

## CHAPTER 13

# THE FIVE EQUITIES: HOW TO ACHIEVE A PROGRESSIVE WRITING PROGRAM WITHIN A DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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The rise of independent writing programs over the past two decades has been both remarkable and laudatory, benefiting the field of Composition and Rhetoric tremendously. The reality, however, is that most writing programs are not independent, but retain curricular and administrative links to a Department of English. As Thaiss et al. note, “almost all writing programs in the US have been connected at some point to English departments” (this volume, para. 1); and, as Ianetta notes, “the overwhelming majority of writing faculty still find their homes in departments of English” (2010, p. 55). Whether for reasons of administrative inertia, budgetary boundaries, intellectual competition, or just plain outdated ignorance of the disciplinary status of composition, many writing programs should be considered permanently within English—and, at times, have managed to thrive *in situ* and embrace a healthy ascendancy of scholarly and pedagogical accomplishment. How can they do it? How can a writing program and its faculty, locked within the traditionally anti-composition structures of old-style English, achieve the functions and energies of a robust independent discipline? This chapter will identify five “equities” writing programs (and writing programs’ practitioners) must achieve to become capable of creating knowledge, reaching our teaching potential, and enacting best practices in our field. The five equities are (1) equity in hiring, in terms of rank, tenureability, and proportion of scholarly specialists in the field; (2) equity in department governance, especially in writing-oriented matters; (3) equity in the core of an English major, with all majors in the department taking core courses that recognize writing and rhetoric, writing theory and writing praxis, as integral to the larger field of English; (4) equity in the options for an English major student, including the availability of a writing specialization; and (5) equity in the availability of Writing Studies within graduate offerings, including writing

and rhetoric graduate degrees consonant with graduate degrees in traditional literary fields.

Before examining the ways in which non-independent writing programs—those within Departments of English—may enact disciplinarily progressive practices despite their administratively subordinate status, let's establish the fact that if your writing program is staffed and funded within English, it's not independent. No matter the degree of respect afforded by, say, appropriately separate office space or staff support; no matter how prominent a writing program wall sign may be in your dedicated end of the departmental corridor; no matter the dignity of the program director's title—in the usual hierarchy of academic power, departments are the *de facto* decision-making units of the institution. Funding comes through department budgets; hiring, especially tenure-track hiring with its assumption of defined disciplinary expertise, is conducted through departments; student allegiance, intellectual achievement, and identity, through traditional academic majors, all come through departments. When the present discussion describes a writing program as being *within* a Department of English (or any academic department responsible for the traditional role of teaching majors toward degrees in a defined discipline), it means that the budget, teaching staff, course content, and enrollment of students into courses occurs through the authority of the department—not through the authority of a program that controls such matters as independently as a department typically does. In the institutional hierarchy, of course, departments answer to deans and provosts, divisions and colleges, but not to other departments. A writing program that has authority to make decisions answerable in a direct line to a dean or provost, or to the Academic Affairs or Student Affairs division, is independent; a writing program that answers first to department policy control, or is subordinate to Department of English budget priorities, is not independent.

Such non-independence is not just nominal. It matters whether you must justify your class size not to a provost responsible for the overall academic achievement of all students in the institution, but in competition with literature professors whose main priority is preserving small seminars for their English Literature majors. It matters whether you must argue for a tenure-track Ph.D. trained in composition not to your dean whose interest is the broad academic preparation of students, but in competition with literature professors whose main interest is to replace the literary theory professor who retired last year so that the graduate program will continue to have the theory specialist it needs to teach a required seminar. A writing program within a Department of English must muster much greater rhetorical energies—and spend much more time—engaging in a competition for resources, and just plain educating colleagues schooled in a different

discipline, in order to achieve respect, understanding, equity, and (ultimately) permission to enact progressive program policies.

In this discussion, I use the word “equity” purposefully. Although equity certainly means fairness, I want to emphasize not just fairness in the sense of justice, but in terms of equality for composition in relation to its main competitor for all of the tangible and intangible resources that allow us to do our academic jobs appropriately. That main competitor in English departments is the field of literature. Equality between literature and composition would ideally include mutual respect between scholar-teachers of two disciplines with close historical relations and the family conflicts engendered through those relations. I do not believe such mutual respect is necessary to achieve fairness for non-independent writing programs; policies, not politeness in the office hallways, will create the equality necessary for building a good writing program. The five equities central to the present discussion each represent a policy area, a structural position; and it is on such equities that program power and quality rely.

I do believe that mutual respect between literature and composition within a Department of English is possible. At my own university, a growing measure of respect for composition among literature specialists, and some key institutional policies protecting composition’s needs, combined to allow if not the completed ideal, then at least the ongoing ascendance of a progressive writing program within departmental confines. I carry into this discussion a high measure of respect for literature (and for literature’s faculty and student practitioners)—indeed, my own undergraduate and master’s degrees were in literature; most of my doctoral work was in literature; and only very gradually, as I approached the dissertation-writing phase of doctoral study, did I comprehend that composition was not just a course I’d probably have to teach sometimes as an English professor, but both a more direct path to access the joy of teaching, and a scholarly discipline worthy of serious study. I simply didn’t know that composition could be seen as a discipline in the same way that literary study was clearly a discipline. Although a few of my professors did take composition seriously, almost all assumed it was a secondary task for the English Department professional; some of my graduate professors openly dismissed the teaching of composition as an unfortunate impediment to *Our Work*—the work of thinking about literature and publishing erudite literary criticism. The institutional structures in which I did my undergraduate and graduate work universally demonstrated an English=Literature assumption. It was fortunate that when I began to identify as a compositionist, and altered my dissertation project to enact that fact, key mentors from literature and composition alike understood and supported my shift in disciplinary emphasis. Now, more recent graduates of undergraduate and graduate programs in English are likely to have benefited from the increased

prominence of Composition and Rhetoric as an integral part, or even a main emphasis, of many English departments or graduate programs; the academic world is much friendlier to composition as a discipline than it was a couple of decades ago. Many literature specialists enter the job market with composition as a secondary specialization (indeed, my own university began its own path of justice for composition by making a secondary specialization in composition a requirement for new literature hires). And the very existence of more composition-centric Ph.D. programs generates not only expertise in the field, but a recognition and respect for a less bifurcated, more integrated understanding of how the act of writing, and teaching about the use of written language as an epistemologically central medium for framing the world and culture and human experience, remain vital to our creation and analysis of both fictive and nonfictive texts. Interdisciplinary respect for the writing program within English can eliminate the structural factors that obscured my graduate-student vision, that conspired against any recognition of the full academic worth of composition, so that new teacher-scholars entering English Studies may do so with unquestionable evidence that Composition counts as a disciplinary choice.

This welcome and relatively recent historical development means that even literature specialists are more likely now than decades ago to accept composition as an established discipline and worthy Department of English priority—that is, a discipline that deserves equity. My use of the word “equity” in this discussion intends to suggest that a good writing program associated with a Department of English must be empowered not only by a necessary (if inadequate) sense of fairness—not by a tone of kindness or noblesse oblige to the underprivileged relative in the house—but by an assumption that the institutional conditions (or privileges) literature has, in the past, taken for granted, based on its scholarly value, should be matched by equally empowering conditions for composition. If a writing program is to thrive, intellectually and functionally, in a Department of English housing both literature and composition, the status and power of the two disciplines must, in institutional conditions, be equal. With the five equities detailed later in this discussion, composition can participate in institutional conditions that allow it to function as an equal in the pedagogical and scholarly life of the department.

Nevertheless, for an audience of us compositionists, and especially for compositionists associated with independent writing programs, it is likely a given that writing programs within English departments often remain mired within second-class status. Too often, composition is, in every sense of the word, an adjunct of the Department of English. The path of progress does not reach every site in the land, and only skirts some locations. A quest for equal status in five areas of program administration and policy requires a brief summary of the his-

torical and structural causes of our inequities. After all, achieving the five equities means undoing those history-generated conditions. In the beginning (ca. 1870), American universities did not include Literary Studies, but did include rhetoric and “philology,” that is, a linguistic-analysis-based assessment of the relative value of texts, often using classical standards and the *belles-lettres* tradition to rate vernacular literature and rhetorical works. As the mid-twentieth-century MLA president William Riley Parker—a Miltonist, not a compositionist—stated in the seminal 1967 article *Where Do English Departments Come From?*, the English department’s “mother, the eldest daughter of Rhetoric, was Oratory . . . or, simply, speech. Its father was Philology, or what we now call linguistics. Their marriage . . . was shortlived, and English is therefore the child of a broken home” (2009[1967], p. 4). A more cheering and pro-composition take on these origins comes from James A. Berlin, who says that the English department’s “initial purpose, contrary to what William Riley Parker has argued, was to provide instruction in writing . . . The study of literature in the vernacular, on the other hand, was a rare phenomenon, occurring at only a few schools, and even there considered a second-class undertaking” (1987, p. 20). As Berlin goes on to explain, literature became central to the new departmental curriculum “as the result of a remarkably complex set of forces” including the expansion of American undergraduate education to include “practical” professions (1987, p. 21). The relative democratization of the undergraduate student body led to some alarm by administrators concerning the literate politesse of entering students, and thus several institutions instituted entrance exams testing writing ability, plus first-year writing courses, in the years 1873–1900 (Berlin, 1987, pp. 21–25). Writing, Berlin explains, became identified as a skill in which students required remediation, to be accomplished by time-consuming mechanical correction; as the analysis of students’ highly imperfect written rhetoric became burdensome to faculty, rhetoric professorships began giving way to literature positions, on the model of German university research specialization, spreading the now-valorized (and less drudgery-filled) image of literature as an elite field. As the more privileged in the departmental hierarchy embraced literary criticism, the comparatively humdrum labor of evaluating student writing shifted to the less privileged—pre-college teachers, junior faculty, adjuncts, and graduate students—who further simplified the essay-analysis task by focusing on grammatical correctness, allowing scholarly considerations of rhetoric largely to abdicate to speech departments and specialized graduate study (Berlin, 1987, pp. 23–25). Still another element of the historical relationship between literature and composition was the emergence of competing visions of English as either an essentially humanistic enterprise, or as a functional skill set serving what David B. Downing, Claude Mark Hurlbert, and Paula Mathieu call “English Incorporo-

rated,” in which contemporary English departments in post-Fordist universities enact “an economically useful process of sorting, screening, and selecting students whose basic literacy skills could then be certified as eligible to contribute to the ranks of the professional/managerial class” (2002, p. 7). One might reasonably see composition as a victim, not a perpetrator or participant, of a cultural shift wherein a corporate professional model of higher education subsumes the civic and argumentative content of rhetoric-rooted writing, as well as the humanistic aims of literature, in the sunset of the liberal arts curriculum. However, the redefinition of the Department of English from a home for writing and linguistics, to a center of literary study with a sideline in literacy gatekeeping, bifurcates literature’s supposed humanism from composition’s supposed economic practicality. Sharon Crowley notes that “the humanist insistence that reading great literature exposes students to universal values . . . [and] that reading plays an important role in the formation of character” sets up composition’s role as limited but practical skills training, so that nonfictive composition, to the degree it competes with literature for the student’s attention, represents “a threat to humanism” (1998, pp. 107–108).

Meanwhile, a tiny flame of research serving a broader and more intellectually engaging vision of written rhetoric flickered on, possibly because the laborious and disrespected task placed before composition teachers relegated to “general education” of the masses needed a few institutionally-approved English professors to manage the enterprise, and those English professors did scholarly work emerging from their composition experience. As Sharon Crowley noted in 1998, “Most of the people who work in this field are currently housed in English departments because scholarship in composition grew directly out of the pedagogical challenges faced by people assigned to teach the required first-year course,” and as of that year, she said, “A few composition teachers and theorists now hold tenured or tenure-track positions in universities”—though she notes that “such persons are employable primarily because they are needed to supervise massive programs in required first-year composition and not because Composition Studies is an exciting new field in which new academic priorities are being set” (p. 2–3). In other words, to the average English department, the only use for a trained (that is, institutionally-acceptable, scholarly-qualified) compositionist is to further what Donna Strickland has recently called composition’s “managerial unconscious” (2011, p. 2). Despite the many dispiriting historical developments, some Department of English faculty, and allies in rhetorical and critical fields, were championing composition’s scholarly value all along. In 1949, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (note that last word) was founded. In the 1960s, as Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg observe, notions from rhetorical theorists such as I. A. Richards and Kenneth

Burke, and from critical theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, were contributing to the field (2001, pp. 14–15). In the same period, as Susan Miller notes, a theorized and historicized context for research in Composition Studies was established by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, Janet Emig, and many others (2009, pp. xxxviii-xli). The ascendancy, drawing on rhetorical and critical theory as intellectually respectable as anything in literary criticism (and sometimes sharing the same epistemologies), was real. And the scholarly ascendancy made inevitable composition's conflict with the hegemonic power structures of the literature-centric Department of English (see Everett, this volume, and Rhoades et al., this volume).

Why does this history matter in our discussion of the five equities? It matters because when we compositionists understand this history in which our discipline was original and central to the Department of English, we become less complacent about writing programs accepting a permanent place of marginalization in the department. Composition, in its origins as well as in its recent theories, is a scholarly enterprise, forced into the subordinate role as a dull and mechanical practice by those who found it too hard to teach. Composition was forced into its subordinate role because writing programs arose to teach a new class of students in a democratizing national culture, at odds with the simultaneous effort of departments to emulate more elite European literary research models in the institutional culture. An understanding of this history counters the unfortunate tendency of some in our field to see our subordinate status as natural, inevitable, and acceptable. To know the true history of English departments is to know this fact: composition deserves its equities.

And so the interests of composition must continue to confront (as necessary) and share (when possible) the power structures of the Department of English—not for the sake of power itself, but so that our writing programs can garner the resources and the policy voices to implement ways of teaching and ways of thinking that will benefit our students and help build knowledge in our field. As Edward M. White says for us writing program administrators (whether within, or independent of, English departments, I'd add): “The only way to do the job of a WPA is to be aware of the power relationships we necessarily conduct, and to use the considerable power we have for the good of our program” (1991, p. 12).

## THE FIRST EQUITY: HIRING

The first equity that we must embrace is equity in hiring, in terms of rank, tenureability, and proportion of scholarly experts in the field (see Kearns & Turner, and Thaiss et al., this volume, for more on hiring practices). As we saw above, the perceived laboriousness of teaching writing (especially of reading

and “correcting” essays, as if correcting is the indispensable pedagogical act) has led those privileged in the faculty hierarchy to assign relatively, or completely, powerless institutional functionaries to carry out the required task. At most universities, and at many two-year colleges, contingent faculty—those without the security of long-term employment and tenure, or without the hope of promotion based on contributions to teaching, service, and research—are the main assignees to the composition teaching task. At research universities, graduate student teaching assistants are the main composition workforce. What would our literature colleagues say if we decreed that all 100- and 200-level literature should be taught by adjunct faculty unschooled in the field, or by grad students? Would we be able to say, “Hey, they can read—therefore, they can teach a more academic style of reading, which is the goal of Lit 100”? We would hear, from those literature professors, strong defenses of the value of the Ph.D.-trained, specialist faculty: for the advancement of knowledge through research; for students’ right to scholar-teachers bringing disciplinarily-focused research into the undergraduate classroom; for the indispensability of participation in the tenure track to test, encourage, and reward such advancement of vital academic knowledge. We might also hear defenses of the value of full-time citizens of the institution, rewarded for the range of service from student advising to curricular policymaking, empowered by scholarly prestige to champion the department in the competitive sport of institutional resource-gathering. And those literature faculty would be right. Not incidentally, their strong defense of the tenure track in literature appointments applies exactly to the need for tenure-track faculty in composition.

Why does it matter that we hire tenurable, scholarly specialists? Michael Murphy argues that we should “recognize as fact that *most* compositionists are not, have never been, and will not in the future be supported to do research; that the economic strictures on the field will always require that we be primarily a teaching discipline; and *that we work within those limits to professionalize faculty and instruction as thoroughly as possible* (2000, p. 32, italics in text). Murphy states the reality correctly, but conveniently ignores history, causality, and logical sequence. Because most compositionists are not supported (through the system of perks or rewards for scholarliness reserved for tenure-track faculty) to do research, composition professionalization—and the research-based quality of composition instruction—is severely limited. As Royer and Schendel say, “a few rhetoric and composition specialists in a department of English faculty committed to various other programs like language and literature face an uphill battle” (this volume). Building a strong program, especially in a Department of English, requires a sufficient number and proportion of compositionists. But simple disciplinary identification with composition is not enough. Because most



compositionists are not tenure-track, they are excluded from the committees and the scholarly prestige that can change budgetary decisions, and that set policies influencing resource allocations: in other words, lack of tenure-track influence in the institution creates the conditions that impose inequitable economic strictures on the field. With increased professionalization but without the status of tenure, contingent faculty risk falling into the absurd position of those at Appalachian State, where Rhoades et al. describe a situation wherein the increasing professionalization of non-tenure-track composition faculty led to a “backlash” from literature faculty: contingent faculty who had been voting on policy were redefined into an “adjunct” category that specifically prohibited them from voting on department policy, even in committees on which they served, and department meetings were rescheduled to convene at times purposely chosen to conflict with most composition faculty schedules (this volume). I strongly support the professionalization of contingent faculty, and have championed practical steps toward such professionalization (Lalicker, 2002, pp. 62–64). I believe that all of us more privileged faculty have a moral and professional duty to improve the benefits and material conditions under which contingents labor. But defending professionalization and labor justice for contingent faculty does not preclude the need for Writing Studies to have access to the powers that accrue with a tenure-track faculty proportional to that in other disciplines. What would happen if we resisted Murphy’s model—the Eeyore model wherein we accept a woeful inequity as a natural and unchangeable constant—and insisted on tenure-track positions for composition? The more tenure-track positions in composition, the more faculty in composition will be supported to do research; the more faculty in composition who do research, the more documentable justification for better conditions in our field and for approaches to teaching that are research-proven to be effective. If Murphy argues that the Department of English, or the institution, can’t afford it, why can the department or institution afford it for literature hires? If it’s a zero-sum game within limited budgets, hire fewer tenure-track literature faculty in order to hire more tenure-track writing program faculty, in order to work toward equity. Murphy’s white-flag abdication from the first-class citizenry of composition guarantees the “limits”—the inequities—of composition. Unfortunately, in the 15-plus years since he made his case for a permanent second-class composition citizenry, the results have come in: composition in its institutional contexts has continued in its inequity. Composition as a teaching-only pursuit for teaching-only faculty continues to be doomed when departments and institutions value research. And though I might agree with those who place the blame on the valorization of research and the relative disrespect for teaching as a central academic priority, colleges and universities are not going to relinquish the prestige of research. Tenure-track

faculty typically earn tenure and promotion, policy power and livable salaries, based on assessment of their teaching, service, and scholarship. Take out the scholarship, and such faculty remain indispensable as functionaries promulgating a hierarchical academic culture rooted in a reified academic language, but become increasingly irrelevant in institutional policy discussions—including in their own field. And if, as Ira Shor says, the “act of study needs to be thought of as an act of cultural democratization” (1987, p. 96), composition itself will not be democratized, and the culture of academia will not be democratized, by excluding those who teach composition from the institutionally recognized act of study in our discipline.

Once you start getting trained specialists, who have advanced degrees in the field and who can continue to explore better ways of understanding the field, to teach the course, students take it seriously. More importantly to the long-term health of the writing program in the institutional competition for resources and for voice in policymaking, the presence of tenure-track composition specialists in policymaking roles, with scholarly credibility, push the institution to take writing seriously. If this first equity is achieved, most if not all English departments will have sufficient tenure-track faculty to act as a powerful voice for the policies that can enact the other equities necessary to a strong composition program. Composition faculty may even constitute a majority of tenure-track (and eventually tenured) professors, if tenure-track hiring is established in straightforward proportion to the preponderance of composition credit hours taught. (One issue is that, arguably, composition and literature alike do not necessarily need scholarly tenureable specialists to teach introductory-level general education courses. Literature may also, with some reason, argue that coverage of its many subfields and historical periods, often required for majors and graduate students as well as for specific teaching certification standards, necessitates a large cadre of literary specialists. These issues, ostensibly true but rooted in contexts of indefensible hierarchy, provide the reasons for the third, fourth, and fifth equities, which will be championed later in this discussion.)

My own institution’s non-independent, Department of English writing program was confronted with the necessity, and the value, of this first equity soon after I’d been hired as an untenured but tenure-track composition specialist and WPA. A month before the start of my second academic year in the position, the graduate director notified the department that, to serve the department emphasis on literature scholarship, all graduate assistants formerly assigned to staff our too-small Writing Center would be reassigned to help tenure-track literature faculty with research projects. The Writing Center—part of the writing program, and therefore under the jurisdiction of the Department of English—had been staffed solely by English graduate students; staff funding was through the

Department of English; the Writing Center would thus close. My complaints to the graduate director, and to the department chair at whose pleasure she served, met with flat refusals to reconsider the change. Therefore, I approached the dean of the college of arts and sciences to seek alternatives for funding and staffing, with the proposal that if no such alternatives bypassing Department of English control of the writing program were available, the writing program would secede from English and use all composition-course-generated funds to establish a Department of Writing Studies, thus to set about funding composition priorities appropriately. In short order, the dean called the department chair to his office to meet with me and with three composition faculty (we were four composition specialists out of about 55 tenure-track faculty in my large department) who supported me. The department chair at first demurred to rescind the decision. The discussion went something like this.

*Chair:* In assigning those graduate assistants to the literature research faculty instead of the Writing Center, I am carrying out the will of my department.

*Dean:* How does the department express its will?

*Chair:* By department vote. We decide on departmental priorities like graduate assistant assignments and requests for new tenure-track hires. Only tenure-track faculty are allowed to vote; almost all are literature specialists; thus they vote for literature's priorities. So Bill, I mean, composition and the Writing Center, can't have what they want.

*Dean:* Fine. I'll let Bill start a new Department of Writing Studies, using all funds traceable to credit hours in basic writing and general education composition classes.

*Chair:* You can't do that to us! Most of the department's budget relies on those credit hours! We won't be able to fund our classes in literature!

*Dean:* Sure, I can do that. My responsibility is not just to English or to some subset of your department, but to the priorities of this university and the students of this university. The university has instituted a general education writing program I am bound to support, and that English is bound to support. Support the writing program commensurate with the appropriate priorities, or I'll use those dollars and those credit hours to do so.

*Chair:* I can't do that! The department faculty voted on our priorities the way we saw fit. The majority rules. Literature and literary research are our highest priorities.

*Dean:* Then you need a new faculty with new priorities. Approval of tenure-track hiring requests is at the discretion of the dean. As long as your department refuses to hire tenure-track faculty in composition, I will not approve a single Department of English tenure-track hire . . . unless composition has a number of tenure-track hires equal to literature; plus, any literature tenure-track hire must have a secondary specialization in composition; plus, Bill or another of the tenure track compositionists must serve on every hiring committee to ascertain the composition qualifications of all new tenure-track hires.

The Department of English chair blanched, then acquiesced.

Within about five years, we had 15 tenure-track writing faculty in the Department of English, plus a number of new literature faculty with significant disciplinary study in composition as well. A change in our collective bargaining agreement provided additional support for composition hiring, with a clause that required tenure-track hiring in fields that demonstrably relied on ostensibly “temporary” faculty for perennial academic needs. As the university grew in size over the next decade and a half, the department likely also benefited from stabilizing the number of adjunct faculty: it is costly and labor-intensive to hire and train increasing numbers of adjuncts whose contribution to institutional service and student advising is necessarily limited. Every policy decision—in the department, and in college- and university-level committees as well—was influenced by the presence of writing-passionate, composition-savvy scholar-teacher faculty in the institutional venues where funding, research, and curricula are decided. Hiring compositionists as first-class citizens in the academic hierarchy was the necessary first step for every other kind of progress.

## **THE SECOND EQUITY: DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE**

The second equity writing programs must achieve is equity in departmental governance, especially concerning writing program policies. In most academic departments, decisions about tenure-track and contingent hiring priorities, about curricular policies, about resource allocations, about research support, about tenure and promotion standards, are made by tenure-track faculty, and their committees, alone. (Yes, upper administrators or faculty councils sometimes

have final say, and the WPA has a real, if constrained, measure of power; but without departmental support and a voice in regular governance matters, the writing program's needs may never even be considered. You can't go to the dean and threaten to secede from the department every day, for every small departmental decision that erodes the writing program.) Decisions, in most English departments, are made either through departmental committee recommendations or through at-large departmental faculty vote. But composition faculty are what Karen Fitts and William B. Lalicker call "invisible hands" that do the departmental labor but do not participate, are not allowed to participate, in the professional life of the department (2004, pp. 431–434). Contingent faculty ("temporary" adjuncts or graduate teaching assistants) are often the largest composition faculty category, and usually have little or no voice in departmental governance; adjuncts (and graduate teaching assistants) are seldom on department committees. (Why should adjuncts be on committees anyway, since they get no credit toward tenure or promotion if they perform "service"?—see also Davies, this volume, and Rhoades et al., this volume.) In those "liberal" departments where adjuncts are allowed to serve on committees (and possibly get some positive performance evaluation from such service), such adjuncts are often nonvoting representatives, with only a small literal voice, but no power, in policymaking. Or the adjuncts are allowed only to serve on a composition committee—when the competition for resources is played out against a dozen committees mustered to minister to English (that is, literature) majors, and research (that is, literature) allocations, and graduate (that is, advanced literature) programs, and tenure-track (that is, mainly literature) hiring decisions, and the myriad concerns the department has deemed more central to its identity. Rhoades et al. provide an example from Appalachian State: as noted above, anti-compositionist backlash excluded compositionists from department meetings and the related policy discussions; moreover, the Personnel Committee determining hiring policy—for tenure-track searches and for the annual rehiring of contingent faculty—specifically excluded all but tenure-track faculty; and with only 3% of department tenureable faculty in Composition, it was virtually guaranteed that composition would have no voice in the staffing of its own courses (this volume). The writing program's faculty, when mainly adjuncts, therefore have little or no voice—and likely no vote—on most departmental issues. (The relative voicelessness of composition's largely adjunct labor extends, of course, to independent writing programs as well as non-independent programs within a Department of English; see Ianetta, 2010, pp. 68–69.) The makeup of all departmental committees—and the voting presence of composition faculty on all departmental committees—matters, because writing program policy is not made in a vacuum, but in a context of jostling priorities. In such a governance

inequity, the writing program will suffer. In still-feminized composition, with its mostly contingent nonvoting faculty, composition professionals are in the position of American women prior to suffrage: it's forever the year 1919. In typically lit-centric English departments, composition faculty teach the majority of budget-building credit hours but are a permanent minority of voting members on all issues, with little or no governance power, even on issues that establish or influence composition policy.

Equity for composition simply cannot be achieved until composition has a proportional voice in the decisions the department makes on competing departmental priorities. There are several extant models for governance within English departments that allow composition its equity in decision-making power. In one model, composition-savvy faculty (specialists, and non-compositionists who have a serious secondary specialization or scholarly knowledge of the field) lead all composition-related committees, and make up the majority or totality of each such committee. This means that appropriate program policies can be devised and adopted without the slow, frustrating process of educating colleagues who have little interest or knowledge in the field. (Yes, that educational process can have positive long-term effects—but only if the non-composition or anti-composition faculty are willing to be educated.) There is value to a composition-led, but disciplinarily-diverse committee membership, when the inclusion of non-compositionists fulfills a model of governance that makes composition (or any and all departmental responsibilities) a matter of import for the whole departmental community. But in that case, it is absolutely vital that such inclusion be reciprocal: composition faculty ought to have a significant voice in all departmental committees, so that matters of curriculum and the English major benefit from compositionists' influence and perspective. The effect of equity in departmental governance is that the writing program achieves a reasonable degree of agency in promoting progressive and appropriate policies for the teaching of writing.

At my own institution, the writing program within the Department of English benefits from the inclusion of a significant number of tenure-track faculty—first-class citizens of the department who are therefore empowered to participate in all department discussions and votes; serve in, vote in, and lead department committees. Compositionists travel (with funding equal to those of their literature colleagues) to conferences in the field, to access innovative discussions in the discipline. Compositionists publish, with the recognition, promotion, and institutional credibility that a research agenda and scholarly production affords. Although the compositionists have lost a few rounds in resource or policy debates, we have sufficient power and enough voices to make a positive difference for the benefit of our program and our students. This sit-

uation in which many Department of English faculty are tenure-track composition specialists is rare (as Crowley noted above, frequently only the WPA is an actual tenure-track compositionist); acquiring the tenure-track composition faculty to participate in governance may require fortunate circumstances and higher administrative support (as my experience in countering the Writing Center closure suggests), but deserves to be a priority for more non-independent, department-linked writing programs. At some institutions, similar governance equity may be achieved by empowering adjunct faculty to vote, serve on committees, lead committees, receive research support, and otherwise engage as first-class citizens of the department and institution. (The latter solution carries its own labor-justice challenges, since adjuncts may not be compensated or promoted fairly for work that may be beyond their standard teaching-only job descriptions.) In whatever way possible, we compositionists should seek the power necessary to fulfill our educational mission, and so every writing program within a Department of English should seek locally appropriate and practical ways to achieve equity in governance.

### **THE THIRD EQUITY: WRITING AND RHETORIC AS CORE COMPONENTS OF THE ENGLISH MAJOR**

The third equity resides in the core of the English major: all English major students should take required core courses that recognize writing and rhetoric, writing theory and practice, as integral to the broader field of English. If English is, in fact, everything that is done in the English department, shouldn't composition be as prominent in the English major as is literature? In other words, if a department claims to embrace an English Studies model—or even if it simply benefits economically from the resources brought to the department by the credit hours of students taking required composition courses—composition should be seen as an equal part of the field of English. Moreover, good writing and rhetorical abilities are valuable to the student who wants to get a job upon graduation: if good communication skills and rhetorical analysis of discourse help the graduating English major get a job, it's in the best interest of the department and its students to grant equity to Writing Studies within the major, whether a student's primary interest is in literature or in Writing Studies. If the English department keeps a single and unified English major, the requirements of that major must include not just the twentieth-century-style, literature-centric focus, but an appropriately twenty-first century attention to writing and rhetoric alike. If, in a Department of English, the structural model is a single major in English as a field—with the assumption of a kind of unity-in-diversity—then no component of English Studies (including composition and rhetoric) should be subjugated.

If the major requires a theory course, that course should not be mainly about literary theory, but should be about critical theory broadly defined, with rhetoric and poetic, production of text and consumption of text, considered equally. If there are key literary movements required for study, than an equitable proportion of rhetorical and composition-theory movements should be required for study. There is, in fact, theoretical justification for such a unified major, if we assume that language itself has a preeminent epistemological role in making meaning equally in the novel, the poem, the newspaper editorial, the advertisement, the webpage, the Twitter tweet. Much in critical theory and cultural studies lends itself to this sense of epistemological unity: Kenneth Burke's famous dictum, "Man is the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal" (1966, p. 16), like many fundamentals of critical theory, applies equally to rhetoric and to poetic. (For an extended discussion of the English Studies major that unifies Rhetoric and Composition equitably with literature based on common theory, see, for instance, Fitts & Lalicker, 2004) If composition takes an equal place in the English major, it will be elevated above a first-year "skills" course for students to "get through," and composition's equal role in the English major will give it a foothold in the consciousness of students and faculty alike.

What does equity in the structure of the major look like? At my own university, the English major core is structured to recognize that rhetoric and literature each emerge from a rich history and from a diverse body of theory. Thus, every English major takes a core sequence of courses framed to introduce a common body of knowledge and terminology, and each of these courses examines both the writing and rhetoric side of English Studies and the literary side of English Studies. (The faithfulness with which the courses fulfill this ideal of equity—and the faithfulness with which different professors versed in different composition and literature specializations enact this equity—remains a challenge, but that's a topic for another discussion.) The point is that every English major learns that she is expected to know both rhetorical theory and literary theory as equal parts of the major. English majors take these core courses—one fashioned as a first-year course, and the other two designated at sophomore level—as prerequisites to more advanced study in the theory and practice of nonfiction writing, rhetorical analysis, creative writing, literary criticism, literary history, professional writing, English education, and the other manifestations in the major. This structure, in which the major invokes rhetoric and literary study equally, is justified by the epistemological fact that language and texts of all kinds play the centrally mediating role to create meaning in culture and communication; and this structure articulates the importance of nonfictive writing in the study of English.

An additional theoretical justification for a unified English major exists in the fact that teaching remains a common enterprise in English Studies, and thus



the theory and practice of teaching can be a unifying subject. It is unfortunate that, in the mostly-unwritten prestige hierarchy of many English departments, the devaluing binaries of power divide not only composition as subordinate from literature, but teaching as subordinate from scholarly research. Thus pedagogy is typically framed as a nuisance or afterthought in the literature-centric English department, an obstacle to research, a time-suck preventing closer communion with the latest *PMLA*. Composition is framed as separate (as noted above) from Our Work of literary criticism, in the professional lives of many literature specialists; “my teaching” is segregated from and subordinate to “my work” of research (see Fitts & Lalicker, 2004, pp. 436–437, and Kronik, 1997, p. 160–66, for variant deconstructions of the latter binary). But the fact is that many (probably a plurality) of English majors, whether aspiring to employment in elementary or secondary schools, or in higher education, will be teachers. Teaching happens to require skillful engagement with the tools of Rhetoric and Composition—with the use of language as a medium of pedagogy and persuasion and possibly entertainment, and with the electronic manifestations of rhetoric in multimodal information transfer—so a sophisticated understanding of composition and communication is necessary to the literature teacher and to the rhetorician alike, bringing lit and comp together in a wisely-constructed English major.

In fact, a number of observers of English (for instance, Ohmann, 1996; Scholes, 1998) have, for at least two decades now, prescribed a breakdown of these hierarchical binaries, and a restoration of equity between literature and composition as well as between teaching and scholarship, as necessary for the revitalization of English as an engaged agent of academic culture, social relevance, and economic value. At the same time that implementation of equity in the structure of the English major benefits our departments and our students by introducing stimulating context from the composition side of the house, inclusion of composition and rhetoric in the major contributes to our writing program a fuller articulation of the range and value of writing as a discipline.

In my own institution, the transformation of the English major from a de facto literature-only major to an integrated English Studies model with inclusion of composition and rhetoric happened soon after an adequate body of tenure-track compositionists had been assembled to serve the writing component of an updated major. The next step was the creation of a separate track for students who wanted to focus on writing (detailed in the discussion of the fourth equity, below); but the key point here is that the Department of English as a whole recognized, through curricular reform, that every English major—even majors with a declared focus on literature—must encounter composition and rhetoric in the three major core courses, and also must take at least two advanced courses

in Writing Studies to matriculate within English. This move made the writing program more than a first-year skills requirement, more than a gatekeeping literacy test reflecting the classist history of first-year composition and basic writing; writing participated fully in the sense of the word “major” equally with literature. Achievement of this third equity transformed the definition of English for every student.

## **THE FOURTH EQUITY: WRITING STUDIES SPECIALIZATION**

The fourth equity is in the options for an English major student, specifically in the option for an English major to specialize in Writing Studies. Whereas the third equity applies to the core knowledge of a major in which English is unified and generalized, this fourth equity requires departments (even those departments with a critical theory core that invokes reading and writing equally) to establish the option for undergraduates to major in advanced study not just in literature, but to have the equal choice of advanced study in composition. If the English major (in the usual old model) allows a selection of courses that focus mostly on literature, equity demands that writing and rhetoric be established as an equal realm of study. The option of a writing and rhetoric emphasis within the English major can help raise the undergraduate study of composition to the same status as the long-privileged study of literature. Thaiss outlines the transformative process of building a Professional Writing major at the University of California at Davis, “an ongoing process that has contributed to the professional development of faculty, to increasing connections with the undergraduate programs in Communication and English, and to strengthening relationships with stakeholders ranging from undergraduate students interested in writing to professional organizations” (this volume). Royer and Schendel describe a similarly encouraging result with the “truly integrated writing major” at Grand Valley State (this volume); in this writing major, the independent program can “come from and celebrate our liberal arts roots” while including “professional and practical work,” so that “our students graduate with the benefit of this two-fold ideal”; they conclude, “That ideal, then, is the final cause that helps explain how our department came to be” (this volume). But there are also potential pitfalls when independent writing programs embark on the responsibilities usually distributed across a Department of English structure. As Davies attests, the “undergraduate major . . . changed the character of the independent Syracuse Writing Program” away from a sole focus on teacher training, labor issues, and administrative functions, with complicated results: with responsibility not just for first-year writing but for the major and a graduate program, it became “in-

creasingly challenging to devote enough attention to all parts and activities of the system” (this volume). My position is that, as the experience at Davis and at Grand Valley State demonstrates, a writing program—whether an independent unit or as a part of a Department of English—benefits from the disciplinary identity (however hybridized and inclusive Writing Studies may be) conferred by having a major. Writing, as a field (however defined), benefits when writing is seen as a topic for a student’s main undergraduate focus, and for a faculty’s advanced attention across many levels of academic inquiry, and not just an introductory requirement administered by gatekeepers and endured by students in a general education hazing process. But if the Syracuse experience provides a cautionary tale, it allows us to recognize that an independent writing program is not the only, or always the best, venue for the writing major. A writing program within a Department of English has the advantage of the existing departmental infrastructure and administrative protocols that support an undergraduate major. Equity, moreover, requires that if the Department of English has a literature major, it should also have a writing major (and not just in “creative writing”—that is, mainly the creation of fictive literature): a major in the study of Composition and Written Rhetoric.

The existence of the writing and rhetoric major within the Department of English has the obvious advantage, for those of us who value such study, of acknowledging composition as a discipline, one with the potential for complex study at an advanced level. Students in the major have an avenue for examining the many complex issues that arise from an analysis of nonfictive texts in our culture, and can also practice the production of such texts. In a society and a world where experience is always and everywhere influenced by advertising, electronic discourses, visual rhetoric, civic argument, and every other manifestation of rhetoric, a rhetoric and writing major within English provides students with an important field for study. The existence of the major also justifies the creation and offering of writing-oriented courses that would likely never exist without the impetus of the major, and students of every major benefit from the opportunity for study and practice in nonfictive writing. Students in a writing and rhetoric major gain courses that provide the opportunity for the practice of writing in a wider range of contexts and purposes than would otherwise be offered, aiding the employability of those students in a myriad of enterprises upon graduation, in every field that can put to use better argument, textual understanding, multimodal communication, business and technical writing, and every variety of rhetoric.

Equity in the options of the English major also has central benefits for the traditional composition program at the first-year level, the general education requirement. When the existence of a major in the field articulates the fact that

writing is not just a “skills course” provided as a “service” for the previously subeducated, the major elevates gen ed composition: basic writing and first-year composition can become introductory courses in an engaging discipline, a preparation for advanced study. The writing program benefits from the influx of ideas about writing in an academic community that has, because of the major and its collection of advanced writing courses, a reason to think about composition beyond the genre essay and the research paper. And with a major in Writing and Rhetoric, the tenure-track faculty that must be hired to teach in the major are likely to teach in the introductory composition program as well, bringing scholarship-vetted theory and praxis into basic writing and general education composition classrooms. Establishing the advanced major thus supports the introductory writing program.

What does equity in the options of the major look like? One model of such equity simply establishes a Writing and Rhetoric major, alongside a Literature major, within the Department of English. At my own university, however, a slightly different model establishes that all majors are English majors, unified under the mantle of a BA in English, or a BS Ed. in English for teaching certification students. But within the English major (BA or BS Ed.), students must designate themselves as following a Writings Track or a Literatures Track.

My colleagues and I established this track within the major soon after we had achieved equity in hiring and thus had a substantial core of composition specialists to do the work of building a reformed curriculum. The composition specialist faculty first consulted with all colleagues identifiably associated with Writing Studies: professional and technical writers; “creative” (that is, mainly fictive) writers; education specialists interested in writing pedagogy through our local National Writing Project site; journalism professors. (With 15 tenure-track compositionists allied with from two to four tenure-track specialists of each of the other writing-allied fields, Writing Studies faculty, broadly defined, mustered numbers approaching equality with literature faculty.) With input from all interested colleagues, we imagined a “Writings Track” within the English major—with the plural form “Writings” to emphasize the diversity of genres and aspects of writing to be included and respected. We imagined that students could take the revised core of required theory courses (described in the discussion of the third equity, above); and, having had a fair initial exposure not just to first-year composition, but also to the Composition and Rhetoric theory units of the three core major courses, would have the opportunity and knowledge base to make a choice between parallel Literatures or Writings emphases. Students in either track would stay connected to a broadly integrated understanding of English Studies by taking a modicum of courses in the differing track, even as they selected most of their major requirements to align with the chosen track in

literature or in writing. (This approach serves the same values as the Grand Valley State model in which traditional liberal arts and contemporary professional work remain allied.) We then had a couple of open forums for English majors (that is, at the time, strictly literature majors) in which we faculty described the proposed revision and track options, and we allowed students to comment. With a significant number of faculty from all disciplines in attendance at these forums, we were overwhelmed with the positive response we received from students. “I’ve been waiting and hoping for a major option like this! I know that I will need to know more about writing for the career I have in mind after graduating, and this is just what we’ve been missing!”—comments like this came from student after student, and the Department of English soon voted to start the process of changing the literature major to an English Studies model with inclusion of composition and rhetoric in the core courses, a traditional Literatures Track, plus a newly designated Writings Track. We compositionists got to work on writing new courses, revising old courses, and figuring out new faculty roles with majors to advise and serve. (Interested parties can see the details of the English major, including requirements for the Literatures Track and the Writings Track, at [http://www.wcupa.edu/\\_academics/sch\\_cas.eng/documents/EMH1516.pdf](http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas.eng/documents/EMH1516.pdf); detailed course descriptions are in the catalog at [http://www.wcupa.edu/\\_information/official.documents/undergrad.catalog/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_information/official.documents/undergrad.catalog/).) In sum, students now get an English major in which three required core courses previously in literary theory have now become three courses in critical theory with literary and rhetorical applications; then students who choose to focus on literature are required to take two courses from the Writings Track, even as the majority of their major courses are in literature; and students who choose to focus on writing are required to take two courses in literature, but the largest number of the requirements for Writings Track students are their choices of six Writing Studies courses. For Writings Track students, two Writing Studies courses must be from a list described as “Style & Aesthetics,” two must be from a list described as “Power & Politics,” and two must be from a list described as “Information Literacy, Technology & Media.” This is a real Writing Studies major embedded within the English major. As of early 2014, approximately 275 English majors were taking the Literatures Track, and approximately 325 English majors were taking the Writings Track.

The pluralization of Writings, and of Literatures, acknowledges the diversity of texts and practices and traditions within the rhetorical and nonfictive course of study, or within the literary course of study. Thus a Writings Track student must take courses in categories that provide a broad overview of writing and rhetoric, but some of the courses may explore the range of writing, from “creative” writing through business and technical writing, touching on ideas from

classical rhetoric to recent composition theory and electronic discourses. Equity is in the fact that the department acknowledges that a focus on the study of writing for the English major is as acceptable as a focus on the study of literature; and just as a literature student should have a broad overview of literature and may also explore a wide variety of literary histories, theories, and traditions, the study of composition and rhetoric allows students a rich diversity of approaches to the discipline.

Many of the Writings Track students first achieved exposure to the field of Rhetoric and Composition through the general education writing program. The existence of a major in advanced writing provides a scholarly and disciplinary context contributing to the scholarly seriousness of first-year composition, a new intellectual placement for basic writing and first-year composition in a symbiotic relationship in which all writing courses are recognized to be diverse but related parts of a stimulating academic discipline. The Writings Track also provides an academic path for students with a passion to study nonfictive writing for its intellectual value and its workplace applications. The establishment of the writing major thus legitimizes composition beyond the functional-skills limitation; intellectually energizes students and faculty with a theorized vision of writing as epistemologically and culturally productive; enables greater scholarship about teaching, and about teaching writing; contributes to the body of knowledge supporting writing program policies; and does all of this within the Department of English, through the achievement of equity in a writing-focused major curriculum.

## **THE FIFTH EQUITY: GRADUATE STUDIES IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION**

The fifth equity is in the availability of Writing Studies options among graduate offerings and programs. Just as composition and rhetoric's empowered inclusion in English depends upon equity with literature in the core, and in the advanced major options, of the English major, the Composition Program's success in the Department of English is enhanced by composition and Rhetoric graduate programs. (This equity, of course, is not applicable in community colleges, or in institutions that have no graduate programs, or no graduate programs in English.) In every Department of English that has an MA in literature—or, as is commonly the case, an MA in English that is actually, by its narrow requirements, an MA only in literature—there should be an equal opportunity for students to take the MA in Writing and Rhetoric. The same parallelism should apply to Ph.D. programs. If not, the department is again sending the message “English=Literature”—or that the English that is worthy of the most advanced study is literature and not composition. Without such equity, the writing pro-

gram cannot be taken seriously, as an intellectual discipline, by its faculty or by its undergraduate students.

Moreover, the presence of graduate programs in composition necessitates the hiring of accomplished specialist tenure-track faculty in composition. As we have seen above, the presence of such faculty is an ingredient in building a writing program that reflects research in the field; that invokes best practices; that inspires an informed community of compositionists; and that has a credible voice in the institutional sites that have power to garner appropriate resources and influence appropriate policies.

Another reason for the importance of the fifth equity has to do with staffing composition course sections, one of the thorniest and most problematic tasks in the writing program administrator's job description. At many universities with Ph.D. programs, many or most instructors in the composition program are graduate teaching assistants working toward their graduate degrees. If the only graduate degree offered is in literature, it's likely that those instructors are not particularly interested in composition—otherwise, they'd be in a comp and rhet Ph.D. program. Instructors uninterested in the field in which they are teaching are obviously unlikely to bring much enthusiasm into the classroom. Moreover, they are unlikely to have either the motivation or the opportunity to learn about composition and the teaching of writing: without a grad program in the field, there won't be many senior faculty specialists in the subject, won't be graduate seminars in the subject (other than, perhaps, a single and minimal how-to-teach course, often required for grad teaching assistants to take not before but concurrently with their first semester teaching writing). Without a Composition and Rhetoric graduate program, there will not be a community of fellow graduate teaching assistants interested in discussion and mutual support concerning the discipline (other than survival of the hazing process that teaching writing may represent, the enforcement of the decades-old hierarchical message that the least empowered teachers teach writing). In fact, in a research university, the absence of Composition and Rhetoric as an equal part of the graduate program reinforces the retrograde message that Composition and Rhetoric isn't a discipline at all. And that message filters down to the undergraduate students in first-year composition. The composition program itself is institutionally identified not as a vehicle for introducing a discipline, but a busywork course; an introduction not to methods of intellectual engagement and the mediating power of writing, but to survival of a bureaucratically required task unwelcomed by instructor and student alike. In an institution, or a department, with a research mission, what's not worth research isn't worth doing—and students will get that message. Undergraduate students will especially get the message that composition is only busywork if all of their instructors are graduate students with little passion for

the subject being taught. Therefore, Composition and Rhetoric must be a fully equitable part of the department's research structure. Preferably, the proportion of graduate offerings, and graduate students, engaged in Composition and rhetoric programs should be equal to the importance of composition as a discipline within English—and, since so much of our work in English departments is the teaching of composition, we should be preparing master's- and doctoral-level compositionists in numbers equal to, say, literature: that's equity. Without such equity, universities will continue to overproduce literature Ph.D.s who will reluctantly take composition jobs as contingent faculty unschooled in the discipline they purport to teach, in a staffing cycle that perpetuates the dysfunction of the English department and of composition as a field.

At my own institution, we achieved the fifth equity and created a writing-oriented graduate program in much the way we created an English major core inclusive of Writing Studies theory, and then a Writings Track within the English major. We compositionists knew that there was a constituency of graduate students who desperately wanted a Composition and Rhetoric MA (ours is a master's-only graduate program at present) because, despite the English=Literature structure of the program requirements (not to mention frequent anti-composition bias in the English Graduate Director's office), a couple of very determined English graduate students had managed to write successful MA theses on Writing Studies topics. We bolstered this small sample of experience with more formal marketing inquiries; brought together all Department of English faculty sympathetic to Writing Studies; and on the basis of our discussions, proposed an MA concentration in "Writing, Teaching, and Criticism." (Interested parties can see and compare the curricula of the Literature concentration and the Writing, Teaching, and Criticism concentration at <http://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/arts-sciences/english/english-ma-literature-track/> and <http://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/arts-sciences/english/english-ma-writing-teaching-criticism-track/> and can see detailed course descriptions in the graduate catalog at [http://www.wcupa.edu/\\_INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/GRADUATE.CATALOG/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/GRADUATE.CATALOG/).) As with the undergraduate major, the graduate concentrations are both part of the Department of English. The department has not closely tracked the comparative numbers of literature concentration and writing concentration graduate students, but anecdote and observation suggest that, as in the undergraduate major tracks, writing is more than holding its own as the choice of Department of English students. Our Writing, Teaching, and Criticism MA provides advanced study in a somewhat hybridized association of scholarly foci, in a way somewhat parallel to the University of California at Davis "Designated Emphasis" Ph.D. program in "Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies," which Thaiss et al. describe as "an elective interdisciplinary



concentration” drawing on “Education, Linguistics, English, Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature, and Performance Studies” (this volume). An informal survey suggests that our Writing, Teaching, and Criticism MA graduates have been especially successful at getting into college teaching jobs and respected Ph.D. programs. However, in my view, the Writing, Teaching, and Criticism concentration has not yet been afforded completely equal status in the Department of English graduate program: Literature Concentration students do take an “Introduction to the Profession” required seminar that (like the undergraduate major core courses) covers writing and literature alike; but literature concentration students need not take any additional Writing Studies seminars, and are not allowed to count any of the courses associated with the National Writing Project (now designated a National Writing and Literature Project) site, while writing concentration students must take literature courses. It is my belief that the literature concentration’s continued neglect of composition seminars disservices those students: whether they go on to Ph.D. programs or to teaching in community colleges or other schools, those students would be better positioned for their next career steps with clear preparation for understanding rhetoric and teaching composition. This is especially the case because of the fact that at my institution, graduate students may have graduate assistantships as Writing Center associates or as research assistants, but may not teach classes. We haven’t fully achieved the ideal of equality, but we have opened the door to the fifth equity’s recognition that Writing Studies is a graduate-level disciplinary topic worth a graduate degree in the Department of English.

## CONCLUSION

Finally, it is worth remembering that enacting the five equities allows us to engage in and support the best practices that elevate the teaching of writing and the study of rhetoric as theory and act, whether those practices occur within a Department of English, a Department of Writing and Rhetoric, or an independent or interdisciplinary college writing program. Once you’ve achieved the five equities, what happens? Let’s imagine that you have achieved the five equities, and now you have them all.

You have equity in hiring, so you have a sufficient cohort of scholarly, tenure-track compositionists not just to enhance the content of your general education writing program, but to take a credible role in all of the institutional places where composition can earn respect and support.

You have equity in governance, so you can influence departmental policy-making, and now writing and rhetoric are fully and appropriately integrated into everything the department does.

You have equity in the core of the major, so all English majors will understand that composition and rhetoric are a considerable part of the study of English, and all students will take some advanced writing and rhetoric courses as part of the major.

You have equity in the options in the major, so many of the students in the major will opt to take the Writing Concentration, or the Rhetoric Track, or the Writing and Rhetoric major—whatever name the Writing Studies option has been given. And as new, energetic, scholarly-oriented, teaching-focused tenure-track comp faculty (see the first equity, above) become advisors and mentors and favorites in the classroom, many students will enthusiastically take the writing option. Eventually, more undergraduate majors may be in writing than in literature.

You have equity in graduate offerings and programs, so graduate students have the opportunity now to take the graduate seminars and write the graduate theses that are most useful to enhance pre-college or college teaching careers and give an advantage in the professorial job market. Pretty soon, the Writing and Rhetoric graduate programs may be bigger and stronger than the traditional literature graduate programs.

And now let's go back to remember our history: a century and a half ago, rhetoric and writing were not just central, but dominant, in the Department of English. The possible (and possibly delicious) irony of taking the five equities seriously is that enacting full inclusion of Composition and Rhetoric as a full-size portion of English Studies exposes more traditional (that is, in most departments, more of the ostensibly literature-centric) students to exciting ideas about writing and rhetoric. The proportion of composition-oriented students soars; the writing program may eclipse the literature element of the department. Will our literature colleagues in the old Department of English be content to exist within the smaller segment of a bi-disciplinary department; or does achievement of five equities create conditions that call for a new department: an independent writing department? That's up to each department, program, and institution to decide. Now the Department of English, potentially—but for the mutual respect we value, the understanding that literature and composition both deserve to be taken seriously—becomes, once again, a department of Rhetoric and Writing.

Where a program resides institutionally does matter. As Tony Scott notes, "When we put on our writing program hats, we understand that curricular initiatives don't spring from the heads of scholars; they are bound to the material practices of specific institutional settings" (2007, p. 87) for the circulation of knowledge and the promulgation of rhetorical understanding among our students. At my university, we have progressed, over the past fifteen years, from an English=Literature model in our undergraduate and graduate programs alike, in

our tenure-track faculty, and to the good of our introductory and general education writing program—and have done it all while remaining within the Department of English. But whatever the institutional arrangement, recognizing and institutionalizing the five equities is good for composition; our students benefit from the results of implementing the equities, whether we are all within English or in a new Department of Writing and Rhetoric. The most important result of achieving the five equities is that, at whatever level and in whatever manifestation of our writing program, such equities allow our students to be served with the best practices our discipline offers.

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