

FORUM

NEWSLETTER FOR ISSUES ABOUT PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT FACULTY

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CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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From the Editor: How Adjuncts Can Find Funds for Professional Development

Evelyn Beck

Departmental travel funds for adjuncts are such a rarity that those eager for professional development are often on their own. So I thought I'd share a few ideas for funding resources.

Some organizations offer assistance to attend their conferences. The Conference on College Composition and Communication, for example, offers a \$250 PEP (Professional Equity Project) award to help adjuncts attend the annual CCCC convention: <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/awards/118145.htm>.

The Two-Year College English Association (TYCA)-Southeast gives a \$550 award for the best conference program proposal by an adjunct; it also conducts a drawing for three \$350 travel stipends to the annual conference: http://www.tyca-se.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=32. TYCA-West offers an annual Part-Time Teaching Award as well as an annual Writing Award, each worth \$50: <http://www.tycawest.org/awards.html>.

Grants are also available to help fund professional development. The National Education Association's Leadership and Learning Grant offers \$2,000 for a professional development experience: http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/Learning&Leadership_Guidelines.htm. Inspiration Software's Inspired Teacher Scholarship awards \$750 to attend a conference related to visual learning:

About Forum

Forum is published twice a year by the Conference on College Composition and Communication. As editor, I welcome you to submit news items, book reviews, editorials, and/or articles related to non-tenure-track faculty in college English or composition courses. Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than May 1; for the spring issue, the deadline is September 1. Note: Submissions will not be returned.

Submit your work electronically via email or an email attachment. Address your work to beck.e@ptc.edu and put the words “*Forum* article” somewhere in your subject line. Submissions should include the following information:

- your name
- your title(s)
- your institution(s)
- home address and phone number; institutional address(es) and phone number(s)
- if applicable, venue(s) where submission was published or presented previously

For additional guidelines or information about *Forum*, contact Evelyn Beck, *Forum* editor, Piedmont Technical College, 620 N. Emerald Rd., Greenwood, SC 29648 or phone 864-941-8450.

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<http://www.inspiration.com/prodev/index.cfm?fuseaction=scholarship&CFID=22262536&CFTOKEN=35863401>.

For a more extended professional development opportunity, apply to attend a National Endowment for the Humanities institute or seminar. These programs range from two to six weeks in length, with stipends from \$1,800 to \$4,200 to cover travel and housing: <http://www.neh.gov/projects/si-university.html>. Also check out grants available from your state humanities council: <http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html>.

Writing competitions can provide travel money, as well. The NEA’s Excellence in the Academy Awards offer \$2,500 and a trip to the NEA Higher Education Conference in Austin for the best articles in three categories: <http://www2.nea.org/he/ajeaward.html>. And the Teachers & Writers Collaborative awards the \$3,500 Bechtel Prize for the best essay about creative writing education, literary studies, or the profession of writing.

I hope that one of these opportunities will work for you.

Rider University Embraces Adjunct Diversity

Suzanne Carbonaro

How many of us remember our first day of kindergarten? I know I cried, which was perhaps a way of communicating my anxiety of breaking away from something safe, but most likely was the fear of the unknown swallowing me up as I gazed into the darkened, hollow hall before me. I

empathize with this feeling that my daughter now has, several years later, as she faces her first day of school. She won't be alone, though, as I will walk with her down that uncertain hallway leading to the rest of her life. Her transition to full-time public school signifies my own entry into the world of promotion and tenure—as an adjunct. Like my daughter, however, I have a strong hand to hold along the way.

Having worked at seven diversely populated colleges, this year marks the beginning of my fifteenth year of adjunct work in the communication field. More specifically, I am entering my fourth consecutive year at Rider University, a small institution of about 5,500 students located in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. Rider has been represented by a strong and united chapter of the American Association of University Professors since 1976. As part of the union agreement, adjuncts, like full-time faculty, can apply for promotions after demonstrating consecutive years of service, effective teaching, value to the university, and scholarship. Additionally, promoted adjuncts can receive stipends for attending conferences and fair and steady pay increases. As is true with most journeys, though, the road to Rider was not a straight line.

As an undergrad, I set my sights on a career in broadcast journalism. Teaching was not even a glimmer in my eye until Peter Ensel at SUNY Plattsburgh introduced me to Boston University's master of science program. This jump-started my career in television, and I worked at a battery of media companies, including network affiliates, NBC Studios, MTV, and Warner Brothers. I won press awards and a Cable ACE nomination for work I did as a videographer and producer. It was, after all, my dream to work in the "biz." For me, however, television and having children did not mix. My passion never left me, but I needed to find another venue for this creative zeal in my bones without abdicating my role as a new parent; thus began my career as an adjunct.

I started at Monmouth University in New Jersey teaching introductory media and television courses, but later found myself teaching public speaking at Wagner College in Staten Island, New York. I built a career on teaching students effective ways of presenting themselves in their everyday encounters, but ironically, these skills did not transfer to my own life as I found myself pigeonholed into the same courses each semester. From my chair, Christopher Catt, an acclaimed theatrical director and a brilliant mentor, I learned a great deal about myself as a communicator and what I needed to do to truly make a livelihood from adjunct and workshop instruction.

Following 9/11, like many New Yorkers, I moved my family to a small town outside of Princeton, New Jersey, where I found a tremendous opportunity at Rider University. Students here receive intimate instructional opportunities through

assorted programs, developmental guidance, and small class sizes. Howard Schwartz, who began the Department of Communication (presently the Department of Communication and Journalism) in the 1960s, hired me after emailing the comment, “hopefully, you are as good in person as you appear on paper,” which I have adopted as my mantra for success. I began teaching Business and Strategic Speech, a course designated for discourses in business and instructional technology. Here at Rider, I have enjoyed job security, convenient class times that fit around my children’s schedules, salary raises, regular assignments for summer programs, strong union representation, and a department of professionals who care about me and my career path.

When I started at Rider, I was told about the distinction of Adjunct Priority Status, something I could attain after teaching three consecutive years (six consecutive semesters). Dr. Schwartz fought for me each semester as assignments for courses were made. One semester, halfway to my Priority Status, one of my classes was not opened by the registrar’s office right away. Therefore, there was no enrollment in the section, and it looked as if I could lose the benefits of my years of service to Rider. Fearing that I might have to start my journey for promotion over again, Dr. Schwartz, along with transition chair Jonathan Millen, allowed me to teach Interpersonal Communication, a course usually taught by full-time faculty. Not only did this assignment save my track to Priority Status, but it opened new doors for me. Students have been empowered by the course, and now, as I enter my third year teaching it, I have added a blogging feature after attending an information technology session led by members of the USC faculty at the 2007 CCCC New York convention. My chair, Dr. Millen, nominated me for a CCCC Professional Equity Project (PEP) Award, which I won. Participating in pedagogical discussions afforded me the courage to submit a presentation proposal, which was accepted by the Conference on English Leadership. All of these offerings stemmed from strong peer leadership at Rider.

Since fall 2005, Dr. Millen has organized an adjunct faculty reception, which has served as a conduit through which adjuncts can discover channels of professional enrichment at the university. Through these sessions and subsequent conversations, I have networked with other faculty members who have encouraged me to serve on committees, write articles, attend conferences, and teach a diversity of courses. With the support of my departmental faculty, I’ve had a chance to blossom and take advantage of professional projects that currently appear in my dossier for promotion and tenure. I have lectured for student groups such as the United Council for Negro Women, the Leadership Development Program at the College of New Jersey, and Rider’s Equal Opportunity Program. Additionally, I have done workshops for the United States Coast Guard and Miele, Inc., in Princeton. I have taught classes when professors were called to other commitments, including a

public relations course last summer. Now I am being considered for teaching graduate-level courses for both the department and the university's M.A. program in organizational leadership. Dr. Millen calls me his "most diverse adjunct" because of my ability to teach courses in a variety of subject areas.

So, as I embark on my fifteenth year of university work and vie for Adjunct Assistant Professor status at Rider University (a promotion I realize is not offered at many institutions for part-timers), I feel valued in my role as a member of the Department of Communication and Journalism. Senior faculty member Myra Gutin recently wrote in a correspondence to me regarding my application for promotion and tenure that she "could not think of a more worthy candidate." With words of confidence like that, a wonderfully accommodating support staff, an advocating chairperson and union representation that is revolutionary in its efforts to give members a shot at a promising university career, I am where I need to be, sharing my experiences in television with my students instead of producing new ones that would leave my own children in the dark.

Suzanne Carbonaro is a priority status adjunct instructor in Rider University's Department of Communication and Journalism and teaches courses in business and professional speech, interpersonal communication, and public relations.

Labor in the Diploma Mill

Lisa Lange

My name was misspelled on everything. That, however, was not the first indication that my initial for-profit teaching experience would be "different." This particular two-year, for-profit college is known in the region as the place where working-class, first-generation students not accepted at other colleges are welcomed with open arms. No student capable of applying for financial aid would be turned down. Though jokes were tossed around town regarding the students' criminal records and the college's acceptance policy, as an outsider, I viewed the school as a second chance—potentially a last chance—for those who finally understood the importance of a higher education to their futures.

One's class at birth is the largest player in whether one succeeds in earning a four-year degree. A working-class kid, I had beat the degree odds but failed to make it into the middle class. Like most adjunct college English teachers I know, I found myself unable to find a full-time teaching position and therefore was unable to earn (economic) middle-class status.

I teach eight courses a semester for two area community colleges. I accepted a position as an adjunct instructor at this particular for-profit college in hopes of expanding my teaching options.

A week before classes were to begin, an article in the local newspaper caught my eye: the headline read “_____ College Employee Arrested.” My first thought was “Well, it could happen anywhere, to anyone. Probably a drinking-and-driving charge, or a domestic.” As I continued to read, I thought, “...oh. Oh dear. Oh my.” It was *not* a drinking-and-driving charge or anything else one could conjure up as criminal but not uncommon. I took the evidence presented to me and decided this was not the ivory tower. Good.

I arrived an hour late for my first faculty meeting. My department chair had supplied the wrong start time, and I had not received the corrected email with the pithy signature line, “A problem is your chance to do your best!” When I entered the meeting, a suit was stressing the importance of wearing our supplied name badges. She explained this would aid students in identifying the instructors from the students. Name badges? The reason I went to graduate school in the first place was to *never wear* a name badge. To me, the name badge is a symbol of the working class. You know my name; I do not know yours. I must wear my name on my shirt, giving you the advantage in any interaction. My name was misspelled—irrelevant by definition of the name badge’s intended purpose.

After the meeting, we were pointed toward the adjunct faculty office. In one corner, an adjunct’s entire wardrobe sat stacked from floor to ceiling. According to our tour guide, this adjunct had experienced a flood at her residence. The flood had left her homeless—or at least closetless. For the past two months (and it turned out for several months after), she had been safeguarding her clothing in the office—where she also dressed during the week. The adjunct office also possessed her iron, ironing board, starch, and assorted dry-cleaning bags, tags, and hangers. I found the symbolism striking: The adjunct faculty office is the place one enters to find the uniform and tools of the middle class.

I began my first day of class without a textbook. My chair (who, according to the college’s website, had earned his managerial position with fourteen years in the food and beverage industry) had explained that the books were late, and I’d just have to make do until they arrived. When I entered class, my shiny new students gazed at me from behind shiny new textbooks. As it turned out, all of the students had books; I was the only one who did not. Later I discovered the college would supply instructors only with the free review copies publishers offered, and those copies had not arrived yet. When I asked if the department could just buy my book from the college’s bookstore, the answer was, “Oh, no. We can’t do that.” It would be two weeks before my textbook arrived.

Once ensconced in the day-to-day workings of the institution, I began to see how the sausage was made. I found the college's recruiting tactics shocking. Shortly after I began teaching, I received the following email from the college's admissions office: "Right now admissions could really use your help, we are looking for some personally developed leads to hit our budget for the month.... Ideas: Lunch delivery people, gas attendants, store personnel...." I was responsible not only for teaching but for recruiting as well. The responsibility lay with all of us, I was told.

Shortly before the college's newest president quit or was fired (the fourth president in as many years), I was emailed a survey from the college's parent company. The survey contained more than one hundred questions ranging from my thoughts on the college's mission statement to the condition of the parking lot's asphalt. Missing was a single question regarding the quality of the education these students were—or were not—receiving. I stared at the screen dumbfounded.

As for-profit institutions flourish, more teaching opportunities become available. However, can we live with our decision to aid in the fleecing of the working class? This school and the many like it are recruiting working-class teens and adults alike with promises of brighter futures—new careers, a college education, and a chance to join the ranks of the middle class. What these students leave with is a mountain of debt, a useless degree, and a permanent place in the working class. These "institutions of learning" are worse than diploma mills. They strip their students of their money, their dreams, and their faith in a system that betrayed them.

In November of 2006, the local newspaper pronounced the college was for sale: "A Perfect Gift for the Person Who Has Everything" read the headline. Money can buy you your own college. What it can't buy you is a way out of the working class.

Lisa Lange is a working-class academic and community college instructor in New England.

When Adjuncts Are Limited by Time

Andrei Guruianu

I consider myself lucky. I like teaching part-time while working toward my doctorate in the hope of some day finding a permanent position. However, I've also known colleagues who don't share these same feelings. Concerns over compensation, respect within the department, and flexibility are some of the issues that come up if you ask an adjunct to talk about his or her job.

Are those valid issues? Of course they are. But for me, the difficulty of teaching as an adjunct lies much deeper. I've taught as an adjunct at private colleges,

community colleges, and state colleges, and currently teach academic writing at Ithaca College in upstate New York, where I'm fortunate to have been made to feel at home within my department. I do not necessarily feel like a second-class citizen in relation to the full-time professors, and I have the support and understanding of my department chair. I love what I do. And yet there are still instances when being only a part-timer has its downsides.

Those moments typically relate to how much work I need to accomplish and how little time I spend on campus. Part-time instructors often have one or more additional jobs to supplement their incomes. Naturally that takes us away from campus, our offices, and our students. For me, this has created a dilemma in terms of offering students the attention I know they deserve and, even more important, need in order to succeed.

The contact hours we spend with our students in class are rarely ever enough to cover all the material and offer the kind of one-on-one help some crave. Office hours help to some degree, but because of different schedules, these may not always be the best times to meet with all of our students. So what happens to the rest? We hope they somehow don't fall through the cracks, and we try not to think about them too much because, after all, we're only there temporarily.

This problem of insufficient contact hours and inadequate student-teacher interaction is what I find most difficult. As teachers, we naturally want our students to succeed and we want to be there to help them do so; otherwise we're in the wrong profession. When we can't do that because of other obligations, we justify it by saying we're not getting paid enough to do any more than what we're already doing, or tell ourselves that it's not that big of a deal.

The reality is that it's a very big deal. Freshman composition courses like the one I teach are often mandatory at two-year and some four-year colleges. We are often the students' first and only exposure to writing instruction at the college level. To me, that means enormous pressure to prepare these students for future academic work. I want to be there to guide them when they need me.

This is even more of an issue when taking into consideration the growing number of English language learners coming into composition classrooms. For the past year and a half, I've had the privilege, joy, and frustration of teaching writing to entire sections of international students. Nothing is more rewarding and challenging than teaching first-year international students how to create cohesive academic essays in a language that they are barely able to speak. I'm happy to say that I've had some success in this endeavor but also some setbacks. Those setbacks were, in my opinion, related to the number of contact hours I had with my students. While this is an issue that part-time instructors encounter in more-typical

classrooms, the problem is exacerbated when dealing with English language learners.

Approximately three contact hours per week are hardly enough time to include lecture, discussion, and essay structure instruction. When all that is done, if lucky, some of us throw in a bit of grammar and style. But English language learners need more than global revision strategies and the kind of grammatical and style instruction that skims the surface. Some of them have never gone beyond the five-paragraph format that they've had to memorize so they could pass their entrance exams. Some struggle significantly with fundamental parts of speech—articles, conjunctions, and basic pronoun use. They need sentence-by-sentence instruction. They essentially need English tutors, which is not what we are.

But that doesn't mean we don't want to help them. There just is not enough time to accomplish all that we would like. Even if it were mandatory for international students (or all first-year writing students, for that matter) to attend a minimum of one additional contact hour outside of class, there is the issue of who's going to offer it and who's going to pay for it. The amount of time it would take an adjunct to meet with each student for one hour outside of class would easily add enough hours to his or her instruction time to be considered as time teaching an additional section. I don't know of a department that would be willing to pay for this.

Writing centers help. They offer students the kind of outside-the-classroom guidance that instructors sometimes are unable to provide. As a part-time instructor, I believe that it should be mandatory for first-year composition students to attend a writing center conference for each essay they are required to complete during a given semester. This would alleviate some of the burden on instructors, especially those of us who are not on campus as often as we are needed or as often as we would like to be there. If this can't be made into a blanket policy for individual departments, individual instructors should require some kind of proof that the student has attended the writing center. Ithaca College offers such a system where students ask for a slip of paper to attach to their essays proving they've attended a writing center session. It's an option, if not a solution.

As part-time instructors, we have the same goals and expectations for our students as other professors. However, at times, individual circumstances can limit how much we are able to offer them. I find that to be the most disheartening aspect of teaching part-time. The money and rank may come in time, but I'll never be able to recover the time not spent with my students when they needed it most.

Andrei Guruianu is a part-time instructor at Ithaca College, and began teaching as an adjunct three years ago. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in creative writing at Binghamton University.

York Technical College's Adjuncts Creating Excellence Program: A Part-Timer's Road to Success

Grace Ocasio

I first heard about the Adjuncts Creating Excellence (ACE) program at York Technical College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, in 2004, after a year of working as an adjunct English instructor there. I was curious, yes, but I was not quite sure that the program was for me. It seemed to me at the time that the requirements were quite stringent: I would have to supply the ACE facilitator with a set of recommendations, brush up on my knowledge of technology by acquiring training on how to use computer equipment in a smart classroom, and read extensively on the most up-to-date teaching methods. Was I intimidated by all these requirements? As I reflect on that season of my life, I must now confess that yes, I was.

Nevertheless, the advantages of participating in the program were too good to pass up. To begin with, I would receive a pay increase upon completion of the program. I also felt certain that my status as an adjunct would improve in that I would be allowed to teach higher-level composition courses and even literature courses, eventually. What I liked especially about the process was how the ACE program itself was presented to adjunct faculty; that is, the instructional developer of the program extended an open invitation to all adjunct faculty to become involved. Of course, the one prerequisite for participating was that an adjunct had to be teaching credit courses.

Still a relative newcomer to York, I felt I needed more experience. In the fall of 2004, I taught two English 100 courses (developmental English). And each semester of the previous academic year, I had taught only one course—one section of English 100. My first year, though, had been memorable. For one thing, my first supervisor made me feel that I was part of a team. She took time to explain to all of us part-timers at orientation that first night how to fill out the different forms. Perhaps more amazing than anything else, she demonstrated her generosity of spirit by placing chocolate kisses in each of our mailboxes. With this kind of welcome, I felt certain that I could inspire all my English 100 students to strive to become better writers.

I remember, too, how my supervisor supplied me with all the resources I needed (textbook and handbook), answered all my questions about standard procedures to follow in the classroom, and directed me to a full-timer teaching English 100. This full-timer, in turn, was very supportive, sharing with me all her handouts (grammar exercises), her class policy statement, and her class schedule document. Although I did not have an office of my own, I soon discovered that the adjunct faculty office was a place where I could interact with not only other adjunct English instructors,

but with adjuncts representing other disciplines as well. The pay for an adjunct was decent, though not as high as at some other institutions I knew about.

By the fall of 2005, I noticed that one or two persons who had participated in the ACE program were singled out at the first-of-the-year meeting for adjuncts. Here these individuals were recognized by the ACE facilitator in front of adjuncts representing a variety of disciplines. In fact, I knew one of the people recognized; I even had, on occasion, talked with her in the part-time faculty office. She had struck me as an easy-going, warm-hearted person with a broad smile. When I saw her that night, I marveled at the transformation that her participation in the program had brought about. She seemed so much more self-assured, standing with her back straight, garbed in a conservative-looking suit. Seeing her example, I began to toy with the idea that I could do the same, especially since I was much more acclimated to the college by my third year there. I even started running into former students of mine in the hallway of the A building. "Hi, Mrs. Ocasio," they would always say with a smile breaking across their faces. "Hi there," I would say back, always humbled by the knowledge that my class in some way had registered for these students.

The only impediment that stood in my way of finding out more information about the program that fall was the fact that I was still bogged down with graduate work. I was in the process of pursuing a second master's degree, only this time in English. My first master's—in poetry—had only enabled me to teach creative writing and composition courses (upon my having taken some graduate-level writing courses, that is). At this stage of my teaching career, I was looking to teach literature courses, something I had never done. Having already taught as a full-timer in the English department of another two-year college, I wanted to maintain a part-time teaching schedule and pursue my career as a creative writer. (I am a published poet.)

In addition to pursuing my graduate studies, I was noticing how the English department at York was changing as well. I had become accustomed to working with the supervisor I had started out with in the fall of 2003. Now there was a different department head. I would have to readjust to his particular management style. Even so, I found him to be an agreeable individual. Following through with my plan to participate in the ACE program was still possible.

After a series of e-mail contacts with my supervisor and the distance learning department manager, my time had finally come to participate in the ACE program in the fall of 2006. The teacher of the class, as it turned out, was a past participant who had gone from being an adjunct instructor to a full-time faculty member. Consequently, I was impressed that participating in the program held promise for those adjuncts interested in pursuing full-time teaching positions. I appreciated as well the fact that I would be taught by someone who had already been through the

training. I have to admit, though, that I felt a bit uncertain as I had never taken a distance learning class before. However, I realized that familiarizing myself with distance learning technology would serve me well if I were ever afforded the opportunity to teach a distance learning class. I knew that I would be more receptive to students' needs after having gone through the experience myself. I considered, as well, that as an adjunct seeking full-time employment at a later time, knowing the technology might enhance my status.

I soon discovered how user-friendly this distance learning course was. It was not long before I found myself looking forward to reading the material of the modules as a much-needed break from my normal routine of grading compositions and commenting on students' reader responses. I particularly enjoyed the scavenger hunt assignment of module two. Designated as a learning activity, this assignment required me to look up pertinent facts relating to my day-to-day interactions with students. I learned what to do if I encountered a student experiencing a medical emergency, where to direct a student interested in acquiring note-taking and test-taking skills, and how to advise a scholarship student carrying a load of twelve college-level credit courses in addition to one three-credit developmental course. Although I knew this material was not immediately applicable, since I was not required to advise students, doing research to discover the answers to the questions listed in this learning activity was quite challenging and intellectually stimulating.

My favorite part of the course, though, was preparing the class activity that both the instructional developer and my supervisor would observe. I conducted a debate on whether violence-prone sexual predators can be rehabilitated. I used an approach like that favored by the ABC news show *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, which features a panel of four political pundits representing a cross section of views as expressed by primarily magazine editors and columnists. This "round table" method, it seemed to me, would be the most conducive to a classroom setting.

Participating in the ACE program at York proved to be an invaluable experience. Not only did I attain a greater appreciation of the college's infrastructure, but I also developed as an instructor by implementing new teaching strategies into my classroom. I should stress, however, that I received no monetary compensation for the training I underwent in order to successfully complete the program. But in the aftermath of the program, I was invited to teach classes I had never taught before—one a higher-level composition course, the other a literature course. Fulfilling the requirements of the program also did not guarantee that I would acquire a set number of classes to teach every semester. These minor drawbacks notwithstanding, thanks to the ACE program, I now feel that I am much better equipped to serve York Technical College's student body.

Poet/teacher Grace Ocasio lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband, Edwin. She has poetry forthcoming in the literary journals Court Green and The Cherry Blossom Review and in the anthology Step up to the Mic: A Poetic Explosion. She has been published in Poetica: Reflections of Jewish Thought, Main Street Rag, and Aries.

Observations from an Adjunct Turned Full-Timer

Cheri Lemieux Spiegel

Last year, I became an expert at consuming coffee, multitasking, and living without sleep. I was an adjunct instructor of English by night, and by day, I slaved away doing data entry and various administrative tasks for a state agency. I entered data to pay my bills, and I taught to keep the joy in my life. By the end of the fall 2006 semester, however, I knew this practice could not continue. At the rate I was going (working 30 hours per week for the state and then teaching between 9 and 12 credits at night), I knew I was going to burn out within mere months. I needed to make a change. I needed to find a full-time teaching position that would fulfill my need to pay the electric bill while also meeting my deep yearning to remain in the classroom. Thus, as an overly hopefully individual, I set out on a quest that I thought was unachievable: to find a full-time teaching position at the college level with limited teaching experience (one year as a graduate teaching assistant and one year as an adjunct instructor). Could it be done?

Apparently it could. I was hired this fall as a full-time, permanent instructor of English at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), Annandale. I don't pretend to understand the hiring process in its entirety nor do I profess to have "satisfaction guaranteed" advice on how to land a full-time position. However, what I can offer is some explanation into what I feel helped me to successfully make the jump from adjunct to full-time instructor. My explanations stem from my observations of the unifying features between myself and my fellow new hires as well as from recent conversations with my new colleagues, particularly the seasoned full-time faculty members who served on the hiring selection committee.

Understanding the College Mission and Students

As an adjunct, I indicated a strong desire to teach online and hybrid-style courses. Distance learning is valued in the NOVA community because it increases student access. Increasingly, my students are leading lives with multiple complex demands upon them. They endure lengthy commutes; they work, sometimes several jobs; they take care of family members (often by themselves). Online education allows

these students the opportunity to continue their education on their time—at 3 a.m. in their pajamas, if necessary.

In addition, these diverse students come to the classroom with various skill sets. Regardless of what level of writing skill my students enter the classroom with, I dedicate myself to their success in my course and after it (in their future courses and workplace endeavors). As such, I spend a great deal of class time working with my students and helping them to develop as writers. I'm in almost constant contact with the students via email; I also schedule individual conferences with every student several times a semester. I focus on individual success for each student in my classroom.

These values and characteristics of my instruction aided me during my job search. While I was looking for full-time employment, I focused my attentions upon NOVA almost exclusively because I strongly support the mission and vision of the college. NOVA is a two-year college with a wide variety of degree programs. Its vision, subtitled "The Gateway to the American Dream," indicates a strong dedication to reaching the needs of a diverse population by increasing access, developing student success, and maintaining excellence in instruction. The college values success in the classroom and service to the Northern Virginia community much more than scholarship alone. I was knowledgeable of these priorities and thus able to highlight and emphasize them (sometimes intentionally and other times not) in my application materials and interviews.

Responding to the English Department's Needs

As graduate students at Virginia Tech, my cohorts and I were reminded by the faculty, countless times, of the evolving state of English studies. Sadly, the demand for faculty teaching exclusively literature has all but plateaued; competition for such job openings is fierce. However, those are not the only openings available. As overall college enrollment continues to rise, the demand for sections of general education courses continues to grow. In turn, the need for college writing teachers continues to expand. The modern English department needs good writing teachers. The English department needs not only folks who are willing to teach the university's writing courses but also people who are well prepared for such a task.

Luckily for me, composition pedagogy happens to be something I'm quite passionate about. I focused my master's capstone research project upon the integration of the visual into first-year composition. I took graduate courses in contemporary pedagogy and composition pedagogy. After graduation, I continued to explore the field through continued research, conference presentations, and professional affiliations. I keep current in the trends of composition pedagogy and incorporate those advancements into my instruction. In my application materials and during my interviews, I focused on conveying my passion for composition

studies and the teaching of writing to the hiring committee. This fact stayed with them. Those who were then evaluating me (and are now supporting me as colleagues) have stressed to me that my dedication specifically to writing instruction—rather than a passion for literature—helped my application materials to stand out.

There may be some universities who are in need of literature faculty. If that's your passion, seek out those universities. If it's creative writing you desire, look for postings that focus upon such coursework. However, if the colleges you wish to apply to are focusing upon building their composition or professional writing faculty, then be prepared to equip and promote yourself accordingly. This may seem like an obvious point; however, it's one that I feel is so fundamental to the hiring process that it cannot be ignored. Simply put, market yourself toward the needs of the changing English department.

Maintaining Enthusiasm

I genuinely love teaching writing and the challenges that come with it, and I made sure the hiring committee knew it. At the conclusion of my interview, when asked if I had anything else I wanted to add—any additional information that I felt the hiring committee should consider when making its decision—I shared a very important truth about my life: I need to be in the classroom. I reminded them that I currently worked 30 hours a week for a state agency just to support my evening spent teaching. I told them that no matter what, I would find a way to be in the classroom every semester but that I'd love the opportunity to put all my energy into instruction and service to the university rather than having to divide it between the data entry and teaching. In the end, this comment, above everything else, seemed to stick with the committee.

Above all, I encourage you to focus your energy on the positive elements of your teaching experience—those delightful rewards that keep you coming back every semester—despite the office space, pay, or less-than-desirable schedule. I focus on those moments and allow them to drive my service as a teacher. When I find myself losing enthusiasm, I remember those classroom successes. When I itch for a schedule packed with literature or upper-level composition courses, I reflect on those students that have come to me after a semester of hard work to tell me that they've never done well in an English class before but that this course, this gatekeeper composition class, made them want to become an English major. And above all, I remind myself that I'm a part of something larger: the "Gateway to the American Dream." Keeping my mind focused in this way helps me to maintain the enthusiasm I have for teaching. It restores me after hard days and allows me to truly express a passion for pedagogy. In the end, the hiring committee has told me, my passion for the classroom was evident throughout my interview and contributed to the lasting impression I left upon them.

Unfortunately, beyond these simple elements of understanding the college mission, the evolving department, and the need for enthusiasm, I cannot offer any concrete advice. I wish I had a five-step, foolproof plan that I could share with you to guarantee your success. Somehow, I doubt such a plan is possible. If it were, I'm certain it would have been constructed by a far more brilliant mind than mine, years before I even realized I would love teaching as much as I do.

Cheri Lemieux Spiegel served as an adjunct instructor at Northern Virginia Community College (Manassas Campus) for one year before joining the full-time faculty at the Annandale Campus this fall. Her research interests focus on topics related to composition in the digital era.

Search for New Editor of *CCC*

CCCC is seeking a new editor of *College Composition and Communication*. The term of the present editor will end in December 2009. Interested persons should send a letter of application to be received no later than **June 2, 2008**.

Letters should be accompanied by (1) a vita, (2) one published writing sample, and (3) a statement of vision, to include any suggestions for changing the journal as well as features of the journal to be continued. Do not send books, monographs, or other materials which cannot be easily copied for the Search Committee. Applicants are urged to consult with administrators on the question of time, resources, and other services that may be required. NCTE staff members are available to provide advice and assistance to all potential applicants in approaching administrators about institutional support and in explaining NCTE's support for editors. The applicant appointed by the CCCC Executive Committee in November 2008 will effect a transition in 2009, preparing for his or her first issue in February 2010. The appointment term is five years. Applications or requests for information should be addressed to Kurt Austin, CCC Editor Search Committee, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; (217) 328-3870, extension 3619; kaustin@ncte.org.

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