Council of Writing Program Administrators Consultant-Evaluator Service: A Brief Overview
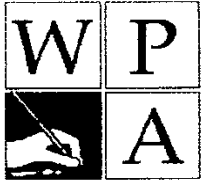
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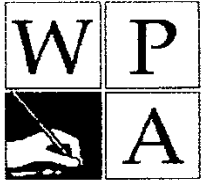michaelp@georgiasouthern.edu

▶ Why do Writing Programs need WPA C-E visits?

◦ Get an informed outsider perspective about strengths and challenges of the program

◦ Assist a new WPA beginning a term of service and requesting an assessment of the current strengths and challenges of the program

◦ Advise a program/department/institution considering making a major change and seeking guidance

◦ Supplement periodic academic program or department reviews if they did not address the writing programs in detail

- What time of year is best for a C-E visit?
  - Anytime during the academic year when most students, teachers, and administrators are available to participate

  - Any time when key personnel are available: WPA(s), upper level administrators, and others
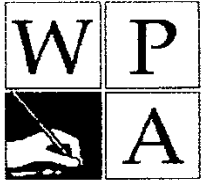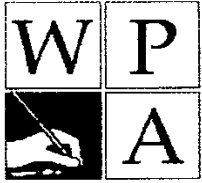
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- **What is the typical process and timeline for a visit?**
  (see sample timeline from Brady article—reference in last slide)

  1. Consultation with C-E Service Co-Directors about Writing Program's needs and goals for a visit

  2. Request for and approval of funding from institution's administration

  3. Self-study process begins (or continues)

  4. Several possible dates for a visit (usually Sunday afternoon through Tuesday noon) are identified: Be aware that Deans', Provosts', and Presidents' calendars fill far in advance, so start by identifying their available dates and times

  5. C-E Service Director selects team members for the visit based, in part, on relevant experience and availability within given date range

  6. Co-Directors introduce team-members and program's coordinator for the visit (typically the WPA); contact information is exchanged; confirmation of date for visit and clarification of procedures for C-Es' travel, compensation, and reimbursement is reviewed

▸ **What is the typical process and timeline for a visit? (continued from previous slide)**

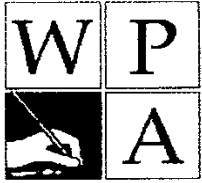7. Completion of general outline of visit schedule, typically in consultation with the C-Es

8. Completion of program Self-Study Report and delivery to C-E team; team contacts visit coordinator and/or self-study author with any questions and suggestions for revisions of visit schedule

9. Visit takes place

10. Exit interview in which preliminary recommendations are outlined

11. Team prepares and submits a written report of their findings and recommendations within four to six weeks of the visit

12. C-E Service conducts follow-up with team and writing program.

▶ **How are C-Es chosen for a visit?**

◦ Teams are chosen from among a panel of 24 C-Es who have participated in C-E training ; team is matched to program issues;

◦ Panel is constituted of rhetoric and composition scholars at a range of types of colleges and universities who have extensive experience as WPAs in one or more areas of writing program administration;

◦ Two-person teams are made up of panel members with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Panel members adhere to the Ethics Guidelines
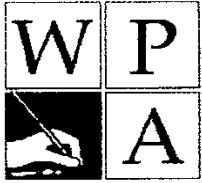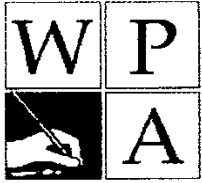
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▸ **How does the Self-Study get written**?

- *Who writes it?* Sometimes the WPA is the single author; sometimes the self study is a collaborative effort;

- *What information is included*? A <u>Self-Study Guide</u> is provided by the WPA C-E Service; some programs supplement with other relevant information or analyses, especially if they have unique questions or issues;

- *How is information gathered?* Sometimes writing programs have information already at hand; sometime they assemble information from available data; sometimes they collect data through interviews, surveys, or other forms of research.

▸ **What happens during a C-E visit?**

◦ See Sample 48-hour schedule in Brady article, from C-Es' arrival through departure

◦ Formal and informal meetings with
  · upper level administrators with oversight of the writing program (sometimes all the way up to college or university president)
  · one or more WPAs
  · teachers in the program
  · groups (committees) or individuals with responsibility for setting curriculum, policies, and practices
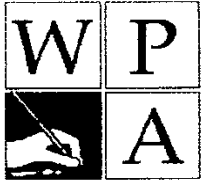 · campus partners
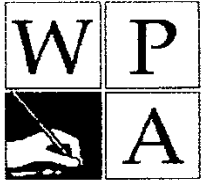 · students
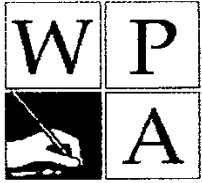
- **What kind of report do the C-Es write?**

  ◦ Report usually consists of both a statement of findings about the current situation, including recognition for program strengths, and a set of recommendations for changes

  ◦ Areas of discussion typically align with information, issues, and concerns outlined in the Self-Study

  ◦ Recommendations usually reference statements of professional guidelines and "best practices" and sometimes offer other successful writing programs as examples

▸ **What are the outcomes of C-E visits?**

◦ WPAs and other administrators use the report findings and recommendations to set directions for the program

◦ C-E Service follows up one week, one month, and six months after visit to evaluate our processes and effectiveness and to offer additional consultation if needed.

‣ What does the service cost?

◦ $4000 for honoraria for two consultant-evaluators ($2000 each);

◦ $250 administrative fee paid to the service to support costs of C-E training workshops and operating expenses (*note: administrative fee for a visit conducted virtually when travel is not allowed is $450*)

◦ Travel and lodging for two consultants*

◦ Meals for C-Es and sometimes for others meeting with the C-Es at meals*

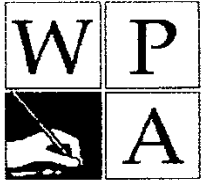*does not apply for virtual visits when travel is not allowed
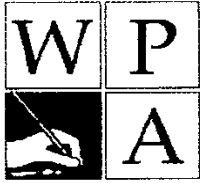
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Related Publications

- Beidler, Peter. "WPA Evaluation: A Recent Case Study." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 14.3 (1991): 69–72.
- **Brady, Laura. "A Case for Writing Program Evaluation." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 28.1–2 (2004): 79–94.
- Harrington, Susan. "The Place of Assessment and Reflection in Writing Program Administration." In *Discord and Direction: The Postmodern Writing Program Administrator*. Sharon James McGee and Carolyn Handa, eds. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2005. 140–157.
- Holdstein, Deborah H. "Where Discord Meets Direction: The Role of Consultant Evaluation in Writing Programs." In *Discord and Direction: The Postmodern Writing Program Administrator*. Sharon James McGee and Carolyn Handa, eds. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2005. 18–27.
- Hairston, Maxine. "What Freshman Directors Need to Know About Evaluating Writing Programs." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 3.1 (1979): 11–16.
- Lindemann, Erika. "Evaluating Writing Programs: What an Outside Evaluator Looks For." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 3.1 (1979): 17–24.
- McLeod, Susan H. "Requesting a Consultant-Evaluation Visit." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 14.3 (1991): 73–77.
- Rose, Shirley K. "'Creating a Context': The Institutional Logic of the Council of Writing Program Administrators Development of the Consultant-Evaluator Service." In *The Promise and Perils of Writing Program Administration.* Eds. Theresa Enos and Shane Borrowman. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2008. 21–48.
- White, Edward M. "The Rhetorical Problem of Program Evaluation and the WPA." *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Administering Writing Programs*. Ed. Joseph Janangelo and Kristine Hansen. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann–Boynton/Cook, 1995. 132–50

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Resources

▶ **Other Materials**

◦ Sample Timeline for planning (from Brady article)
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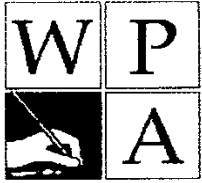02?ver=19

◦ Sample Schedule for visit (from Brady article)
http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/asset_manager/get_file/3779
02?ver=19

◦ Guidelines for Self-Study (link on WPA C-E Service webpage)
http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/asset_manager/get_file/377
905?ver=20

◦ Sample Table of Contents for Self-Study (from Brady article)
http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/asset_manager/get_file/37790
2?ver=19

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Thanks

Questions? See https://associationdatabase.com/aws/CWPA/pt/sp/consulting-services
or contact: shirley.rose@asu.edu and/or michaelp@georgiasouthern.edu

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