

## Writing Program Design in the Metropolitan University: Toward Constructing Community Partnerships

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Based on our work as WPAs at Georgia State University, a large urban campus located in downtown Atlanta, this article represents an attempt to understand the contexts within which we work as urban writing program administrators, teachers, researchers, and colleagues. We share this attempt because we believe that our university and the way in which we are trying to construct writing programs may be similar to others and may, therefore, serve as a way to start a conversation about writing program work in metropolitan universities.

Certainly readers of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* recognize that the work of WPAs is often strangely defined and dual in nature. As Rita Malenczyk explains in a recent issue, we are not administrators “in the same sense that deans and college presidents are administrators” (18). She argues “that the difference between a WPA and a dean or a higher-level manager is that WPA work, like the work of more traditional academic disciplines, is grounded in research and scholarship and is ultimately intellectual and pedagogical rather than managerial” (18). We agree and argue that the priorities of the “metropolitan university philosophy” (defined below) and the potentials of community-based work allow for a significantly greater role for writing programs within the university.<sup>1</sup> The writing program that we envision moves away from a primary identity as a coordinator of service courses and toward a new type of institutional system with multiple purposes, functions, and activities tied to research. As research-based institutional systems that can coordinate meaningful and related work across and outside the univer-

sity, writing programs are potentially powerful institutional systems that foreground the work of writing teachers, researchers, administrators, and students within the university in potentially transformative ways.

### The “Metropolitan University”

Tom Miller tells us that “to make sense of our (WPA) work, we need locally-situated, politically-engaged accounts of what English departments do” (“Why Don’t Our Graduate Programs Do a Better Job of Preparing Students for the Work That We Do?” 53). We agree and wish to ground our discussion of WPA work within recent scholarship concerning the broader mission of metropolitan universities. Blaine Brownell explains that “the term ‘urban university’ no longer describes, as it once did, an open admission institution with mostly undergraduate and applied academic programs staffed by mostly part-time faculty” (21). He prefers the term “metropolitan” over “urban,” emphasizing a larger, rather than smaller, area of concern (21). A growing number of administrators and teachers at urban universities who now view their institutions in these broader terms have united to develop the philosophical concept of the “metropolitan university,” a construction often quite distinctive from the traditional urban university in terms of mission, community leadership and partnerships, and (critical for WPAs) evaluation of traditional faculty responsibilities.

Charles Hathaway, Paige Mulhollan, and Karen White define the metropolitan university as an institution which embraces an “interactive philosophy” leading to the establishment of a “symbiotic relationship” with its metropolitan area (9). Universities adopting this “interactive philosophy” have joined to form the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (see the Appendix for the Declaration of Metropolitan Universities), which provides a network of annual conferences, publications, and grants for its members in an effort to unite “universities that share the mission of striving for national excellence while contributing to the economic development, social health, and cultural vitality” of urban and metropolitan areas (*Information on the Coalition*). The Coalition publishes a quarterly journal, *Metropolitan Universities Journal: An International Forum*, targeted primarily to departments of sociology, higher education, and policy development. However, as WPAs in an urban university—one which is a member of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities—we find these articles invaluable in helping us understand both the university’s broader commitment to and symbiotic relationship with the metropolitan Atlanta area, and the role the first-year composition program might play in this interactive philosophy.

Critical in the move to redefine WPA work in terms of research and scholarship rather than managerial tasks, the mission of the metropolitan university leads to a broader conception of the traditional “responsibilities” of university faculty: teaching, research, and professional service. In the metropolitan university model, faculty (while meeting the highest scholarly standards of the academic community) are encouraged to reconsider and more fully merge these duties, which are never mutually exclusive. For example, metropolitan university faculty must seek research opportunities linking basic investigation with practical applications appropriate for the classroom. Faculty must adopt responsibility for educating students to be informed and effective citizens, as well as preparing them for their chosen professions and occupations. Additionally, faculty must contribute to the metropolitan area’s “quality of life” while developing close partnerships with area enterprises in mutually beneficial ways (not only serving as experts disseminating information). This reconfiguration of research, teaching, and service is similar to that proposed by the MLA Commission on Professional Service, which recasts research, teaching, and service into “intellectual work” and “academic and professional citizenship,” with research, teaching, and service arranged as sites of activity that can be found in both categories. For WPAs, either new configuration of responsibilities would mandate that we train our graduate students to carry on our mission, in Tom Miller’s words to “transform public higher education” by developing “the critical awareness and practical skills needed to make productive use of converging institutional, disciplinary, and public trends” (“Why Don’t” 44). Just as importantly, these necessary reconfigurations more accurately reflect the ways in which research, teaching, and service already blend in our own work.

We think that the concept of the metropolitan university invites us to rethink the place of the writing program in the larger university mission just as it supports our work on terms that are likely familiar and comfortable. The implications of this institutional theory, however, run deep. They first demand that we think of writing programs as much more than spaces that support good teaching and university service. In fact, the implications of this institutional theory demand that we think of the writing program’s community interface and (therefore) research functions as just as important as more traditional roles and functions. This audience already knows that WPA work is intellectually rich and demanding, and many in this audience engage in inquiry activities that are called, variously, scholarship of teaching or teacher research. Fewer of us see the administrative and institutional work that we do as inquiry that can be framed as such and written about (see Porter et al.). There is already an internal impulse, then, to more fully embrace the research

possibilities of the writing program. However, the move to rethink writing programs as signature places for university-community collaborations increases the *need* for research as well as the type of research and institutional work required of WPAs. A community interface for writing programs, by which we mean the point of contact between the writing program and various communities, must first be imagined, designed, and constructed by WPAs.

### **The Writing Program as Community Interface: Research and Civic Rhetoric**

Regardless of whether one's university fits the definition of a metropolitan university, the *idea* of a metropolitan university is a useful heuristic for thinking about writing programs because it is an institutional theory (and not, say, a cultural theory). Furthermore, because writing programs are pragmatic spaces that act in partnership with others in the university, the outreach and problem-solving *ethos* of the metropolitan university serves as a concrete model for outward-looking WPA work. There are problems, however, with designing good community-based work.

Linda Flower discusses university-community interface concerns when she writes that "town and gown" relationships have always been strained and marked by asymmetries of power. She also notes that the current enthusiasm for community-based work is at least to some degree a function of cyclical interests, and that this enthusiasm will wane unless community-based work is "rooted in the intellectual agenda of the university" (96). Flower calls for community-based work that is animated by a spirit of inquiry, which means that community-based work must be connected to research.

We welcome a research focus because we believe that writing programs need to be structures that support and generate research. More directly, however, we believe that that community-based work *requires* research. Any serious interrogation of "community" requires inquiries into the nature and meaning of communities themselves. And any serious, sustained community-based work that avoids the cyclical attentions of academic fashion requires the sustained activities that community-based research can provide. Our way, then, of working through the problems of cyclical interests in community-based work and relatively thin views of community is to focus on the research functions of writing programs and to pick up on much older rhetorical traditions in the form of a renewed focus on civic rhetoric in our writing programs.

What we take from readings of recent attempts in political and social theory to define community is that it is relatively easy to name small, homogenous communities, like tight cultural or family groups, particu-

larly when they are situated within a shared space. The task becomes more difficult when confronted with contemporary society, which is generally more diverse and dispersed. In such a context, sociologists like Anthony Cohen argue that community is constructed symbolically as a system of values, norms, and moral codes that provide boundaries and identity (9). For Cohen, the term “community” is relational. One locates community by recognizing boundary construction. Citizens, activists, and others help construct communities in any number of ways. One of us has worked with organizations, both large and small, that have helped construct community around issues such as crime and safety (see Grabill, *Community Literacy*, Chapter 5). We have also seen community constructed around housing issues, political issues, health issues (think of the history of HIV/AIDS activism), and institution building (e.g., civic associations and advocacy groups). While some boundaries may certainly be material or biological, most are symbolic—constructed through the communication of shared symbols and meanings—and any metropolitan area is a configuration of multiple and overlapping communities.

The complicated dynamics of communities should give us all pause as we consider community-based work. If a community is a highly variable and situated construct, then making the determination of exactly which community writing teachers and researchers are working with is an open inquiry question. Writing program interactions with communities, therefore, need to be framed as research activity for reasons connected to all that we don’t know and understand about the relationships between writing programs and community-based work. “Research,” in this sense, means at least two things. Community involvement of any kind—service learning, outreach, and explicit research—should begin with the assumption that communities are not found places but moving targets. A fundamental inquiry question attached to all such projects, then, should be “who is the community with whom we are working?” Answers to that question lead to an equally fundamental ethical inquiry, which asks “in whose interests are we teaching/serving/researching?”

There is another, more engaged sense of community-based research that is recognizable as such. This type of community-based work involves researchers working with communities to solve problems in ways articulated by community members (e.g., Sclove, Scammell, and Holland; Greenwood and Levin). Community-based research is not without conceptual and practical problems. Practitioners spend considerable energy defining what “counts” as community-based research, usually on the basis of the nature of community participation: Is research done on community members or with them? Are community members supplying questions and initiating research projects or not? Are com-

munity members primary participants or merely consultants? And so on. To do “true” community-based research is extremely difficult: communities must be well organized; researchers must be open and flexible to working in new ways (ways that funding cycles aren’t sensitive to); and meaningful participation is difficult (see Kretzmann and McKnight for much more on community building and change). In addition to the inquiry needed to design effective service learning experiences, for example, community-based research provides a framework for other types of research activity (e.g., Grabill “Shaping Local HIV/AIDS Services Policy Through Activist Research”). For community-based research to be most useful, however, it must have an institutional home. There is considerable writing-related problem solving to be done with community-based organizations. The writing program—as a visible and active research and outreach center within the metropolitan university—provides a necessary institutional home.

In order for a writing program to organize sustained community-based work, its partnership with “the community” must be under constant scrutiny. Framing community involvement as research is the best way we know to be both self-conscious about the community-based work of a writing program and useful to communities themselves. But community-based research is not the only way that writing programs can construct meaningful community interfaces. Another, much older tradition, is that of civic rhetoric. Tom Miller tells us that

a civic philosophy of rhetoric can enable us to bring our work with service learning, new technologies, and political controversies into a unified project that challenges the hierarchy of research, teaching, and service that limits the social implications of academic work and devalues the work of the humanities. (“Rhetoric Within and Without Composition” 34)

If we adopt Miller’s stance, then civic rhetoric becomes the catalyst not only for what we do in the English department and university but also a powerful catalyst for refiguring our work outside the university. These ideas are not novel but rather call for a return to the ideal of the eighteenth-century public intellectual. During the late eighteenth century, professors of moral philosophy in the British cultural provinces included the study of English literature, composition, and rhetoric in their course curriculum. Working in the margins of the British realm, moral philosophy professors, such as Adam Smith and John Witherspoon, were training their students to compete with Oxford- and Cambridge-educated students for jobs and social position. These first professors to teach English Studies could be defined as “civic rhetoricians,” professors “concerned with the political art of negotiating received beliefs against

changing situations to advance shared purposes” (Miller, *The Formation of College English* 34). In many cases, these professors delivered public lectures in English to citizens interested in social, political, and economic advancement. The curriculum of the public lectures found its way into the university courses. Viewing the aims of communication in terms of civic rhetoric has the potential for changing the face of contemporary urban English departments as well. Indeed, there are a number of compositionists who have already refigured writing programs—at least in part—along these same lines (see David Cooper and Laura Julier and any number of service learning advocates).<sup>2</sup> We believe deeper curricular changes, however, begin with changes in writing program design. Like moral philosophy classes of the eighteenth century, composition courses are our core requirement for all students and provide unique teaching moments for blending students’ self interests with civic participation. Civic rhetoric and a focus on inquiry in community contexts provide frameworks for education—and “good” writing and writing instruction—in terms of preparing our students to enter local communities in hopes of advancing the common good in the face of changing political needs. We see a renewed focus on civic rhetoric within the writing curriculum not only consistent with an intellectually and ethically sound community interface but consistent as well with the role of the metropolitan writing program.

## **Toward Program Designs**

All that we have written to this point is necessary institutional theory that frames and drives any pragmatic program design issue. At this point, we want to focus more concretely on issues of program design. We divide this discussion into issues of administration, curriculum design and teacher training, and relationship building with community-based groups.

*Administrative Issues.* To succeed, our vision of writing program (re)design must receive university, college, and departmental support. At our institution, changing administrative attitudes and practices concerning larger educational theories, financial support, and curriculum issues usher in the necessary environment for change to occur. At a broader institutional level, Georgia State’s adoption of a metropolitan philosophy of education, along with the restructuring of the Carnegie system for ranking colleges and universities, encourages faculty to refigure the traditional triumvirate roles of service, research, and teaching.<sup>3</sup> Faculty members interested in expanding existing programs to reflect a metropolitan philosophy of education that emphasizes the university/community symbiotic relationship are encouraged to do so. Grant money



and designated budgetary funds are now available to support faculty who are interested in researching and initiating these changes (and for disseminating findings to audiences outside the academy), to create new degrees that foster this interaction, and to establish administrative faculty tenure lines that foster the metropolitan university principles. Additionally, Georgia State is actively participating in national discussions concerning institutional aims and assessment of the “work” of higher education. This interest in a broader, integrated analysis of the role of the urban university leads us to believe that the time for revising existing programs is at hand.

At the Arts and Sciences College level, our dean (with backing from the faculty senate and the provost) has appropriated funds for creating new initiatives, new degree granting programs, and new faculty lines to expand/redefine the “work” of the department, in correlation with broader university philosophies. For example, the move away from adjunct faculty to visiting instructor/lecturer positions changes not only the “face” of writing instructors but the level/quality of composition instruction in first-year writing classes. As members of the department, visiting faculty take an active role in not only curriculum design and the mentoring of teaching assistants, but also in program administration. The dean has fully supported this move and appropriates funds (as needed) to increase the number of visiting positions we may staff.

Within the department, our chair has expanded the duties/parameters of the WPA, even changing the name of the position to Director of Lower Division Studies. Although the WPA now has increased responsibilities, we see the restructuring of this office as a positive move. Lynée, as Director of Lower Division Studies, has hired an Associate Director of Lower Division Studies (who is appointed from the pool of available visiting lecturers) and an Assistant Director of Lower Division Studies (graduate student) to help administer the program. The department financially supports these positions. Perhaps more importantly in terms of program redesign, however, is the freedom now afforded to the Directors in terms of curriculum design and teacher preparation. With changes at the university, college, and department level, writing program administration has a degree of autonomy and acknowledged expertise that allows room for new program designs. We detail these larger administrative shifts because of their importance; those in position to effect change must have (some degree of) administrative support at all three levels of institutional government. In terms of institutional change, two issues have been fundamental for our design initiative:

- Efforts focused on institutional changes that create value for community-based work (see Porter et al.).



- Efforts focused on institutional changes that create value for Positions devoted to help organize community-based work. This is a task we have started but have yet to complete. We are focusing on developing relationships with community organizations, supervising ongoing projects, and looking for new teaching and research opportunities (including funding for those activities).

There is no question that the program changes we are implementing and suggesting are resource-intensive and institutionally visible—we require resources and are shaking up a formerly literature-based writing program. There is no other way, in our mind, to do community-based work effectively.

*Curriculum Design and Teacher Training.* Tom Miller, in a recent issue of *WPA*, explains that in order to prepare graduate students “to transform public higher education, we must help them develop the critical awareness and practical skills needed to make productive use of converging institutional, disciplinary, and public trends” (44). We agree wholeheartedly and believe WPAs must design teacher training models that address local institutional and community exigencies. Miller’s program at the University of Arizona and Linda Flower’s community-inspired program at Carnegie Mellon offer two examples of locally situated, civic-minded approaches to teacher preparation (see Miller “Why Don’t Our Graduate Programs Do a Better Job of Preparing Students for the Work That We Do?” for detailed program descriptions). Writing Programs at our institution are in their infancy. Institutional conditions are rapidly changing, and “moments” for change are just now present. As we are taking advantage of these developments to formulate our theories/directions for advocating that students “go public,” our personal experiences in the arena of community-centered pedagogy obviously inform our thoughts concerning teacher training. What follows is a reflective example of Lynée’s attempts to develop curricular models and teacher training along the lines we have suggested in this article.

As director of that program, Lynée recently piloted a first-year ethnographic writing course (along with seven other instructors) in civic rhetoric/writing, based on principles of service learning and public literacy instruction.<sup>4</sup> The ethnographic approach takes advantage of the urban locale and encourages students to take advantage of the unique research opportunities available in Atlanta and surrounding bedroom communities. Higher education task forces advocating a metropolitan university philosophy of education indicate that the quality of student learning is directly related to the quality of students’ involvement in their

education. It is not enough, in other words, to say that a writing curriculum will involve public issues or demand that students venture out into their communities. Charles Ruch and Eugene Trani tell us

boundaries between the classroom and the community can be made permeable, and the extent to which the flow of ideas and people is accelerated is the mutual benefit of both. However, the full impact on the curriculum will not be met by including only community activities. Inductive pedagogy, case methodology, and cooperative learning strategies will need to be introduced into the classroom. Only by restructuring the instructional process so classroom content is tied with community experience will the full potential of these boundary-spanning strategies be achieved. (233-34)

Based on a rhetorical philosophy of composition instruction and founded on the pedagogical approach advocated by Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater and Bonnie Stone Sunstein, authors of the class text *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*, the ethnographic-based writing class answers the call for incorporating community experience in the academic classroom. Those involved in this project are “inventing” a new curriculum and pedagogy—adopting an interdisciplinary approach to writing instruction that is new and exciting for teachers and engaging for students; moreover, we are creating real-world research scenarios and writing assignments tied to community experiences.

Specifically, our 1102 students pick a site to investigate. Most of the course assignments concern or occur at the students’ sites. Projects include: mapping exercises, observations in the field, interviews, oral histories, artifact gathering and analysis, and videotaping, along with “traditional” research and documentation exercises. The students submit a well-organized portfolio the final week of the course including all of the course assignments, a complete narrative (research paper with traditional bibliography), and reflection essay. Each component of the final portfolio has been peer-edited or presented to the class, in some cases graded, and revised over the course of the term. To date, seven instructors have participated in this approach to first-year writing instruction with overwhelmingly positive results. Students’ projects cover a range of topics and communities, some personal interest groups—others public institutions and organizations. The students choose their research sites based on their own interests and experiences in a particular local community.

After a successful first attempt, Lynée is now moving the course and the larger curriculum more clearly in the direction of studying and practicing “civic rhetoric,” eliminating sites that don’t lead students from the

role of observer to participant in community affairs while still allowing students to pick their own sites—one of the course’s greatest strengths. *Fieldworking*, which offers a comprehensive course of study including excellent assignments and sample portfolios, was the ideal text for our first attempt at ethnography in the first-year writing course. However, we are now departing a bit from the *Fieldworking* approach in the reconfigured course, directing students to both historical and contemporary readings that address civic rhetoric. We want students to fully grasp the concept of “a good man speaking well” and the term’s historical implications (and mutations).

Likewise, we’ve expanded the focus of our teacher mentoring sessions to include concerns of civic rhetoric and community. Those of us engaged in the ethnographic pedagogy lead training colloquia advocating a civic approach to teaching first-year writing. We are gradually “infusing” most of our mentoring meetings with discussions of civic rhetoric and community involvement. We are making grass roots progress. Those TAs who have taught the course encourage other TAs to adopt this methodology; these TAs also present their experiences at area conferences and colloquia. The second edition of *Fieldworking* has just recently been published, and we are scheduling the authors to lead a seminar for TAs. In the required teacher preparation course, graduate students planning to teach at GSU are encouraged to adopt a civic-minded philosophy in their courses.

This reconfiguration of the curriculum adopts tenets of the metropolitan university that forward Georgia State’s urban outreach mission and addresses what Elizabeth Ervin has labeled composition teachers’ “increasing dissatisfaction with teaching writing in ways that objectify ‘society’ rather than foster students’ direct interaction with it” (“Course Design, English 496” 43). By training TAs to encourage students to enter the public sphere and engage in public writing, we are helping to restore in both graduate and undergraduate students “a sense of *civitas*, of belonging to one polity and community” (Brownell 23). We also want to underscore the fact that curriculum development efforts such as this—long-term, ongoing, and collaborative—are essential for creating necessary broad-based program change. Without both collaboratively revising curriculum and developing related teacher training, program changes run the risk of being top-down or unsupported (or both) and therefore doomed to fail.

*Building Relationships.* Another key component of the writing program we envision is building relationships with community-based partners. These relationships will vary with the context, but they are an important part of any community interface. As we discussed earlier in the article, research—or more generally inquiry activities—is the start-

ing place for developing these relationships. Here we want to discuss how long-term relationships can be created and how these relationships affect program design. Toward that end, we will use our service learning program in professional and technical writing as our example.

Like Thomas Huckin's goals for service learning in technical communication—(1) helping students develop writing skills, (2) helping students develop civic awareness, and (3) helping the larger community by helping area non-profits—our goals for service learning are to take part in long-term community change by meeting the needs of community partners and to provide rich and compelling contexts for student learning.

Setting up service learning projects takes some time and involves the informal inquiries into the nature and function of local communities we presented earlier in this article. Service learning program development begins, then, with a kind of community-based research. The process of developing actual projects runs throughout the year. Georgia State's office of community service learning occasionally funnels projects our way. Sometimes faculty will speak at information sessions with members of community-based non-profits. These opportunities often result in new projects and relationships. Over time, we have established a network of contacts in Atlanta with whom the program has been working for a number of years. These efforts are essential because this is how we are trying build long-term relationships with organizations in the community that make a difference in people's lives; likewise, we are trying to position our professional and technical writing program to make a difference in people's lives.

In either business or technical writing, we try to come up with seven to fourteen projects each semester, depending on the course schedule. These projects meet the following criteria:

- The projects meet a real need as articulated by our community partner.
- The projects are sophisticated and writing related.
- The projects fit into the time frame given to the project (5-10 weeks, depending on the course and project).

The heart of the criteria is that these projects must be of service to the people with whom we are working. Once that criteria is met, we begin to address the other constraints. Once potential projects are identified, we visit contacts at their locations to learn about the organization, learn about the neighborhood (if necessary), and make sure the site (and neighborhood) is safe and accessible to students. We also further discuss the contours of the project and the needs of the organization and community. Once the contact person expresses the desire to proceed, we do so with

letters of understanding and, eventually, with visits to class and contact with students.

This approach to service learning is somewhat different from the model typically presented in composition and some technical and professional writing forums. The difference is not really in the pragmatics of setting up or teaching a service learning project. It is in our focus on program design and relationship building. The relationship that is of primary importance is not the student-community agency relationship. In composition studies in particular, the common service learning model is to have students find projects to work on or to choose from a wide array of projects—usually more projects than can be addressed in a given semester. Student choice, student agency, and student voice are valued and for good reason (see Bacon). Our concern with such an approach is that it too often sounds like a low-level colonization of the communities around a university, particularly if the burdens for community-engagement are placed on the shoulders of students. In other words, we have serious doubts about the ability of service learning to accomplish either its service or its learning goals without a solid institutional home. A writing program's community interface is meant to be such a home.

Service learning in technical and professional writing—and any sustained community engagement on the part of writing programs—needs to be connected to the day-to-day institutional work and ethos of the writing program and its faculty. This is how relationships with community groups are initiated and maintained. For our part, we have found the following “to do” list useful in our efforts to build relationships with community groups and design our community interface for the professional writing program:

- Spend the time necessary to get to know the community (again, activity that should be thought of and framed as research);
- Make sure that community-based organizations are well served, both initially by a service learning or research project and on an ongoing basis through consistent follow-up;
- Ask community-based organizations for help, ideas, and advice regarding how to extend and strengthen new and existing initiatives;
- Commit the resources necessary to show that the program's commitment to community-based work is long-term.

## Conclusion

Students view the occasional encounter with classroom pedagogy that extends beyond classroom walls for what it is: an anomaly—an experimental blip on the educational radar screen, not viewed as authentic or

even sanctioned by university practice. Perhaps as their teachers, we do too. There are few examples of writing program design that match the numerous course designs and individual faculty initiatives. There is little sustained thinking that might suggest that the recent turn to community-based writing is much more than current fashion. There is even less community-based research in composition.

Certainly, our related experiences with ethnographic writing and service-learning projects and our attempts to build them into a coherent program design reflect our attempts to bridge perceived gaps between university education and the “real” world; however, do these singular experiences really heighten students’ awareness of community or motivate students to actively engage in civic activities long term? Just as importantly, we must ask how limited “term projects” benefit local communities. The scholarship of our field repeatedly raises these questions, but for us the answer lies in writing program (re)design.

Writing programs are far more useful to communities than to individual students and faculty because they provide a context for meaningful student and faculty work. They can do so, however, only if they are designed with a community interface. Writing programs are well positioned to take the institutional theory of the metropolitan university and run with it. Without administrative design, however, the community interface necessary to support community-based research and meaningful, sequenced curricular experiences will never materialize, and writing programs, we fear, will fail to become the centers of research, teaching, and service that they can be.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> We think of writing programs as encompassing “first-year” writing as well as each writing program for which associated faculty are responsible—professional writing, writing across the curriculum, and so on. We think of them also as broad intellectual and administrative structures. As intellectual structures, writing programs can “house” research by clustering faculty with similar interests (much like graduate programs) and by making certain activities (e.g., the teaching of writing) a valued activity. Similarly, writing programs, as administrative structures, manage and align significant resources (books, phones, desks, people) and could, if designed in such a way, manage other structures and processes, such as community-based work. As administrative systems that leverage significant resources, writing programs can act as levers for institutional change.

<sup>2</sup> Recent composition scholarship concerning theory and pedagogy encourages WPAs to adopt principles of civic rhetoric in course design and program development. In particular, the following works provide rationale and practical advice for restructuring the aims of higher-education writing instruc-



tion: Bruce McComiskey's *Teaching Composition as a Social Process* (2000), Elizabeth Ervin's *Public Literacy* (2000), John Paul Tassoni and William H. Thelin's collection *Blundering for a Change* (2000), Emily J. Isaacs and Phoebe Jackson's edited collection *Public Works* (2001), and the groundbreaking collection, *Coming of Age* (2000), edited by Linda K. Shamon, Rebecca Moore Howard, Sandra Jamieson, and Robert A. Schwegler. These composition scholars and teachers offer theoretically unique and pedagogically sound options for instigating immediate programmatic change. What form that instruction actually takes is predicated upon local communities, student needs, and institutional identities. Students must not only master the skills of argumentation and persuasion but also understand the moral and philosophical implications of the arguments they make and the persuasive actions they take. These works all suggest—in a variety of ways—that students must study rhetoric and writing to move beyond analysis of texts towards public engagement.

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, the revised Carnegie Classification 2000 ranking recently “moved up” GSU’s classification from the category of Doctoral I to Doctoral Extensive, the highest-ranking category, including only 3.8% of classified institutions. A senior scholar at the Carnegie Foundation who supervised the new classification system, Alexander C. McCormick, explains that the categories were revised because foundation leaders were concerned that “the categories had come to weigh institutions’ research activities too heavily, at the expense of other aspects of their missions, such as teaching and service” (Basinger A31).

<sup>4</sup> For a fuller discussion of ethnographic course design at Georgia State University, see Gaillet’s “Bridging Two Worlds: Writing Program Administration in the ‘Metropolitan University’” forthcoming in *City Comp: Teaching Writing in Urban Spaces*. Ed. Cynthia Ryan and Bruce McComiskey. SUNY P (2002).

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## Appendix

### Declaration of Metropolitan Universities

A number of presidents of metropolitan universities have signed the following declaration.

We, the leaders of metropolitan universities and colleges, embracing the historical values and principles which define all universities and colleges, and which make our institutions major intellectual resources for their metropolitan regions,

- reaffirm that the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are the fundamental functions of our universities;
- assert and accept a broadened responsibility to bring these functions to bear on the needs of our metropolitan regions;
- commit our institutions to be responsive to the needs of our metropolitan areas by seeking new ways of using our human and physical resources to provide leadership in addressing metropolitan problems through teaching, research, and professional service.

Our teaching must:

- educate individuals to be informed and effective citizens, as well as capable practitioners of professions and occupations;

- be adapted to the particular needs of metropolitan students, including minorities and other underserved groups, adults of all ages, and the place-bound;
- combine research-based knowledge with practical application and experience, using the best current technology and pedagogical techniques.

Our research must:

- seek and exploit opportunities for linking basic investigation with practical application, and for creating synergistic interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarly partnerships for attacking complex metropolitan problems while meeting the highest scholarly standards of the academic community.

Our professional service must include:

- development of creative partnerships with public and private enterprises that ensure that the intellectual resources of our institutions are fully engaged with such enterprises in mutually beneficial ways;
- close working relationships with the elementary and secondary schools of our metropolitan regions, aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the entire metropolitan education system, from preschool through post-doctoral levels;
- the fullest possible contributions to the cultural life and general quality of life of our metropolitan regions.

