

**SUMMARY OF TEACHING, SCHOLARSHIP, ADMINISTRATION, AND SERVICE**  
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Just as other faculty in English Departments think of themselves as "a poet" or "a Shakespearian," I think of myself as a writing program administrator (WPA). Accordingly, my scholarship and my teaching both enhance and draw from my administrative work and perspective. In taking an administrative perspective in all these areas, I expand the scale of the challenge at hand—whether it concerns a text or a student or a faculty workshop—in order to consider its implications for other students or teachers, locally or nationally, who might encounter similar situations. Beyond that, I consider the long-term, program-wide implications of the actions I might take in response, within the institutional contexts in which I work. Moreover—and this is one of the most intellectually engaging elements about being a WPA—I work across boundaries, whether disciplinary, departmental, or interpersonal, in order to synthesize ideas from a range of sources and perspectives, to address complex problems, and to create new opportunities for myself and others.

Being a WPA at Mason has allowed me to continue to integrate my multiple roles. My initial appointment letter reads, "Because, as Director of Composition, your work in the English Department is partly administrative, your tenure decision will be evaluated in the following way: 1/3 scholarship, 1/3 teaching, 1/3 administration. (It is understood that service for the department and university is an integral part of administration work.)" This statement supports my own understanding of the work I do as a WPA: that my administrative work is equal to and tightly woven into my work as a teacher and scholar, allowing me to draw on my strengths in each area as I contribute to the composition program, the department, the university, and the larger fields of writing program administration and composition studies.

**TEACHING: Overview...** (please contact me if you would like to see a copy of the full statement)

**SCHOLARSHIP: Overview...**

**ADMINISTRATION: Core Values**

My central responsibility as a writing program administrator is to facilitate learning—for our undergraduate students, TAs, and faculty—through program structures, informed curriculum design, and personal support and advice. I see my administrative efforts to facilitate learning as falling into four main categories:

- Supervisory Responsibilities (see Folder A-1)
- Program/Curriculum Design and Assessment (see Folder A-2)
- Faculty Development (see Folder A-3)
- Administrative Documentation (see Folder A-4)

Guiding my efforts in these areas are four key principles, which are developed in my scholarship:

- a view of the job of writing program administration as macro-teaching—in which the modeling of best practices and the development of other teachers and mentors are crucial elements of my administrative work;

- a conviction that as a WPA I should practice "servant leadership," which feminist scholars Marlene Fine and Patrice Buzzanell define as "doing things for others that enable them to do their jobs...[and] taking obstacles out of [colleagues'] way";
- a commitment specifically to empowering other teachers to make their own choices, which means ensuring that information and resources are widely available, and that policies and guidelines are well-published and applied fairly;
- and a continuing interest in building community and a collaborative ethos among a very diverse group of teachers in the composition program, in order to enable the other practices mentioned above.

Finally, I set an ongoing agenda for change and growth—not because the Mason writing programs need "fixing," but because people and programs thrive in an environment of thoughtfully considered, directed, and supported change. I am ever mindful as I do so, however, of my colleagues' need for safety and support in the midst of change, and of the need for consultation and communication particularly as new ideas arise. And I am particularly aware of the very serious limits placed upon the speed and scope of change that is possible when my colleagues are constrained by low salaries, high workloads, insecure employment status, and/or limited experience in the field.

## **Administration at Mason**

### ***Administration as Excellence in Teaching***

Since George Mason University has no precedent for counting administrative work toward tenure or promotion, my administrative achievements will be evaluated primarily under the category of "genuine excellence in teaching." At Mason, faculty who strive for "genuine excellence in teaching" are expected to engage in curriculum development, advising and/or mentoring of students, the pursuit of new knowledge and skills, and dissemination of their work, both locally and nationally—all features of my work as a WPA. Moreover, at this level, excellence in teaching is expected to be supported by familiarity with and application of relevant scholarship—in my case, not just the scholarship of teaching and learning, but also the scholarship of writing program administration.

Much of what I do as the director of the composition program has clear parallels to these elements of university teaching:

- Curriculum development: The revised learning-goals statements for English 101 and English 302 clarify the curricular expectations of these courses, and cast those expectations in language that is accessible to teachers, focused on student outcomes, and thus able to be assessed (see Folder A-2). In addition, two faculty development initiatives I started—the Working Group on Hybrid Pedagogies for English 302, and the Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC) grant-supported project, Integrating Technology into Advanced Composition—have implications for curriculum revision in English 302 (see Folder A-3).
- Advising and mentoring of students: In addition to regular one-on-one advising, I have created and expanded the Tutors in Classrooms mentoring program, which matches first-year teaching assistants with experienced mentor-teachers. I have also instituted monthly Continuing Professional Development meetings for TAs during their first semester of teaching, and expanded the support for those TAs to include two classroom observations (up from one) and an individual consultation about grading student essays. (See Folder A-3.)

- Pursuit of new knowledge and dissemination of one's work: Some of my research and dissemination efforts are made visible in my formal scholarship on administration. I have also run faculty development workshops, such as the 2006 ITAC summer workshop (see Folder A-3), that required me to complete additional research in a new field (for example, teaching with technology). In addition, I have now led three workshops at national conferences specifically on issues in writing program administration.

### *Additional elements of administration*

Nationally, the Council of Writing Program Administrators designates program-administration as separate from teaching, arguing in its statement on evaluating WPAs that this administrative work should be evaluated based on the following five categories: "Program creation and development, curricular design, faculty development, program assessment and evaluation, and program-related textual production." (Of this last category, the CWPA says, "[WPAs] concretize their knowledge—and build a reviewable record—through the authorship of a body of textual materials related to program [administration].") While much of my work can be seen as an extension of the teaching-excellence categories noted above, three aspects of the work I do as a WPA promote learning via *administrative* actions that differ in scope and/or in emphasis from what is expected of most classroom teachers.

- Program creation, development, and assessment: Within the composition program as a whole I have created other support programs. As one example, Tutors-in-Classrooms goes beyond individual mentoring to be a mentoring *program* (see Folder A-3), requiring an expanded administrative point of view and related actions. In designing it, I needed to collaborate with the directors of the Writing Center and Creative Writing to assess needs and ensure a smooth fit; to understand how it could fit into a larger program of faculty development in composition; to articulate its rationale and to provide support and education to its participants; to choose activities that would be sustainable over several years as participants changed; and to design assessment processes that could reveal its strengths and weaknesses and aid future revisions to the program.
- Faculty development: Faculty development within a large writing program differs from mentoring students in that it needs to be more programmatic and collaborative, respecting colleagues' expertise and drawing on it to help reach program goals. The eleven, three-hour workshops I presented or arranged for in 2005-2006, for instance, responded to faculty requests (help with ESL students), to high-priority composition program needs (teaching with the new English 302 learning goals) and to departmental needs (concerns about adjunct and term faculty portfolios); to enhance collaboration in the program, I also supported non-tenure-track members of the Composition Instruction Committee in presenting a workshop on grading. Moreover, since composition faculty range from novice to expert teachers, they require a very flexible system of support. I thus revised Fall Orientation (Folder A-3) to involve an orientation day and a workshop day, and helped upgrade the resources available on the website (Folder A-4) in order to respond to these variable needs as well as to make visible composition faculty's collective expertise.
- Administrative documentation: The documents I list on my vita and include in my administration folders represent the kinds of administrative writing I produce, from largely original documents that draw on composition theory (the guide to preventing plagiarism), to collaborative documents for which I am a primary author (the learning goals statements for English 101 and 302, the guide to Excellence in General Education Teaching), to largely informational or synthetic documents that enact my administrative philosophies of enabling teachers to make informed choices about their teaching (the Syllabus Guide). Published on the composition website, these documents establish and/or articulate program policies, support teaching, and provide general guidance; they are accessible to all faculty and their students, and are also available to the general public.

My work in curriculum design and faculty mentoring (and in writing the documents that support such endeavors) promotes and enables good teaching throughout the composition program, in close parallel with my work as a classroom teacher. In addition, as I work collaboratively with composition faculty from all ranks, and as I design events, programs and policies that are intended to improve the whole program over a series of years, I step into a distinctly administrative role. Both my teaching-related work and my administrative work as a WPA support the same goal: serving and leading over a hundred faculty colleagues and the students they teach.

## **SERVICE...**

In each of these service settings—as in all of my work as a faculty member in the English Department—I try to enact the principles that guide and energize me as a WPA: working collaboratively, analyzing complexities and peering around institutional assumptions, enabling others to do their best work with fewer obstacles, planning for long term changes. Indeed, one effect of my current administrative and scholarly work, as I try to identify what "being a WPA" means personally and professionally, is that I have come to draw fewer and fewer lines between "my work" and "service," particularly as I draw fewer lines between "leadership" or "scholarship" and "service." My summary thus comes full circle: I have enjoyed and learned much in working in these many venues as a WPA in the composition program and the English Department at Mason, and I look forward to continuing to develop as a teacher, scholar, and administrator.