Looking Forward: Considering the Next Steps for Contingent Labor Material Work Conditions

Lisa Melonçon
University of South Florida

Laura Wilson
University of Cincinnati

Mahli Mechenbier
Kent State University: Geauga

Lisa Melonçon is a professor of technical communication at the University of South Florida. Her teaching and research focuses on the programmatic and professionalization dimensions of technical and professional communication, research methodologies, and the rhetoric of health and medicine.

Laura Wilson has an MA in English with a concentration in Scientific and Technical Communication from Bowling Green State University. She has worked as a technical writer and editor and has taught technical, professional, and business writing at the University of Cincinnati since 2005, where she is an Associate Professor Educator. Laura is passionate about her work and her students; beyond technical writing, she enjoys teaching courses on social media, rhetoric, and web authoring.

Mahli Mechenbier teaches Technical Writing, Professional Writing, and College Writing at Kent State University: Geauga as a three-year-renewable Senior Lecturer. She was a member of NCTE's Committee for Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction and was an editor for the OWI's Open Resource (2013 – 2016). Her research focuses on how academic administrations manage distance learning and the intellectual property rights of contingent faculty.

"It [working as a contingent faculty member] felt like I was a piece of furniture that was being used."
Study Participant

We wanted to be forward thinking and—by using what we learned from the data (see "Results and Findings from the Survey" and "Data Takeaways" articles in this special issue)—to consider new ways of addressing contingency. So much of the existing scholarship critiques from a theoretical or conceptual stance or the solutions offered are too localized to a set of specific conditions: this framework is not conducive to forming strategies that could enact changes more broadly. The fact remains that for over forty years, the writing field—composition in particular—has completely turned a blind eye except for writing and re-writing the same stories accompanied by consistent hand-wringing; this cycle is incredibly dismissive to the people who are impacted by these circumstances.

We wanted to re-think this approach, and rather than considering big and conceptual, we opted to think in smaller, incremental steps that can have broad impacts on the material work conditions of contingent faculty. In part we draw inspiration from the work of Sara Ahmed, who examined racism and diversity in institutional life. One of Ahmed's main arguments is the idea that when something is named as a commitment within an institution, often then the work for that commitment ceases because it has been named. Ahmed calls this phenomenon the "non-performative" in which the "naming can be a way of not bringing something into effect" (117). We see this as indicative of issues around contingency. That is, by saying contingency is a problem and then believing little can be done since administrators and faculty do not control institutional budgets, we are in fact extending the non-performative by naming contingency as a problem while doing little to change it.

Blaming the "system," the "administration," or a variety of other factors (such as the systematic and ongoing defunding of higher education) is easy. Calling for more unions (for example, see Samuels; Tolley) as the solution to the problem is too simple, and while unions are important, these calls underestimate and deflect from the work that faculty need to do every day. The systemic changes that need to happen to improve the working conditions of contingent faculty must be sustainable, and they must be made at every level: from how we treat our colleagues, to how we run our programs, to how we support professional development, and to how we prepare students for an ongoing constricted and challenging job market. This level of involvement is the only way to change a system that is desperately and irrevocably broken—and we have to implement these changes by using what we have in place already: contingent faculty and the programs they help shape and run.

Hundreds of institutions (big and small) have no local activists and likely never will. What they do feature is an unfair and unsustainable hierarchy that consistently wreaks havoc on those who work in the program and those who administer it. What they do have is fear. As Risa Gorelick posits, "perhaps the research question we have been afraid to ask over the past three decades is whether our national organizations…have the authority to really improve our situation" (119). This blame shifting and deflecting then puts the onus on everyone except tenure-line faculty and program administrators because it helps to alleviate our own guilt and complicity. However, the time for nuance has long since passed. We must accept a share of complicity in a failing system—that writing program administrators helped to create—and then move toward real action.

> As a WPA, I understand the lure, and sometimes the necessity, of pragmatism. In order to function as a program administrator in most medium to large institutions it is necessarily to sometimes be complicitous with administrative realities that we abhor…: it is essential to continually name the contradictions and inadequacies in our programs, scholarship, and pedagogy—to keep pushing the issues to the forefront and to be willing to make strategic, if controversial, moves to address them. (Scott 186)

With this study, we have strived to highlight these contradictions and to provide strategic (and yes, sometimes controversial) means to break a cycle fraught with bystanders, with hand-wringing and vocalization, and with little—if any—action toward repairing a broken system.

In the introduction to this special issue, we used the epigram "I love my job, but…" and we want to come full circle back to this idea and counter it with the angst and pain from the participant who opens this article. Both quotes represent the material work conditions of contingent faculty as an either/or as well as a both/and. While we have gathered and presented important information from a field-wide perspective, we have come to the conclusion that to improve our situation means we have to rely on local actions and share in more specific ways how those local actions can then impact national conversations. Admittedly, this assessment runs contrary to our own thinking when we started this project. Yet we stand by the need for field-wide data. Much like the collection of stories in Seth Kahn et al., we need to be more aware of how changes are being implemented and how—in specific details—small victories were gained. These sorts of examples, when placed alongside field-wide data and information, can provide powerful exigence to instigate change at all levels and locales.

In this final article, we discuss the implications of the current model of contingency and move toward ways to shift institutional infrastructures by engaging Donna Strickland's managerial unconscious alongside change management theory. This combining of theoretical

approaches allows us to provide both a conceptual apparatus for thinking through contingency, but, most importantly, offers a practical framework for implementing incremental changes to address the material work conditions of contingent faculty.

Managerial Unconscious and Change Management

The move to contingency and adjunctification has been seen as a marker of the de-professionalization of teaching. As Larry Gerber notes in his book on faculty governance, the move to using business methods to run higher education has resulted in erosion of faculty governance in large part through contingent appointments. This unbundling of teaching from research and service has led to faculty as employees rather than teachers, and further, since the number of faculty eligible to participate in institutional governance dwindles, decisions are made more so by those who are not regularly engaged in teaching.

Gerber's concept of de-professionalization intersects directly with the work of Adrianna Kezar, an education policy scholar at the Delphi Project, to bring contingency into the open and call for changes to a system that recognizes existent hierarchies in higher education will never go away. While we have consciously not brought in a lot of scholarship from outside of TPC and composition, Kezar's work is so important because she has consistently argued for creating teaching jobs that are professionalized and off the tenure track ("Embracing" and with Daniel Maxey, "Envisioning"). This idea of "good jobs" off the tenure track is an important foundation for presenting data and making claims around the politics of service. Composition and TPC have a large number of faculty in "good jobs" that are full-time and fairly compensated: many with possibilities for promotion, longer contracts, and opportunities for faculty development, including funds for travel or research (see "Results and Findings from the Survey" article in this special issue).

However, the problem is not the "good jobs"; the quandary is the de-professionalization of teaching as a key foundation to the mission of higher education. Instead of emphasizing and professionalizing teachers and teaching, institutions of higher education have fetishized the research aspect of the professoriate so that teaching is no longer seen as worthwhile. Part of the move to non-tenure-track and part-time faculty is a transition to de-professionalize the labor of teaching, as seen in the hierarchies found within higher education's labor landscape. When something is no longer recognized as a profession, when it is no longer valued, it becomes much easier to outsource for low cost. This diminishment of value is why we have reflected so much on professional development and the need to continue to provide opportunities for contingent faculty. Teaching is not something to be outsourced; however, the problem continues since administrators and faculty often feel they lack power, and/or they have no idea how to combat the structural inequities. We all know that asking for a series of tenure-track lines is no longer a viable solution.

What is viable is working toward securing meaningful "teaching-track" positions that are essential to the modern university. As Paula Patch argued:

> Yet these "teaching-track" lines are critical to the contemporary university, particularly those that find themselves with increasing student enrollments overall…. Some institutions, mine included, need a balance of teaching-track and research-track lines and not only because the "teachers" can staff more classes in a semester: We need folks who can devote a lot of time to being creative, innovative teachers or administrators or leaders in other areas that generally look like service—and we want to give them a secure line that lets them devote as much time as they need to this.

What Patch argues for—and what we are arguing for—is an extension of Kezar's work specific to composition and TPC and the realities of handling programs. However, we all know this is easier said than done. To re-professionalize teaching necessitates a shift in the structures of our programs, departments, and institutions. In the next section, we propose a way to initiate that.

Considering Managerial Unconscious Through Change Management

One of the first steps in implementing change is to understand the function of organizational structures and to also identify the role of people within those structures. For composition, an important scholarly moment in this understanding was Donna Strickland's *Managerial Unconscious*. Strickland's book argues that, "the work of writing program administration is managerial work.… To ask questions about the management of teachers is as much an intellectual activity as is developing a curriculum. In fact, developing a curriculum for others to implement is itself a management activity—it is a putting into place of structures to guide the work of others" (90). This point is vitally important in formulating any approach to getting around the persistent and pervasive managerial unconscious. Beyond that—and arguably more importantly—we have to understand the ground we are building on, so to speak, to ensure we are developing a plan or are being strategic in ways that make true changes with programs that will directly and positively impact faculty. Understanding the "managerial," as Strickland describes, is key to the framing of this entire project.

> The sticking point for many composition scholars, then, seems to be the word "managerial." Certainly, it has negative connotations for traditional humanist intellectuals, who have tended over the decades to distrust management as, at best, nonintellectual and, at worst, soul-murdering. All the same, it's really a matter of word choice to prefer "administration" over "management." Although

> management in its current usage is more recent and more aligned with corporate oversight, the function (coordinating the work of other people) is the same. (Strickland 10)

Now is the time to use the managerial and our persuasive capabilities to shift how WPAs and TPC PAs manage programs, particularly considering that many of these programs would cease to function without the labor of contingent faculty. One way to improve the environment is to draw on concepts from management communication by integrating the idea of change management.

Change Management

Corporations undergo change at a high frequency with reorganizations occurring every 2-5 years (Stevens). Because of this rate of rapid change, the field of change management was developed as a way to work through the theory and the actual practice of making changes within large organizational structures. Drawing from management and TPC scholarship, faculty and administrations can learn that "change management in technical communication is about implementing change in organizational processes" and infrastructures (Jansen).

Change management is a management approach that emphasizes changes to the internal structures that impact organizational processes, as well as organizational culture. Effective change management requires a number of other managerial skills and components such as project management, which is focused on the specifics of a defined project or task (e.g., update to curriculum). Although traditional change management is typically focused on a specific business outcome (e.g., moving through a merger successfully), broadening the definition—as we have done here—enables us to show how change management can be implemented to effect structures and cultures. Incremental change is often the most lasting, and a number of incremental changes can create larger changes within organizations.

Change management builds on Strickland by focusing on the positive aspects of management theory that provide a framework for implementing the types of incremental changes necessary to alter systemic cultures around contingency and material work conditions. Following Strickland, we want to offer suggestions that consider not only how to get things done, but, more importantly to "include questions of the ethical and political consequences of doing so" (120). We understand bureaucratic complexities exist when making any change—particularly systemic changes. However, we also know that we have to try. Additionally, we know, based on the data we have collected and the voices we have heard, what it will take to begin this change.

One of us has often said that higher education is simply the most inefficient organization in which she has worked. While spoken in some ways tongue-in-cheek, a kernel of truth is present within the statement.

The rationale for thinking in these terms is that while the mission of higher education should never be tied to corporate objectives, a need exists to improve the infrastructure of higher education and the way that it goes about managing and organizing work. Separating the mission from its structure and then thinking through how to develop a more efficient and inclusive infrastructure is one of the primary goals of change management.

The managerial aspect of programs binds first-year composition (FYC) and TPC together, and, more importantly, brings to the forefront TPC's scholarly history of understanding the managerial role within organizations, including how to leverage that role to effect change and provide value to organizations. In her landmark study of memos and other forms of communication, Joanne Yates describes "[m]anagerial control—over employees (both workers and other managers), processes, and flows of materials— . . . [as] the mechanism through which the operations of an organization are coordinated to achieve desired results" (xvi). By understanding managerial work as simply a key mechanism for the way work gets done rather than some capitalist move to dominate, coerce, and control for nefarious purposes, change management theory opens up the conversation around the material work lives of contingent faculty as a managerial issue that needs to be solved—or rather—as one that can be solved. This concept makes us think of the rhetorical question: "What happens if we invest in developing our people and then they leave us? [Response:] What happens if we don't, and they stay?" Understanding managerial aspects such as the professional development we push for so much in this study allows us to see that changing the way we manage and develop our faculty can make all the difference. In the oft-cited piece by Porter *et al.* regarding institutional critique, the authors go to great lengths to argue that institutions are rhetorical. That is, institutions can be reformed through rhetorical practices such as changing policies, procedures, and documentation and by transforming our own positionality and actions. Andrea Fraser argues, "It's not about being against the institution. We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kind of rewards we aspire to" (282). This attitude connects the articles of this study: the re-professionalization of teaching needs to be a practice we reward, and professional development and job security are the rewards we aspire to.

Thus, it would be more helpful and accurate to say that institutional critique connected to actions can be effectuated. We want to invoke the idea of critical change management as a way to give power and direction to institutional critique. So how do we go about implementing change? John Hayes offers a change process that includes:

- Recognizing the need for change
- Diagnosing what needs to be changed

- Planning how to achieve the desired change
- Implementing plans and reviewing progress
- Sustaining the change (25)

To implement change management, an employee first needs to understand the organization from the perspective of all concerned stakeholders. While Hayes's work in change management is well known, these ideas have not been consistently picked up or adapted across higher education outside of those in educational leadership programs (see for example, Wagner et al.). This is why we offer it here as a tool to think through issues of contingent labor and the role of this labor within the program, department, and institution.

In TPC, scholars have developed a tool to help administrators work through understanding their organizations and where change can be implemented. Joanna Schreiber and Lisa Melonçon turn to continuous improvements models, which are "used in industry to organize several iterative processes and practices in conversation with each other, promoting alignment without sacrificing important deliberation. These models have been used to facilitate communication and work processes across units within companies" (Schreiber and Melonçon 258). They acknowledge that applying a model from industry to higher education would be problematic, so instead Schreiber and Melonçon "use the theoretical rationale of workplace continuous models to design a model that could work within higher education" (260). Their model is based on four steps:

- **G**ather: the process of gathering existing data about the program or exposing the lack of existing programmatic information and data.
- **R**ead: the process of reading landscapes to obtain additional information and to better understand the multiple perspectives that programs must consider for sustainability.
- **A**nalyze: the process of analyzing together the information from the gather and read steps.
- **M**ake: the implementation of changes or making adjustments to documentation or curricula or processes (or the practice of creating these things if forming a new program).

These steps are done in a circular pattern to emphasize the recursive nature of the process of improving programs. Thus, GRAM becomes a key part of the change management process because it gives concrete approaches—designed by those in higher education for those in higher education—to work toward in changing and sustaining programs or processes.

GRAM is a mechanism for gathering information to determine how to align and to negotiate common goals; these goals have to be realistic within the view of the organization. In other words, while many in writing would argue for tenure-track lines across the board, the reality dictates that that eventuality is unlikely to happen. Instead, mechanisms are needed to find ways to secure buy-in and to find common ground and then to align the different goals and processes to improve material working conditions. The key to change management is to think through current issues, consider what the transition will look like, and imagine a different future with the new changes in place. GRAM provides the tools necessary to perform appropriate and detailed analysis of the existing structures and to shed light on where changes can begin.

In the case of WPAs and TPC PAs, this means understanding the number of influences on their programs. As discussed earlier, change can only be successful after a detailed audit of all stakeholders. GRAM is a process model that can help identify and implement changes specific to program administration. Process perspective emphasizes both the what (the problems) and the how (steps and actions). Thus, change management is the big term that spins positive and practical managerial unconscious into ways that we can change institutional infrastructures**.** Change management includes an emphasis on overcoming barriers and resistance and to help ensure that those affected by the change can make a successful transition.

While understanding and utilizing these processes may feel daunting and may seem to be contrary to the "small, incremental changes" we posit, the time has come for composition and TPC to no longer simply critique the unfair structures. There has to be increased attention on the actions (both strategies and tactics) that can affect incremental—and then eventually more systematic—organizational change. "While it is true that writing program administrators are managers, we think it would be more useful to explore what management as an activity means—and more importantly, what it can mean to do the work of management" (Grabill et al. 226). We want to highlight and extend the focus on the *work* of management in our discussion about contingent labor. What work can administrators do to effect institutional change? We are at a crossroads—appealing to the presidents/deans is not working, nor is appealing to faculty. By using change management, we have identified a way we can convince the "managers" (the administrators) of our writing programs to acknowledge patterns and change the way they manage not just the faculty and the classes, but also the programs, processes, and professional development opportunities. We are not attacking our management; we are offering strategies to lift them up, to help them help us.

Program administrators do have agency, but in the face of institutions viewed as monolithic corporate entities, administrators often forget this simple fact. Invoking administrative agency means finding ways, rhetorically and otherwise, to begin to shift cultures and to change

policies and procedures. "Effective institutional agents know how to work with constraints; a failure to do so will leave us with inadequate characterizations of university organizations and no way to imagine interventions" (Grabill et al. 227). Change management tells us that the most successful of these plans occur incrementally.

Encouraging and building administrative infrastructures without due consideration of the labor—and the multiple costs of that labor—involved has led us into a true catch 22 of iterative cycles of exploitation (which is an argument similar to the one made by Tony Scott in *Dangerous Writing*). We need to talk about money and jobs and labor, and we need to do it as a means to shift the culture. Teaching is a profession, and it deserves more than $2,000 a course. Moreover, having someone trained and invested with long-term job security in these positions is preferable over the precarious nature that legitimately runs the majority of our programs.

What changes do people undergo in administrative contexts when those same people are no longer referred to as people but rather as labor to staff sections? How often do faculty and administrators in our published scholarship—and more so in our day-to-day interactions—lose the human behind "staff" in our desperation to fill a section at the last minute? How might we approach labor differently, through the lens of inclusion? How can we create room for inclusion of **all faculty** that simultaneously addresses the importance of representation and redistribution of resources?

Small, incremental change can lead—and does lead—to larger, more systemic changes, so not losing sight of the daily small things that can have larger impacts is critical. We need to remember that kindness can be disruptive in its own way because it shifts the power structures and helps to build solidarity and productive relationships—it forces all those involved to listen. Through kindness, we can begin to truly see life through different perspectives, and it allows all stakeholders to understand that kindness must be met with a response. The response itself challenges and changes structures. The response can be disruptive. The following is our response.

Action Items to Change Cultures

First, we respond with kindness and respect. This study is full of strong feelings and heart-breaking stories. It is also full of models and quotes where the participants show time and again their *why* in the face of an often brutal system. We respond with the knowledge that contingency is here to stay, with the knowledge that contingent faculty are invaluable through their work and service, and with the knowledge that we *see* them, we *hear* them, we *are* them. To make sure they are seen, heard, and can exist beyond this study, we provide the following series of actions that WPA and TPC PAs can consider to enact change within their departments, colleges, and institutions.

Elimination of the FYC General Education Requirement

We consider Sharon Crowley's claim that FYC should not be taught because the course exploits instructors, and we want to advocate for consideration of the elimination of FYC as a general education requirement. "When the teaching of writing is devalued as rudimentary work of low status, and when research, theory, and history of the field are overlooked or dismissed, credentials don't matter" (Hesse). Even though it affords departments much needed student credit hour revenue streams, the cost in human capital needs to be placed in relation to it. The majority of contingent faculty in the humanities teach composition. Compounding this issue is the fact that when the majority of our contingent faculty teach at the same institution where they earned their degree, it should cause us to question the purpose of our grad programs: to perpetuate an exploitive model? Our data reports that 41% of contingent faculty teach at the same institution where they obtained their highest degree, which seems like a perpetuation of training students solely to teach in an exploitive system, and the existing hiring practices only mean that students are being trained with few options for full-time, stable employment. Granted, we do understand that in some cases students attend a local institution because they have commitments to the area that prohibit them from being able to leave. We also acknowledge—as this data has displayed—that a large number of stable and secure jobs are available. However, as Melissa Nicolas says so eloquently:

> To advocate for better working conditions, to recognize the important, good work that has happened on local and national levels to make things right for all our faculty does not preclude *also* critically examining our foundational assumptions about the pedagogical and institutional imperatives or mandates for the existence of required FYC. We can both fight the good fight and open up critical conversations about whether or not the way required FYC exists in the world is the way we want it to exist.

Change is often controversial and difficult. We recognize that, right out of the gate, we are suggesting a shift that would disrupt countless institutions where FYC is a general education requirement. We hope to start a loud, productive conversation about the material work lives of contingent faculty, and the place to start is with the course that a vast majority of contingent faculty teach. Without the requirement attached to the course, it is possible the WPAs could make different and better arguments in regard to labor and remove the stigma that is often attached to the course now. If FYC were moved to a course that was available but not required, it is likely it would still be needed in large numbers since the class is a first step in writing at the university and because, as is noted in the next section, there is always demand for writing.

Shifting the TPC Service Course Model

TPC is not without blame in this situation, and in some ways even more so. Why? Often, the service course is not a general education requirement but is a requirement for other departments who must meet accreditation requirements, which sets up a distinctive dynamic of being beholden to others. This inter-reliance has caused a different—yet wholly similar—contingent labor problem.

However, often pressure exists to offer more sections of the service course or to develop "specialized versions" (i.e., writing for health science, writing for finance), and TPC PAs get stuck in the middle of arguing for hires who are qualified while being pressured to discover a way to offer the courses because of the need for student credit hours. Recent scholarship by Lora Arduser discussed some of the concerns with specialized courses, and as Lisa Melonçon notes in her critical postscript to the issue, Arduser (as well as other TPC PAs) missed an opportunity when she was approached to offer a specialized course to the psychology department. Rather than ask what the TPC courses could do for their program, her program and department would have been better suited by asking how the current course could support their needs. As Melonçon notes, "the addition of another 'specialized' service course simply means hiring another contingent faculty member without due consideration of the perpetuation of the labor problem and simultaneous problem of undermining the field's own expertise as researchers and teachers" (220).

The conflict creates an untenable situation in many locations where these extra courses are often taught by graduates of the program until instructors realize the cost-benefit of teaching on the side is not worth the trouble. Although being asked to teach a section of a course which is specialized for certain majors may be flattering and exciting for contingent faculty, creating and preparing the (new) course takes time and effort—which is most likely uncompensated since contingent faculty are neither traditionally granted course equivalency nor provided funding for development of new courses. Moreover, these specialized courses may not be run regularly and may become outdated by the next time the course is taught—thus requiring a significant revamp of material and content. Another significant issue with these specialized courses is that once one is successful, more are created.

> *I was asked, one month before the term started, to teach a specialized technical writing course for an audience I was completely unfamiliar with. I didn't have the background or training to develop this course, but because it meant butts in seats, it meant we were teaching the courses no matter what. We did what we had to do to make it work, but the extra work wasn't compensated (though it was certainly appreciated, at least by my immediate colleagues, and that support meant more than they know).*

This is just another way that TPC courses can become exploitive of contingent labor. Inserting more control based on disciplinary expertise and limiting the unsavory side of the service course is a necessary first (albeit painful) step in shifting labor conditions.

Show That NTTs May Not Actually be "Cost Saving"

Here we want to focus on the concept of cost-effectiveness. According to Henry Levin ("Cost-Effectiveness"), a leading scholar in educational research:

> The purpose of cost-effectiveness analysis in education is to ascertain which program or combination of programs can achieve particular objectives at the lowest cost. The underlying assumption is that different alternatives are associated with different costs and different educational results. By choosing those with the least cost for a given outcome, society can use its resources more effectively. (381)

Unlike cost benefit analyses, cost-effectiveness analyses are applied in educational settings because they take into consideration factors that are not easily measured in pure dollar amounts, such as student learning. Even though cost-effectiveness analyses are rare in higher education, they do have potential to help uncover the hidden costs in higher education. What composition and TPC administrators have not effectively accomplished is to better understand the full cost effectiveness of the current model of contingency—and this is where a cost-effectiveness analysis has potential benefits. While they are most often used to make decisions about programs and policies, cost-effectiveness analysis has potential both in thinking through and in gathering data for arguments about labor conditions in higher education. Currently, WPAs and TPC PAs do not have the data to forcefully counter administrators' arguments for maintaining the current model that has been consistently touted as money saving (as seen in Table 1). For example, in its simplest form, program administrators manage an adjunct budget and a regular budget for faculty salaries. What the latter looks like varies widely among institutions, but typically a department has a line for salaries that are permanent and a line for those that are variable. Many departments—or at the very least at the college level—have control over how these budgets are allocated. Adjunct budgets are the simplest since instructors are paid per course with no fringe benefits of any kind, so let us use it as an example (see Table 1). On the surface, this budget looks like it is cost effective because departments can teach a large number of students at a reduced rate when compared to FT NTT or TT faculty.

Table 1: Cost per Course Comparison (Based on R1 in the Southeast U.S.)

Faculty	Cost per Course
Assistant professor, tenure-line faculty member making $75,000 (on a 2-2 load)	$9,375
Continuing instructor on 12-month contract making $60,000 (on a 4-4-2 load)	$6,000
Adjunct	$3,000

On the surface, and from a cost-benefit analysis, it would seem that an adjunct teaching the course affords the most cost savings or is the most cost effective. In a pure dollar amount, the savings of $3,000 or $6,375 in hiring an adjunct to teach in the summer compared to the tenure-line faculty member would seem like the "best" move to make. However, the problem surfaces because no one has paid attention to the hidden costs that would directly impact this same calculation when done from a cost-effectiveness analysis standpoint. In other words, the calculations in Table 1 are only part of the actual costs.

One key aspect of cost-effectiveness analysis is to determine the "cost ingredients." This is particularly helpful in discussions of contingent labor as it relates to change management. Why? Because thinking through all of the cost factors associated with contingency can assist administrators and faculty in making more effective arguments for what is actually needed to maintain educational standards and curriculum. The current system has not uncovered all the hidden costs in contingency, which when laid out in a cost-effectiveness analysis indicates that the current system may not be cost saving at all. These hidden or unaccounted-for costs are what program administrators must include when discussing the issue of contingent labor at their institutions. Let us take a partial look at ingredient costs for adjunct labor as briefly outlined here. The costs in Table 2 are estimated based on the salaries and time averages from one of the authors at her institution for a single term (which is how the per course rate is determined).

Table 2: Hidden Costs of Adjuncts

Administrative costs in the department to complete term-to-term hiring (support to complete the actual hiring process from a paperwork and systems standpoint)	2 hours @ $45/per hr. (for every hire throughout the term) = $90 x 30 (avg. adjunct instructors)	$2,700
Administrative costs in the college and HR to complete term-to-term hiring (support to complete the actual hiring process from a paperwork and systems standpoint)	1 hour @ $45/per hr. (for every hire throughout the term) = $45 x 30 (avg. adjunct instructors)	$1,350
Administrative costs of onboarding (information on keys, rooms, offices, etc.)	2 hours @ $35/per hr. (for every hire throughout the term) = $70 x 30 (avg. adjunct instructors)	$2,100
Training and professional development (PD) in the subject matter (work with the existing curricula, introduction to assignments and processes, initial orientation, ongoing PD, etc.)	18 hours of scheduled PD that is planned, discussed, and organized by a director $55.00/per hr., one assistant at $33/hr., and one grad assistant at $15/hr. = 990 + 594 + 270	$1,854
Ongoing support throughout the term	an average of 1 hour of questions per instructor per term charged to one assistant and one grad student of the program = 30 x $24	$720
TOTAL "hidden costs" of a single adjunct		$8,724

When these "ingredient costs" are included in discussions of costs of contingency, one can see how quickly the "cost savings" disappear. The information in Table 2 is a rough sketch that is not as precise as it could be. For example, we are aware that the costs of orientations would be spread across multiple hires, but at the same time, we have not included other "ingredient costs" such as the need for pedagogical and technical support throughout the term for those new to the institution, or the time that the person who schedules courses expends contacting potential adjuncts to fill courses. For the same institution used in the example above, the course scheduler estimates that it takes between 8-10 hours with additional follow-ups (4-6 hours) in contact time alone to manage filling courses with adjuncts. More importantly, the most notable absence from Table 2 involves the "costs" to student learning for instructors who may need even more increased attention because they are hires who are not fully prepared to teach the course for which they are being hired. This practice is common in composition and TPC when many programs hire literature PhDs and creative writing MFAs to teach writing. Additionally, the analysis does not take into account those faculty who are working at a number of institutions to maintain any semblance of a livable wage and are thus likely not at their best because of the workload and precarity of the situation. The point of Table 2 is to initiate a bigger conversation about the true costs of contingency that are often not discussed or considered when making decisions about labor.

None of these actual dollar-based costs are ever figured into the larger conversations of budgets, maintaining flexibility in hiring, and, most importantly, in discussions of student learning. Integrating the costs into discussions about student learning outcomes is also a key part of cost-effectiveness analysis that need more data-driven research within composition and TPC. Ways exist to measure and determine these sorts of cost-effectiveness formulas, but the fields have not undertaken this work, which is vital to the future of writing instruction.

Admittedly, we can see the immediate pushback to this type of work since few faculty and administrators in composition and TPC entered this job because of their interest in finance, assessment, or evaluation. Moreover, as Levin ("Waiting") argues, "In this respect, cost-effectiveness results may even serve as a threat to decision makers by providing information that is counter to common sense, popular appeal, and support of particular constituencies" (64). However, we are interested in student learning, and without taking the steps to fully understand the true bottom line costs of contingency (in dollars), composition and TPC will make few inroads to challenging the existing systems.

Our goal in doing this work of hidden costs is to provide another way to argue for the addition of more full-time lines while continuing to advocate for and toward changes to structures. The dual focus of consistent arguments from a different perspective and working toward structural

change are both necessary and key aspects of change management. In working toward changes that would include more full-time faculty, the next step is to work on implementing system changes where administrators and faculty can make a difference.

Make System Changes Where You Can

Too often the kneejerk reaction is to throw up our hands and proclaim that those in the department or college can do little to nothing to make meaningful change. The concept that institutions can be changed—or stifled—through policies and documentation is not a new phenomenon (Ahmed; McComiskey; Porter et al; Grabill et al), and program administrations need to be vigilant to make changes when and where they can.

> *Changing the culture. How big is that? One thing that frustrates me is that there is still a perception that contingent faculty are less able and less qualified, and that is so not true. I hate the hierarchy that still exists. And I'm at an institution where the differences are so minimal. I recognize that the situation at my institution needs to be replicated across the field.*

As this respondent points out, shifting cultures can have a big impact. Some specific ways to modify the cultures begins with making documented changes in the larger systems. Following are some examples of actionable considerations program administrators can enact, update, or work toward transforming. These adjustments are based on parts of change management theory that consider the need to recognize self-reinforcing sequences (Hayes). For example, often administrators simply do not believe that change is possible. Approaching change management from the belief that change is indeed feasible and achievable opens up opportunities to recognize areas—even small things—that can be reconditioned to improve the material work lives of contingent faculty (see "Data Takeaways" article in this issue, particularly the discussion of titles and making contingent faculty visible on departmental websites).

Create a Culture of Teaching

Another important takeaway from this study is that beyond the money, the classes, the course loads, and the precarity, the culture matters. If the culture is supportive and inclusive to contingent faculty, everyone benefits. Yet often, many contingent faculty—due to non-permanent office space or scheduling—do not feel integrated into their departments and therefore lack a connection to faculty colleagues. Departments should create opportunities for contingent faculty to interact with each other—both academically and socially—because instructors who value each other as people (and consider their colleagues friends) will be more likely to share strategies in the classroom. Talking anecdotally encourages bonding

and results in cohesion among the faculty. This change can happen in so many ways: regular brown bags on teaching pedagogy, inclusion in curriculum discussion, or increased opportunity for peer observations (both conducting and receiving). These changes do not require institutional upheaval; they often do not require departmental approval. What they do require is time and commitment—and those are two things contingent faculty deserve at the very base level.

Examine Existing Policies

Following Seth Kahn's position that tenure and tenure-line faculty need to ensure that parts of contingents' jobs are not damaging theirs (regarding leaves and sabbaticals), often means that FT NTTs pick up more work, or that additional adjuncts are hired. This model does not indicate the academy cares about contingent labor. One way to balance this policy is to provide FT NTT contingent faculty with the opportunity for sabbaticals. Administrators should offer course releases to develop specialized courses, examine the level of autonomy that contingent faculty have and see how that can be increased, and work on eliminating student end-of-term evaluations (SETs)—or at the very least, ensure that jobs are not hanging in the balance as a result of SETs. As discussed in "Politics of Service" in this special issue, faculty should never have to sacrifice their expertise and knowledge for the sake of ensuring positive SETs. Departments should integrate evaluations differently to ensure they are being applied to assess and encourage innovative teaching rather than being used solely in hiring and renewal decisions. Administrators should create support structures to make for better professional development such as a series at the teaching and learning center or additional funding specific to faculty conferences. WPAs should consider developing mentoring programs to ensure contingent faculty are given the resources and support they need to do the job they were hired to do: teach.

Document Roles and Responsibilities

At locations where a faculty union exists, many aspects of the roles and responsibilities of contingent faculty are documented. However, even at locations without unions, documentation regarding expectations both at the program and department level should be clear and accessible. No matter what instance it may be, universities should ensure that roles and responsibilities are codified in all documents, along with specifics about how contingent faculty can participate in curricular decisions and departmental governance. Although we discussed the importance of titles in "Data Takeaways" in this special issue, and gave some specific actionable items, we return to it here because the topic of titles directs us to ideas that we can actually change within our departments, colleges, and institutions. That is, we can work toward expanding official documentation to ensure that FT NTT faculty have opportunities for advancement and also enjoy opportunities to be fully recognized within

departmental structures. Even though titles in name are extremely important, titles in action and in consequence are what is needed. Shifting structures through institutional documentation—although time consuming—is necessary, and in most cases controllable, by administrators and faculty starting at the department level.

Create Promotion Paths

Even if institutions do not have these paths set up, local paths with incentives can start conversations to change institutional policies. Faculty who are acknowledged for their involvement in this way are more likely to continue making valuable contributions, often going above and beyond what they are contracted to do. We witness this often with contingent faculty: many are required only to teach and provide minimal service to the department, yet many are seen serving at the college and university levels, researching and publishing, and presenting at national conferences. Having the opportunity to earn job titles which reflect that work and service in material ways would be rewarding, especially since service can be a key part of promotion and merit decisions (Schnaubelt and Statham). Service—through teaching—should be acknowledged and rewarded as an important form of scholarship.

Within this idea of promotion paths for contingent faculty should be a consideration of virtual tenure (Junn and Blammer). We take this term to mean that contingent faculty, after successful renewals for a continuous number of years, would have the process of renewal becoming *pro forma* as much is the case for tenure-line faculty after tenure. The shift to virtual tenure for FT NTTs can reduce the precarity of these positions. Instead of leaving the language ambiguous, parallel promotion and tenure language can be integrated into contingent contracts and in departmental- and institutional-level documentation. Granted, some have argued the concept of virtual tenure can make contingency worse (Junn and Blammer), but we think that with a conscientious use of data and cogent rhetorical arguments, the option is better than the existing system. Further, data from studies such as this can assist institutions in making better arguments for these changes because one has data in which to argue and confirm the labor and work that is actually involved (see for example, Tower and Honan).

Each of these items suggest systemic changes through the lens of change management. Seeing incremental changes happen, that are both measurable and visible, can result in a tipping point that influences the achievement of further goals and objectives. Incremental and noticeable changes are a key facet of transforming cultures and institutions through change management theory.

More Empirical Research

Finally, both composition and TPC would be better served to have more actual data to assess when making arguments and cases. Seeing the little amount of research available specific to writing was staggering. One

reason for this entire project was to gather actual data about the material work lives of contingent faculty. Data-driven, empirical research is a vital necessity if any hope of actually effecting change exists.

Stories from the field regarding what has worked at different locations are of course important data to have. Even though stories may be one piece of evidence for larger arguments, composition and TPC desperately need more specific research on the material work lives of contingent faculty. Without field specific information, it is more challenging to align with national research to make strong cases for any type of change. The WPA Graduate Organization just completed a study on work conditions of graduate students, and Paula Patch at Elon University is in the beginning stages of a multi-institutional study aimed at building on the information reported here, and to gain an even greater understanding of the types of differences in contingent roles across institutions. Additional information about contingent faculty will provide more depth and urgency into any local request.

Although it may be provocative to mention, composition and TPC need to investigate new and different ways of teaching writing. The evidence-based research available for so many of writing's pedagogical practices are thin and outdated. The research and evidence program administrators may present does not meet the minimum threshold of evidence in most fields outside of writing. Though difficult to ingest, rather than taking a defensive stance that is aimed at defending the field(s), program administrators and faculty may be better served to design empirical research studies that can provide the types and kinds of data that would not only improve pedagogical practice, but can also sway skeptical university administrators.

Combined with continuing research on contingent faculty's work lives, composition and TPC needs research on the impact of contingency on students and degree programs. Research in other fields has been split on the impact—both positive and negative—of contingent faculty on student learning (Bettinger and Long; Jaeger and Eagan; Kezar and Maxey; Mueller, Mandernach, and Sanderson). Currently, we found no research on the effect of contingent faculty on student learning in writing courses or programs. The absence of this information is a vital data point that needs to be examined. There needs to be research that determines the impact of contingent faculty on student learning outcomes: both good and potentially bad. In other words, at this moment, composition and TPC have no actual evidence on contingency's impact on teaching and learning.

Finally, looking at ways to improve our research practice also means we need to actively engage and support contingent faculty in performing this sort of research. If contingent faculty are teaching the most students, then they should be on the front lines of research agendas and priorities. They are front-line teachers who can and should be generating research questions that need to be addressed to improve both teaching practices and material work lives. This sort of support can be

accomplished in most locations through conscious efforts of spending professional development funds differently or asking for a specific request for research dollars to improve pedagogical practice.

Current models that look at labor in higher education take on the management approach that is rooted in rational language and approaches. These rational approaches often focus on data and accountability as a way to argue for balance and fairness that leads to professional codes or an improvement to systems and processes. Rather than rational business models, we want to put forward a model of disruption based on people and relationships, which is what change management and the GRAM continuous improvement model use as their primary focus.

We know this change will not be easy. We know that any change can be hard. One participant describes her contingent journey from part-time to full-time and the constant backlash of speaking up for inclusion and equality:

> *When I was PT, I was "noisy" – trying to start a union, etc. and when I got made FT, someone said to me: "They hired you full-time just to shut you up" and "they're appeasing you." Very hurtful. Patronizing. Some TT and many administrators, they talk about how much they value PT faculty for their value to the university and it just feels patronizing. Equated how TT and administrators treat contingent to how parents treat small children who want to help. Great example. We know they (i.e. contingent faculty, especially PT, and children) don't have the tools/abilities/resources to do the job but give them a patronizing pat on the back for being a big kid–it's insulting. Another example, if you say anything about wanting better working conditions: If you don't like your treatment, just go? Why do you do this if you're so unhappy – clueless, patronizing the way they talk to and about us. Wish that was different. That there were administrators who would go through contingent faculty sensitivity training. Changing the culture is really hard.*

This quote, specifically the part which asserts, "if you don't like your treatment, just go," speaks to our earlier point of changing the culture. TT faculty are predominantly oblivious to how they affect contingent faculty and are equally blind to how contingent faculty affect them. Stop for a moment, TT faculty, and picture a department without contingent faculty. What classes would you be teaching? What roles would you be taking on, especially regarding undergraduate students? How would their absence affect your service requirements? Higher education, composition, and TPC could all benefit from a different viewpoint. A move to start each conversation and each interaction by putting ourselves in the place of the other will benefit collegiality. Thinking through the concepts of affective investment (see "Affective Investment" article in this special issue) and

politics of service (see "Politics of Service" article in this special issue) has taught us that leading with kindness means focusing on the relationships and their impacts rather than on the transactions. The focus on relationships means the emphasis is on the reality of people's lives rather than the data and administrative mandates: lives are local and global, and any change starts with believing that transformation can be accomplished.

Conclusion

What we have offered in this final piece to the special issue is to consider change management theory as a way to approach making structural and systemic changes within programs, departments, colleges, and institutions. There comes a moment that practical action must be taken to address an overwhelming problem. Program administrators and faculty can no longer afford to believe contingency is not a predicament we can address. We unequivocally acknowledge the full range of affective investments, based in large part on politics of service and the actual work conditions of contingent faculty (see "Findings and Results" and "Data Takeaways" articles in this special issue), are different than anything tenure-line faculty experience. The jobs that contingent faculty perform make them invaluable to our programs, to our departments, and to our institutions.

Using change management to contemplate ways to shift the labor burden of the FYC course and the TPC service course are not new, but, hopefully, considering them in different terms and from a distinct theoretical orientation may help program administrators begin to discover a way to confront the problem. Substantial tasks and actions can and should be executed to improve faculty work conditions, all of which emerged in the data in one way or another. Taking the time to uncover the hidden costs of contingency is likely the most provocative—yet strongest—lever program administrators may possess in starting to implement real, institutional change. Finally, focusing on research and gathering more data, both at the field-wide level and locally, will provide the type of evidence base that is necessary to make persuasive arguments. These ideas, combined with some of the suggestions in the "Data Takeaways" article, provide concrete, actionable ways to affect the material work lives of contingent faculty.

WPAs and TPC PAs cannot solve the problem overnight, but universities are overdue on taking action. As composition and TPC have embraced issues of social justice, it has become one of the greatest ironies that contingency and labor issues have not played a larger role in those conversations (Melonçon "Contingent"). Social justice at its core is about equity, and as Keith Hoeller has argued, "the contingent faculty movement is a civil rights and human rights movement" (151). Failure to act and failure to try and change the system means that we consciously or unconsciously decided this system works just fine. Let us be clear—by not taking action, we are no longer innocent bystanders. We are guilty of the

burden of precarity that contingent faculty deal with on a daily basis. This burden does not discriminate. Being "contingent" is not a disease: and it is not always a choice. Many contingent faculty are contingent only because the system in higher education is broken and does not have space to treat all instructors equally. There is no room at the top and no room at the inn for the talent, experience, expertise, and energy that contingent faculty bring to the classroom. If they are willing to put up with the precarity, the hostility, and the invisibility just to do a job they value and that has value, imagine the change we could make if the academy started to acknowledge them and treat them as equals. However, if we have learned nothing else from this project, we have learned this: the issues are stratified. Addressing one concern shakes another: salary affects rank; rank impacts access to courses; access to courses ties into qualifications. Administrators who stand before this web of complications should be encouraged to act. Although multifaceted and complex, solving any issue as problematic as contingency must have a starting point—and we hope that our research provides such a place to start. The last word, so to speak, must belong to one of our participants: *"I am in this role because teaching writing makes me happy. I just wish I didn't have to sacrifice my material happiness to feed my soul. Something has to give."*

Works Cited

Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press, 2012.

Arduser, Lora. "Specialized Technical Writing Service Courses as a Program Sustainability Tool?" *Programmatic Perspectives*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2018, pp. 12-43.

Bettinger, Eric and Bridget Long. "Does Cheaper Mean Better? The Impact of Using Adjunct Instructors on Student Outcomes." *Review of Economics and Statistics*, vol. 92, 2010, p. 3.

"Bystander Effect." *Psychology Today*, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/bystander-effect.

Fraser, Andrea. "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique." *Artforum*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2005, pp. 278-286.

Gerber, Larry G. *The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance: Professionalization and the Modern American University*. Johns Hopkins University Press 2014.

Gorelick, Risa. "The Missing Piece: Where Is the Labor Related Research at the Research Network Forum?" *Labored: The State(Ment) and Future of Work in Composition*, edited by Randall McClure et al., 2017, pp. 115-125.

Grabill, Jeffrey T. et al. "Institutional Critique Revisited." *Work and Days*, vol. 41/42, no. 1-2, 2003, pp. 219-237.

Hayes, John. *The Theory and Practice of Change Management*. Fifth edition, Palgrave, 2018.

Hoeller, Keith, editor. *Equality for Contingent Faculty: Overcoming the Two-Tier System*. Vanderbilt University Press, 2014.

Jaeger, Audrey J. and M. Kevin Eagan. "Examining Retention and Faculty Use in the State System of Public Higher Education." *Educational Policy*, vol. 20, no. 10, 2010, pp. 1-31.

Jansen, Christoph. "Management Skills for Technical Writers." *tcworld*, 2016, http://www.tcworld.info/e-magazine/technical-communication/article/management-skills-for-technical-writers/.

Junn, Ellen and Tom Clammer. "The Professoriate: To Be or Not to Be Tenure—That Is the Question." *Senate Forum*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2007, pp. 1-20, http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/senate_forum_newsletters/Volume%2022%20-%20Number%202%20-%20Spring%202007.pdf.

Kahn, Seth. "Never Take More Than You Need: Tenure-Track/Tenured Faculty and Contingent Labor Exploitation." *Forum: Issues about Part-Time and Contingent Faculty*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2013, pp. A12-A16.

Kahn, Seth et al., editors. *Contingency, Exploitation, and Solidarity: Labor and Action in English Composition*. The WAC Clearinghouse and University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Kezar, Adrianna, editor. *Embracing Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Changing Campuses for the New Faculty Majority*. Routledge, 2012.

Kezar, Adrianna and Daniel Maxey, editors. *Envisioning the Faculty for the Twenty-First Century: Moving to a Mission-Oriented and Leaner-Centered Model*. Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Levin, Henry M. "Cost-Effectiveness Analysis." *International Encyclopedia of Economics of Education*, edited by Martin Carnoy, 2nd edition, Pergamon, 1995, pp. 381-386.

---. "Waiting on Godot: Cost-Effectiveness Analysis in Education." *New Directions for Evaluation*, vol. 90, 2001, pp. 55-68.

Melonçon, Lisa. "Contingent Faculty, Online Writing Instruction, and Professional Development in Technical and Professional Communication." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2017, pp. 256-272, doi:10.1080/10572252.2017.1339489.

---. "Critical Postscript: On the Future of the Service Course in Technical and Professional Communication." *Programmatic Perspectives*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2018, pp. 202-230.

Mueller, Briad et al. "Adjunct Versus Full-Time Faculty: Comparison of Student Outcomes in the Online Classroom." *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2013, pp. 341-352.

Nicolas, Melissa. "A Further Thought on Facing Poverty." Received by the *WPA Listserv*, 3 Oct. 2017.

Patch, Paula. "Why are all the jobs NTT?" Received by the *WPA Listserv,* 11 April 2018.

Samuels, Robert. *The Politics of Writing Studies: Reinventing Our Universities from Below*. Utah State University Press; University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Schreiber, Joanna and Lisa Melonçon. "Creating a Continuous Improvement Model for Sustaining Programs in Technical and Professional Communication." *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2019, pp. 252-278.

Scott, Tony. *Dangerous Writing: Understanding and Political Economy of Composition*. 2009.

Stevens, Dawn. "You Are Here: Mapping Technical Communication Trends against Best Practices." *Intercom*, 2019, https://www.stc.org/intercom/2018/04/you-are-here-mapping-technical-communication-trends-against-best-practices/.

Strickland, Donna. *The Managerial Unconscious in the History of Composition Studies*. Conference on College Composition and Communication of the National Council of Teachers of English, 2011.

Tolley, Kim, editor. *Professors in the Gig Economy: Unionizing Adjunct Faculty in America*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018.

Trower, Cathy A. and James P. Honan. "How Might Data Be Used?" *The Questions of Tenure*, edited by Richard P. Chait, Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 273-308.

Wagner, Tony et al. *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools*. Josey Bass:A Wiley Imprint, 2006.

Yates, Joanne. *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.