academic literacy practices, how might they find a way in? When academics are in positions that do not value or compensate their writing, they will either choose not to write, or they will find their own connections to professional academic literacy, and find ways to write and to be read.

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Saying Goodbye to Unions in Higher Education: Labor Policy under the Trump Administration

Raymond L. Hogler
Colorado State University

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the effects of the Trump Administration on collective bargaining in higher education. I examine three core areas of labor relations. First, appointees to the National Labor Relations Board will change our labor laws to the disadvantage of unions. This change impacts private universities. Second, the appointment of a new Supreme Court justice affects public sector bargaining law through constitutional decisions. Third, more state legislatures will enact right to work laws because the political climate is favorable to it. All three policy changes will keep labor unions weak and ineffectual in bargaining with university administrators.

Graduate student assistants at Yale staged a hunger strike on April 25, 2017, in support of collective bargaining demands through their union representative, Local 33 of UNITE HERE. Despite a highly publicized protest during Yale's commencement ceremony, the institution continued to challenge the union's legitimacy, and the matter of collective bargaining rights is now pending before the National Labor Relations Board (Rondinone). Yale's position follows the pattern of employer resistance to collective bargaining that pervades American labor relations generally and has led to a steady decline in overall union membership density over the past four decades (Goldfield). The Yale case illustrates the political and legal obstacles that impede unionization in higher education.

This article analyzes the deteriorating status of unions and collective bargaining in the American higher education system. It begins with a description of the distinctive bargaining regimes in private and public sector institutions, followed by an analysis of the present condition of organized labor in the United States. With the election of President Donald Trump, unions most probably will continue to decline in membership and influence as a result of adverse policy decisions. The

Trump administration has control over the composition of the National Labor Relations Board, and recent appointments to the Board indicate a shift toward more restrictive rules for organizing. Trump's recent selection to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court could tilt the playing field against public sector unions through the Court's adverse constitutional decisions. The outcomes for higher education faculty are likely to be diminished power and influence in the academic environment as administrators exercise a greater degree of discretion over wages, hours, and conditions of work.

Bargaining Frameworks

Labor union organizing and bargaining in the United States proceeds under two very different regulatory regimes. In the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), Senator Robert Wagner excluded government workers from the coverage of his bill in the definition of an "employer" in Section 2 (3) of the statute (Wagner). Wagner justified the exclusion on various grounds, including constitutional considerations of our federal system of governance. As a result, private sector workers are covered by the NLRA and regulated by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB or Board). Federal, state, or local laws and administrative bodies, in contrast, govern public sector unions. Because public educational institutions by definition involve "state action," they are further subject to legal doctrines developed under the U.S. Constitution. The Universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois fall into the latter category, while Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Duke are considered to be in the private sector.

Public sector bargaining law generally does not give employees the broad panoply of rights available to workers under the NLRA (National Council of State Laws). Senator Wagner ensured that private sector employees had important protections such as the right to negotiate over wages, hours, and working conditions, and to strike in support of their demands for concessions. Strikers did not abandon their employment but were entitled to reinstatement as vacant positions became available. In the case of a strike over the employer's unfair labor practices rather than economic conditions, strikers could demand immediate reinstatement if they were willing to give up the strike. In the public sector, strikes may be prohibited, bargaining may be confined to a more limited agenda, and rights of reinstatement may be unavailable (Corder). For both private and public sector unionism, the legal rules governing union formation and operation play a crucial role in allocating balances of power in the economic sphere.

Unions and Wealth Distribution

Historically, labor union membership density in the U.S has been associated with union bargaining power and contracts that promote a more equitable distribution of income in this country. During the two decades after World War II, wealth became more evenly distributed, but as membership density declines, union influence over labor markets becomes relatively weaker. An important study by sociologists Bruce Western and Jake Rosenfeld examined the effects of union decline on

rising wage inequality in the United States. Analyzing various explanations for union weakness, they concluded that unions traditionally performed a role in labor markets by acting as “pillars of the moral economy” (517). Institutionally, unions supported “norms of equity that claimed the fairness of a standard rate for low-pay workers and the injustice of unchecked earnings for managers and owners” (518). Such norms arose through three distinct union functions: “(1) culturally, through public speech about economic inequality, (2) politically, by influencing social policy, and (3) institutionally, through rules governing the labor market” (Western and Rosenfeld 518). Declining unions exert less control over labor markets, culture, and national politics.

According to observers of the 2016 national election, white middle-aged men without college degrees tilted the electoral vote in favor of Donald Trump (Cohn). Those voters acted out of a sense of economic desperation, believing that the era of good jobs and increasing incomes had ended for them. Three well-known economists, Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, and Gabriel Zucman, published a commentary describing the “two countries” making up the U.S. political economy. Their analysis showed that in 1962, the share of pre-tax income in this country going to the top one percent and the bottom 50 percent of income earners was approximately 20 percent to the lower earners and just above 12 percent for the top earners. By 2014, the numbers had reversed, with 20 percent of wealth going to the top one percent and just over 12 percent to the bottom 50 percent. One of their recommendations to meliorate the trend is political action leading to “reforms of labor market institutions to boost workers’ bargaining power and including a higher minimum wage.”

If weaker unions result in higher levels of inequality and undermine standards of social justice, a relevant point of inquiry is whether President Trump’s labor policies are more likely to strengthen or debilitate labor organizations across the economy, including those in higher education. The likely answer is that unions will suffer under his administration. Inadvertently or intentionally through his administration, the demographic that successfully installed Trump as President will endure the most serious economic injury during his time in office (Krugman). The harm inflicted on unions has three aspects. The first is Trump’s recent appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court and the Court’s future labor decisions. The second is the present membership of the National Labor Relations Board following Trump’s appointment of two members to vacant positions. The third is the favorable political condition for the enactment of right-to-work laws in state legislatures under the guise of “economic development,” a strategic choice that results in lower wages and benefits for workers. Taken together, Trump’s influence in those legal domains has serious implications for collective bargaining, specifically for academic unions.

The National Labor Relations Board and Private Sector Educational Institutions

As noted, private sector higher education institutions bargain under the regulatory authority of the NLRB. The Board membership in May 2017 consisted of Chairman Philip A. Miscimarra, a Republican appointed by former president Obama, and Democrats Lauren McFerran and Mark Gaston Pearce, whose terms end in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Trump has the authority during his term to appoint two additional members to bring the Board to its full complement of five members. If those appointees share Miscimarra's views on labor issues, then Board doctrine will likely drift in favor of employers, and it could return to more restrictive rules about student workers.

According to a news report in July 2017, a Senate committee approved two Trump appointees, William Emanuel and Marvin Kaplan, to the Board (Lanard, 2017). Emanuel is with the firm of Littler Mendelson, which represents management in labor relations matters, and Kaplan presently works for the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. Three labor relations experts predicted, "If confirmed, Kaplan and Emanuel would give the five-member board a Republican majority. The NLRB is widely expected to use that majority to reconsider big ticket labor issues, including rulings that expanded joint employer liability and recognized 'micro-units' for collective bargaining purposes" (Eidelson, Opfer & Penn).

The Board's most recent decisions involving student assistants at Columbia University illustrate both the decisional processes of the Board and likely direction of Trump's appointees. In August 2016, the Board ruled that student assistants employed at the university were statutory employees entitled to vote in a certification election (National Labor Relations Board). The employees voted in favor of unionization by a margin of 1,602 votes for the union and 623 opposed, and Columbia then filed exceptions to the election arguing that students were improperly designated as employees (Harris, 2016). As of April 2017, the Board had not resolved the matter, and the case was still pending. The Union attorney informed the Regional Director's office in March 2017 that further delay would lead to substantial changes in the makeup of the union because many of the students would be graduating (Meiklejohn). While the case languishes, new Trump appointees could reach a different result concerning the eligibility of graduate students to vote in a certification election.

The more recent case at Yale raises the same issues as at Columbia. The Yale administration refuses to bargain with the certified union, Local 33 UNITE HERE, on the theory that the Board made an inappropriate unit determination. If Columbia prevails with the Trump Board on the issue of whether or not graduate students are statutory "employees," the Yale proceeding will be moot because the students do not fall under the protections of the NLRA. Even if Yale entered into negotiations with the students, no collective bargaining through a representative outside the NLRA framework can legally occur without violating the NLRA prohibition against employer-dominated "company unions" in Section 8 (a) (2) of the Act. Given an adverse decision by the Board on the definitional issue, Local 33 might pursue judicial review

through the federal court system, but the case likely would consume at least three years before resolution.

After fourteen days of Yale's strike, three union supporters were continuing the fast (Ricks). Yale officially criticized the work action, commenting that the "actions this week by members of Local 33 raise concerns about the safety and well-being of the demonstrators and about their apparent disregard for longstanding university policies and principles regarding the appropriate time, place and manner for exercising freedom of expression" (Yale News). Yale also retained a well-known labor law firm to defend its interests before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The university's strategy challenges the "micro unit" approach adopted by the union and approved by the NLRB, which fragmented the class of graduate teaching assistants along departmental lines. Yale claimed that "the low vote count (under 9%) was due to Local 33's 'micro-unit' strategy of holding nine separate union elections, and preventing students in the rest of the school's departments from having a say on the question of unionization" (Yale News).

If a new Board rejects the Columbia and Yale decisions, graduate student unions will disappear. Even more damaging, the Board might use its rulemaking power to overturn regulations of the Obama Board that favor union organizing. One of the most contentious areas of rulemaking involves streamlining the elections process toward the goal of faster elections and certification. Employers dubbed the new procedures as the "quickie election" rule and argued that it disadvantaged employers who had little opportunity to inform employees of their views of unionization and imposed intrusive rules that violated employee rights of privacy. Despite those objections, the rule survived judicial challenge in the federal court system (Fisher Phillips), but they may not withstand a change in Board composition. With two new members, the Board could quickly overturn the election rule and reinstate the previous election procedures.

In 2017, private sector union membership fell to 6.4 percent of the nonsupervisory, nonagricultural workforce. The decline spanned some five decades from a peak of nearly 35 percent in 1945 to its present rate (Freeman). Because unions historically influenced labor markets such that unionized workers gained more bargaining power and compensation, trends in membership suggest that middle-income employees will continue to lose ground. President Trump's policies will do nothing to resurrect private unions; to the contrary, his appointments will lead to even weaker unions. In the public sector, the U.S. Supreme Court will accomplish a similar agenda through a five-member majority having little understanding of, or consideration for, organized labor.

The Fate of Public Sector Unions in the New Supreme Court

In January 2016, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case of [*Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*](#), which involved the compulsory payment of union dues by teachers covered under a collective bargaining agreement. The controlling precedent in the litigation, *Abood v. Detroit Bd. of Educ.* (1977), upheld the

constitutionality of public sector union security and announced the standard applicable to the issue of union dues. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (*Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, n.d.) followed the precedent of *Abood* and declared, “Upon review, the court finds that the questions presented in this appeal are so insubstantial as not to require further argument, because they are governed by controlling Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit precedent.” In short, compulsory dues were an accepted dimension of public sector bargaining and were not constitutionally suspect.

Legal commentators suggested that the Supreme Court might use *Friedrichs* as the vehicle for changing the rules of dues payments to public sector unions. In *Knox v. Service Employees International Union*, a majority made up of Alito, Roberts, Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas invalidated a union dues assessment because the union failed to give notice to members that the assessment would be imposed, and Sotomayor and Ginsburg concurred with the majority on this point. Alito added that all compulsory dues would be constitutionally suspect if members had failed to “opt in” to dues payments as opposed to an “opt out” rule. Alito proposed the notion that public sector union security was only valid if the employee had “opted in” to dues payments. Otherwise, Alito said, no required dues payments were constitutionally permissible (Hogler, “Constitutionalizing Paycheck Protection”). Fortunately for unions, Alito was merely indulging in dicta that had nothing to do with the actual case itself because the facts did not raise the question (Fisk & Chemerinsky). Justice Sotomayor convincingly made the point in her dissenting opinion in the case.

Plaintiffs in the *Friederich* litigation anticipated that the Supreme Court would finish the job begun in *Knox* and do away with compulsory dues payments in the public sector. They developed a litigation strategy that directly attacked union security by focusing on First Amendment protections against “coercive” support for unions’ political agendas. As the case moved through the lower courts, the union prevailed based on the *Abood* precedent. On further appeal following Scalia’s death, the Supreme Court divided equally with four Justices on each side and affirmed the lower court decisions approving compulsory dues. In the absence of a fifth vote, right to work proponents were stymied momentarily. When President Obama nominated federal Circuit Court judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, Senate Leader McConnell refused to proceed with the nomination. Trump, consequently, picked a more conservative jurist, Neil Gorsuch, for appointment and McConnell successfully moved the nomination through the Senate.

In the interim, the National Right to Work Foundation and their anti-union allies quickly procured another set of plaintiffs to challenge public sector dues payments. In *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees*, two public employees sued the union representing them, claiming their constitutional rights of free speech were violated by the compelled payment of union dues. The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the case (*Janus*), and the plaintiffs are now appealing that dismissal to the Supreme Court. A similar case

from California, *Yohn v. California Teachers Association*, is funded by the same litigation machine and will replace the *Friedrichs* decision with essentially the same facts and arguments (Blume). Gorsuch, an admirer of Justice Scalia and an acolyte of Justice Kennedy, will presumably follow the lead of his doctrinal progenitors. The most likely outcome will be that public employment in the future will take place under the right to work principle of allowing free riders (Higgins).

For collective bargaining units on public campuses, the immediate effect of the teachers' cases will be to reduce the resources available to sustain union power. If the Court adopts the conservative formulation announced by Alito in *Knox*, that ruling would immediately impose a constitutional burden on teachers' unions to suspend all required dues payments unless members expressly agree to the deductions. That outcome effectively results in the creation of a right to work rule. A substantial body of research indicates that right to work laws reduce workers' incomes and reduce union density (Gould & Kimball). Public sector unions now make up a larger proportion of total union density than at any time in modern labor relations. As they erode, unionization generally suffers, and private sector density will likewise continue to decline.

How Right to Work Laws Affect both Private and Public Sector Unions

One of the most debilitating factors in union decline is the weakening of collective security through right to work laws. Beginning during World War II, several states attacked labor unions with laws that prohibited contracts requiring all individuals covered by the agreement to pay dues to the union representative (Gall; Hogler, *End of American Labor Unions*). Historian Michael Goldfield attributed union decline to the "changing balance of class forces" and presciently argued that membership density would continue to fall because of employer hostility to unionism. Right to work is the hinge of anti-unionism in the United States and a powerful manipulation of cultural shifts against collective bargaining.

Section 14(b) allows states to enact right to work laws, and since the implementation of the statute, 28 states have enacted such laws (National Right to Work Committee, 2017). Various studies convincingly document the damage to unions caused by right to work laws. Hogler, Hunt, and Weiler analyzed the downward trajectory of union strength in right to work states and concluded that the presence of right to work is negatively correlated with union density. The mechanism underlying the decline is a failure of generalized *trust* between citizens of a state and their fellows; that is, most people believe others cannot be trusted. A key finding of the study is that the declining level of trust is correlated with declining union membership. That is, the less trust that exists within a given community, the less likely that the community will commit to collective action on behalf of the group. Trust is lower in right to work states because free riders can obtain the benefits of group effort

without incurring the costs, which in turn negatively influences union membership density and incomes.

The expansion of right to work laws accelerated between 2012 and 2017. There are now twenty-eight Right-to-Work states, with the states of Kentucky and Missouri adopting laws in 2017. Beginning in the South and West in the 1940s, the movement was transparently anti-union in its objective and designed to counter the growth and influence of organized labor (Tandy, 81-118). Right to work sentiment will flourish under the Trump presidency and its business-friendly agenda. Since its inception, right to work has appealed to the ideology of development by arguing that unions interfere with legitimate business operations and stifle innovation and growth (Hogler, *End of American Labor Unions*).

Conclusion: No Way Out

The election of Donald Trump will have detrimental consequences for the American labor movement in three significant ways. First, his appointments to the National Labor Relations Board will reverse decisions of the Obama Board that facilitated union organizing and empowered employees by strengthening their rights to unionize. Second, with the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, Trump ensures a continuing tilt toward the politicized views of Thomas, Alito, and Roberts on labor issues. Finally, the Court's future decisions will degrade workers' opportunities for collective action and enhance managerial power in the workplace, especially in public sector employment. As the conflictual political division in our system ossifies into ongoing stalemate, Trump comes to represent the apogee of ineptitude. White, working class voters brought him to power, but his allegiance is to the wealthy financial interests that stand to gain from his administration.

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The Labor of Scholarship: Rhetorical Advocacy and Community Engagement

Erik Juergensmeyer
Fort Lewis College

Abstract

This article argues for an expanded understanding of academic labor as it aligns with Ernest Boyer's concepts of the scholarship of engagement and the scholarship of application. It draws on theories of rhetorical advocacy in order to help academics participate more in their communities. It concludes by applying these concepts to a community advocacy project, demonstrating the importance of connecting scholarship and public work, and encouraging academics to become community scholars.

“Still, our universities and colleges remain, in my opinion, one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress in this country. I’m convinced that for this hope to be fulfilled, the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement.”

—Ernest Boyer, “The Scholarship of Engagement”

“At CU-Boulder, even learning to write a proper sentence has been suborned to progressive activism.”

—Randall and Thorne, *Making Citizens*

Unfortunately, leadership within the current political climate sees higher education as more of a problem than solution to many of today's civic challenges. Even following highly effective work

from organizations like Campus Compact, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, and the American Association of State College Universities, ongoing threats to democratic approaches to education abound. Alarming, lobbying organizations are frequently attempting to control the narrative by publicly criticizing faculty labor and programs that engage in activism and service-learning, tainting public understandings of what counts as faculty research, what qualifies as academic freedom, and whether some faculty should continue to enjoy the protections offered through tenure.

In the present-day affront to academic freedom and curricular ownership that hearkens to the days of McCarthyism and calls for “professor watch lists,” an especially disturbing attack on faculty recently surfaced from the “National Association of Scholars” – a conservative “think” tank that has been attempting to control faculty labor and production for decades. Published in January of 2017, this report includes case studies from several public institutions in my home state of Colorado and seeks to put an end to what they deem the “New Civics,” curriculum that threatens traditional understandings of education by engaging students and faculty with problems in their communities (Randall and Thorne 9). In the authors’ opinions, faculty who succumb to the overreach of this popular approach to community advocacy will be ‘transformed’ into obedient minions of the movement: “The New Civics will complement its takeover of the [traditional] disciplines by transforming faculty into ‘civic scholars’” (157). Being a “civic scholar,” according to this myopic worldview, violates traditional understandings of scholarship and eschews guidelines for labor practices.

Of course, attacks by the NAS are not new: their 2002 report suggests requiring “competency tests in order [for students] to graduate” (Block, Franciosi, and Geiger 19); their 2006 report suggests a dangerous preoccupation with the concept of “diversity” that could have “vast” consequences “not only for what has been America, but for the entire world” (“Words to Live By” 7); and their 2011 report suggests mandating specific courses taught in academic departments by specific professors (Ricketts, Wood, Balch, and Thorne 22). What is so striking about their most recent invective is the direct affront to faculty and their pedagogical choices. For example, one critique labels faculty and staff as members of “radical cels” (wordplay on the Community Engagement Leaders –CELS–program that foreshadows images of radicalized extremists threatening our country) and provides individual photographs adjacent to critiques of how these individuals control students through curriculum and labor expectations (Randall and Thorne 211). Whereas such attacks forward a conservative agenda of pedagogical control, equally importantly, they also seek to curtail what faculty and staff do with their time within and/or beyond the classroom.

Fortunately, faculty—and especially writing specialists—have begun to speak out. Gloria McMillan’s thoughtful response to the report

published in this journal's blog astutely acknowledges that the authors of such work "hurt and not help civic discourse," and she calls for more explanation on how academics can positively contribute to society (McMillan). Michael Rifenburg, posting on the Writing Program Administration Listserv, reminds us not to forget the historical connections of academic work and public good, "marrying community engagement and writing goes back to Aristotle and is exactly how the *Declaration of Independence* was penned," and encourages academics to contribute to local newspapers and counter propaganda that seeks to move us backward (Rifenburg). Answering these calls for increased public discourse, I offer the following framework for both expanding opportunities for civic work and reminding stakeholders of the value of academic labor in local communities. In doing so, I encourage students, faculty, and staff to become community scholars – to use personal and disciplinary expertise to collaborate within communities in order to address community problems and to rewrite a narrative that fails to understand the true purpose of college and university instruction. Community scholars can counter misconceptions that higher education is mere preparation for mainstream occupational success and instead revive the long-standing tradition of higher education as redress to the forces that keep sectors of the population down.

The Labor of Scholarship

Such a revival will not come easy, and as we know, change can be slow, especially in higher education. Generally speaking, colleges and universities have held firm to a strict understanding of faculty labor as a relatively independent and formal production that is typically reported through scholarly media, often disconnected from the general public. Consequently, this system has shaped employment practices and defined faculty labor expectations: faculty positions, or "lines," are often categorized through the number of courses taught, mentoring and advising responsibilities, and through varying levels of scholarly productivity. Whereas expectations differ across institutions, faculty, and especially tenure-track faculty, are almost always expected to engage in some type of formal knowledge production and dissemination. Naturally, such expectations significantly affect how academics spend their time. They also influence the type of knowledge being produced and with whom faculty interact when not in the classroom. When discussing the value of higher education, it is this hierarchical system of defining how academics use their time, as Ernest Boyer points out, that is the "single concern around which all others pivot" (*Scholarship Reconsidered* xi). Unfortunately, the products of the labor – oftentimes formal scholarly presentation and publication – overshadow the processes and efforts put in to produce those products, a system that disadvantages those interested in working in non-traditional spaces, and especially within nonacademic communities.

Whereas this method of defining scholarship is comfortably embedded in American colleges and universities, the early 1990's offered a significant challenge to what being "scholarly" means. The model outlined in Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* questions the mechanisms currently being used for acknowledging faculty time and directing their work practices. Published as a special report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1990, Boyer's oft-cited argument broadens a myopic view of academic productivity by efficiently mapping out categories for defining different types of scholarship. The categories seek to create a "more creative view of the work of the professoriate" and can assist scholars who seek to challenge dominant and mainstream ideologies (xii). Boyer provides four types of scholarship:

1. **The scholarship of discovery**—work that "contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university" (17).
2. **The scholarship of integration**—work that makes "connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists, too" (18).
3. **The scholarship of application**—work that "moves toward engagement" (21) where "theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other" (22) in order to bridge the "gap between values in the academy and the needs of the larger world" (22).
4. **The scholarship of teaching**—work that "stimulate[s] active, not passive, learning and encourage[s] students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over" (24).

For Boyer, the first two categories simply "reflect the investigative and synthesizing traditions of academic life" (21). The third, however, honors academic explorations connected to communities and solving social problems, importantly interconnecting scholarship and what has traditionally been defined as "service." The fourth, of course, helps faculty focus their efforts on student learning and empowers them to develop teaching strategies that foster improved learning and critical consciousness. Combined, these categories do more than just broaden conservative understandings of scholarship; they value a variety of labor practices in the academy that can reshape higher education.

Boyer's Model in Practice

Fortunately, Boyer's fourth category, the scholarship of teaching, has been quite influential, especially in the fields of teaching and service learning. Kern, et al. attribute Boyer's call to action as highly influential

to the current success in the field of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and argue for its further application. Saltmarsh and Hartley's highly practical *'To Serve a Larger Purpose': Engagement for Democracy and the Transformation of Higher Education* forwards a vision of a civically vibrant educational system that demonstrates the positive effect of academic scholarship on democracy. Moreover, Thomas and Levine's "Deliberative Democracy and Higher Education: Higher Education's Democratic Mission" and Hartley and Saltmarsh's conclusion "Creating the Democratically Engaged University—Possibilities for Constructive Action" reiterate the significant mission of higher education and the scholarship of service learning.

The scholarship of application, Boyer's third category, is equally important, as it also argues for a broader consideration of how we value academic labor and accomplishment. By being "tied directly to one's special field of knowledge" (22), what has been traditionally defined as service – nearly everything involving work with the community – becomes more fruitful and accepted within colleges and universities. Unfortunately, this idea's influence and application has been slow-moving. Following the 25th anniversary of Boyer's 1990 *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, and the 20th anniversary of Boyer's 1996 "The Scholarship of Engagement," numerous academics have reflected on the challenges of adopting Boyer's model and the potential consequences of inaction. Boyer's collaborator Eugene Rice, for example, laments the slow pace of broadening definitions of academic scholarship and suggests a connection to the steady growth of economic inequality today: "A robust scholarship of engagement would have led the way in identifying and promoting vigorous public discourse on this critical issue [of economic inequality] underlying so many of the social problems that Boyer did mention" (30), calling for the contemporary "democratization of scholarship itself" (32). Furthermore, acknowledging that "too many colleges pay only lip service" to the model, Scott Jaschik argues for "systematic implementation" across all levels of academic institutions: faculty, departments, faculty governance organizations, and all tiers of administration.

As has been seen in service-learning, Boyer's model – and especially his iteration of the scholarship of application – can enable faculty to dedicate more time to work towards improving the public good. It acknowledges public work as scholarship and creates more opportunities for academics to help solve community problems. It can also provide a framework for entire academic departments, or even institutions, to focus more on community work by acknowledging and supporting faculty who engage in civic discourse. An important challenge to academics today is utilizing and improving upon Boyer's model to explain what we actually do when we are working to help various audiences better understand our civic projects. This has become especially important in the current political climate that poses perhaps

the largest threat to academic freedom and labor “since the McCarthy period” (Fichtenbaum, Bunsis, and Reichman). In order to participate in the ongoing narrative against academic freedom and faculty labor, we need to capture the collaborations, efforts, and activities that encompass our work. We need to utilize different categorical systems of labor like “application” and “engagement,” and, we need to describe what happens when our theories and practices combine to produce concrete activities that are grounded in our disciplinary expertise. Hopefully, such frameworks will help external audiences driven by ideological agendas bent on reigning in freedoms better understand our work.

A Rhetorical Approach to Scholarship

One disciplinary field that provides a model for expanding Boyer’s scholarship of application and engagement is rhetoric and composition. Because rhetoric is rooted in public communication, scholars have access to a wealth of disciplinary knowledge that can help design projects that contain “the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities” (Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, 22). Moreover, the field of rhetoric and composition provides an appropriate model for illustrating challenges associated with labor and public engagement as faculty and staff are on the front lines of the neo-liberal push to streamline higher education into job preparation: first-year composition courses are increasingly taught by part-time faculty with low pay and few benefits, outcomes for composition courses are often manipulated by external parties seeking ease of student transfer, class size and enrollments limits are constantly under debate, writing program administrators often struggle to run programs under limited budgets and narrow understandings of writing, etc. Considering how writing and argumentation are integral to improving public communication and critical thinking, it is especially important for rhetoric and composition faculty to dedicate their work to the community instead of forwarding simplistic approaches to higher education as a gateway to employment.

Grounded in Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, contemporary understandings of the discipline have evolved from the ‘ability to identify the available means of persuasion in any given situation’ to include a wide range of symbolic strategies for democratizing education (Aristotle). Enacting rhetoric and composition’s public mission, however, has not come without its challenges in the contemporary environment of educational oversight and control. Department chairs and writing program administrators (WPAs), for example, often dedicate their labor toward myriad challenges and tasks that benefit many different groups. Because of the public nature of writing, these programs often collaborate with a variety of on-campus entities (assessment specialists, reaccreditation organizations, critical-thinking initiatives, disciplines seeking to improve student writing, writing centers, etc.), as well as off-campus groups (national and local

writing organizations, common reading groups, community problem-solving dialogues, community literacy programs, etc.). Consequently, writing specialists are accustomed to balancing public initiatives within the confines of traditional scholarship expectations and have much to contribute to the conversation on valuing community labor as scholarship.

Reflecting on the challenges experienced by writing program administrators, Deborah Dew is well aware of perceptions that WPAs' work is primarily clerical and shouldn't count towards scholarly expectations. As former WPA of the University of Colorado—Colorado Springs and co-editor of *Untenured Faculty as Writing Program Administrators: Institutional Practices and Politics*, Dew is all too familiar with challenges to academic labor. To combat misperceptions about WPA's work, Dew utilizes Boyer's model of the scholarship of application to demonstrate the importance of framing advocacy as academic work. In "WPA as Rhetor: Scholarly Production and the Difference a Discipline Makes," Dew outlines common challenges confronting WPA's who must both struggle to advocate for writing in the neo-liberal academic environment and at the same time satisfy expectations of scholarly productivity. For Dew, the current system is stacked against rhetoric and composition faculty, as those unaware of the nuances and challenges of their work "may construct our advocacy as service, asserting that the discursive frame of the refereed article captures all intellectual work," when in reality there is so much more (41). She offers the frame of "rhetorical advocacy" to capture the intense "applied rhetorical work" of writing programs and writing specialists (41). According to Dew, the term *advocacy* is fitting for the work of WPAs as it represents "the construction of arguments that are intellectually framed, strategically delivered, and theoretically and materially effective," skills that directly connect to theories and practices of rhetoric and composition (46).

Rhetorical advocacy, therefore, is a form of inquiry that produces work which often exists in the places beyond traditional intellectual work. rhetoric and composition and service learning have shared a rich history as detailed in journals such as: *Reflections*, *Community Literacy Journal*, *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* and manuscripts such as *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition* and *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition*. These community-based, academic dispatches detail the benefits of literacy programs, poetry and writing initiatives, and art and public beautification projects to their communities. The many stories they highlight directly challenge claims by organizations like NAS that civic education threatens democracy through radical co-optation of student labor and time.

Grounded in principles of situational awareness, collaboration, knowledge production, and persuasion, its complex structure moves it

beyond simplistic understandings of service. Dew explains, “Rhetorical advocacy is an area of inquiry that is epistemologically integral to our field’s methods of generating, integrating, and applying knowledge” (41). Often collaborative, this process helps participants “define problems, analyze situations, mediate local constraints, and deliberate with stakeholders through language” (42-43). Because of its connection to both theory and practice, rhetorical advocacy provides a grounded framework for scholars interested in articulating their work as the scholarship of application, especially work that demonstrates disciplinary expertise, generates new knowledge, and contributes to the intellectual work of the discipline (Dew 42-43). Generating new knowledge and encouraging new sites of practice, applied rhetorical work enables the iterative cycles of renewal that are integral to Boyer’s scholarship of application and provides practitioners a framework for explaining their work. It provides them the tools to detail their efforts through existing academic frames, validating their labor and actions to different audiences.

The Labors of Advocating for Peoples’ Rights

Just as Dew observes from her administrative experiences, advocacy is most effective when it contains successful arguments directed toward systems that revolve around the activities in which they function. Fully aware of the situations and contexts, advocates usually join an ongoing conversation in order to contribute new information to a group that seeks to create change, be it in thought or action. Effective rhetoricians analyze the systems in which conversations take place and identify ways in which they can successfully contribute new ideas within these systems or offer alternative systems in which to communicate.

Complementing Boyer’s expansion on the scholarship of application and engagement, faculty, staff, and students can utilize rhetorical practices in classrooms and on-campus activities, developing strategies for documenting work in our communities. A recent project in a small community in the southwestern United States illustrates how a group of faculty, staff, and students drew upon theory and practice to engage with their community as they advocated for Indigenous rights in an area with a history of multidisciplinary service-learning initiatives, community reading programs, and community-based learning and research projects. In October 2016, numerous pathways and histories connected in southwest Colorado, culminating in the official naming and recognition of the first annual “Indigenous Peoples’ Day,” an event where different groups converged to celebrate a complex network of rhetorical acts that guided participants to a new sense of community through art, dance, food, poetry, and music. The following sections detail three facets of the event that demonstrate how engagement and advocacy are deeply rooted within larger communicative systems influenced by service-learning and rhetoric and composition. Overlooked by

conservative calls for education and omitted from traditional understandings of intellectual work, these ecologies provide frameworks for community scholars to participate in and further contribute to their communities.

Contributing to the Institution's Mission

Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado has taken on a central role in creating more pathways for increasing how Native Americans are honored and celebrated in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. As a faculty member of this non-tribal institution, I have both personal and professional interests in helping the institution fulfill its mission to advance the education of Native Americans. Through classroom experiences, pedagogy workshops, and conversations with Native American faculty, staff, students, and community members, I have dedicated my efforts to improving educational opportunities for native peoples. Whereas I am not a part of the Native American population, my decade of service to the institution and community has positioned me to contribute to the development of events and pedagogies that can create a more just world for Native Americans.

Planning for Indigenous Peoples' Day was an exciting and collaborative process. Initial stages of the project relied on faculty and student research, as they investigated existing structures for peoples' rights and Indigenous rights, critically analyzing existing systems of oppression. The declaration of an Indigenous Peoples' Day also grew out of the institution's existing "Real History of the Americas" programming, which counters and reframes the Columbus Day holiday in order to bring awareness to existing cultural hierarchies. Ongoing for nearly ten years, the 'Real History' celebration is sponsored by our on-campus center for Hispano and multicultural students, *El Centro de Muchos Colores*; however, numerous students, staff, and faculty serve on the planning board and provide a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Planning meetings I have attended utilized consensus-based decision making and encouraged participants to solicit a wide variety of input and participation from as many people as possible: faculty contributed information on national movements in decolonization, staff contributed expertise in activism and mobilization, and students contributed strategies from ongoing social justice projects.

Work also took place in the classroom. To provide students sufficient contextual information, I worked with other event planners to design curriculum that helped students make connections between coursework on human rights education and community activities like Indigenous People's Day. I invited activity planners to present to classes that I teach and encouraged students to join the planning group in order to provide their insights. Students in peace and conflict studies classes that I teach presented their research on indigenous conflict resolution

practices, improving our understandings of appropriate strategies for social movements and transformation.

In concert with the planning committee, local politicians worked with students and community members to formally recognize the celebration where ultimately the City of Durango City Council approved a resolution formalizing the day in our city's public record:

Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Durango, Colorado, that the second Monday in October shall be known as 'Indigenous Peoples Day' in the City of Durango to celebrate the contributions, the enduring culture and traditions of all Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples. (City of Durango)

At the same time, Colorado State Representative Joe Salazar introduced a motion at the state level to formalize a state-wide observance, which was ultimately defeated in committee. Undiscouraged, Salazar joined our celebration on campus, offering praise and support for students and encouraging participants to not give up on future efforts to have the day recognized by broader groups (Fort Lewis College). These conversations and collaborations all utilized the intellectual work of many different people to successfully address a social problem in our community, forwarding our institution's community mission. Because Native American People participated in these processes in leadership roles, in order to bring awareness to and empower different groups, the event forwarded the College's commitment to Native American Education. Moreover, most—if not all—members of the Fort Lewis College community are fully aware of the College's "sacred trust" to Indigenous Peoples and are educated in and cognizant of avoiding cultural appropriation.

Sharing Expertise

A key component to ideologies that oppress different viewpoints is valuing the expertise of only a few. For change to come about in academic systems, it becomes especially important to value the ideas and creations from many different people. For us, success with the project came about as we showcased the expertise of numerous individuals through activities that shared different facets of Indigenous culture through arts, dance, food, and music. From a multicultural potluck lunch to a local multicultural dance group *Ballet Folklorico de Durango*, a Canadian Indigenous electronic music group *A Tribe Called Red*, and traditional Apache Crown Dancers, the celebration offered ways for participants to experience different facets of Indigenous cultures. Each of these events contained its own context and showcased different groups' shared social histories. Consistent with UNESCO's claim that "neither equitable progress nor social cohesion is truly possible if culture is left to one side," these activities ensured culture stayed central to the

conversation (United Nations). For these varied events, students were especially important in providing expertise in artistic and cultural aspects of Indigenous people.

Other forces at work developing this culture of sharing were on-campus acts of solidarity for the protestors at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Building momentum on Indigenous People's Day, this movement continued to develop through numerous rallies and protests, leading to a Thanksgiving-holiday convoy that was noticed as "one of the largest independently organized caravans from a university" (Romeo). It is important to note that student organizations were primarily responsible for the convoy, and that many of the participants were Native Americans who were well aware of the challenges to sovereignty on native land. (During the previous academic year, a similar group of students participated in a Thanksgiving-holiday convoy to provide support and deliver community-donated resources to residents of Black Mesa, AZ who were challenging property disputes with a nearby coal mine.) On the early morning of the caravan's departure, a large group of community members arrived on campus to support the activists, help load community-donated resources, and bid them safe travels, further demonstrating a sense of shared community (Romeo). Here, faculty and students utilized their experiences in activism and organization to advocate for a common good. Many of the students involved in the rallies and protests drew on scholarship and experiences from coursework in sociology, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and peace and conflict studies.

A New Understanding of Healing

Especially important during the current climate of negativity that exists in our political world is the concept of healing. In order to accomplish a shared vision of social healing, we recognized both the complex systems involved in healing and created spaces for them to interact. As event planners, we understood social healing as "the capacity of communities and their respective individuals to survive, locate, voice and resiliently innovate spaces of interaction that nurture meaningful conversation and purposeful action in the midst and aftermath of escalated and structural violence" (Lederach and Lederach 208). At the event's celebration, the Welcome and Opening Prayer created a unifying and reflective experience within a common space and common vision of healing. Whereas several events created meaningful conversations, especially Dr. Iris PrettyPaint's keynote talk on "Finding Hope from the Inside Out: Cultural Resilience and Historical Trauma" that described the importance of interconnectedness and caring to resilience, the final event was especially poignant. The dedication of Chip Thomas' mural entitled "Two Stars Rising in the North at Dusk" created a lasting image for our event. The mural portrays a young girl (Two Stars) and her dog swinging

forward on playground equipment and represents a story of resilience and healing.



(Thomas (used with permission))

The mural is interconnected to a family who recently suffered the loss of a family member, and at its dedication remaining family members shared their experiences with healing and provided a powerful message of opportunity. In addition, activist Demian DinéYazhí read his poem “Two Stars Rising in the North at Dusk” based on the mural, creating a collective spirit of healing that gives permanent voice to community resilience and rebirth:

Two Stars Rising in the North swings at dusk
One star creates her form in the glittering world
It is inherited strength from resilient ancestors
The other follows her and blesses her journey
It is the wild, steadfast spirit of fallen warriors

Together they breeze through cosmic wind
Intertwined in horse hair and kinetic genesis
Together they guide her movement:
In beauty you are reborn again
In beauty he is reborn again
In beauty she is reborn again
In beauty we are reborn again. (*used with permission*)

Introduced by a local ceremonial drumming group and the College's President, the poetry reading and mural dedication furthered the conversation of healing developed by many different people and discourses throughout the day. These many different genre—poetry, art, music, formal presentation, dancing, etc.—capture the voices and work of a community that traditionally go unnoticed in institutions that view education as simply occupational preparation.

Conclusion

Combined, these experiences represent an entire ecology of collaborations, communications, texts, genre, people, cultures, histories, and institutions. The many meetings and conversations and rhetorical exchanges create what Lederach and Lederach describe as “meaningful conversation [that] rises from interactive spaces that foster belonging and purposeful action” (213). Arising from public intellectual work, these conversations occur in classrooms and in workrooms, in artistic expressions and in scholarly investigations, in collaborations and in solitary explorations – in the systems of labor that require the dedication of many different people. Such work can be very meaningful for students and people who take part in their education, because it communicates community knowledge and includes the stories of groups who are excluded from scholarly conversations; however, ongoing threats to academic freedom and service-learning can divert students, staff, and faculty away from projects like Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Whereas Boyer's proposal positions institutions of higher education to redefine and expand what counts as scholarship and engagement, the intellectual work involved in creating such events oftentimes goes overlooked, as it still doesn't easily fit into Boyer's categories. Therefore, we need to continue to articulate the role higher education plays beyond the walls of the institution by disrupting traditional understandings of being a scholar. Bound by simplistic definitions of scholarship and service, limited frameworks for advocacy, and conservative calls for challenging civic education, the work of community scholars occupies a public space outside of traditional scholarly work. The faculty, staff, and students who work incredibly hard to make community events successful have few opportunities to frame their work within the larger intellectual missions of their institutions. Even though events like Indigenous Peoples' Day are valued by the

institutions and communities in which they occur, they are rarely afforded the same status as traditional scholarship – an inconsistency with the core mission of public education to increase access for an increasingly wider populace and increase the critical capacity for understanding that such access should never be denied.

Providing a rhetorical perspective on advocacy, and mapping the networks and ecologies of participants and their exchanges, can help elevate the significance of community research and collaboration. This can be done by illuminating how projects utilize disciplinary expertise and knowledge, generate new knowledge, and contribute to the intellectual work of the institution (Dew 42-43). Acknowledging the public work of academics – be they part-time or full-time, tenure-track or adjunct, faculty or students – and encouraging them to apply rhetorical frames to community projects, is an important step in the process. It is equally important for participants to situate their work in the rich contexts and collaborations in which we labor.

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