

FORUM

ISSUES ABOUT PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT FACULTY

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CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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From the Editor: Contingency in Context

Amy Lynch-Binieki

I'm honored to begin my editorship of *Forum*. Much thanks to Brad Hammer and Vandana Gavaskar, two of the journal's former editors, for their guidance and confidence as I tackle this responsibility.

The first time *Forum* appeared inside of CCC, editor Roberta Kirby-Werner stated its mission was "to prompt ongoing discussion of issues concerning non-tenure-track faculty and to effect positive changes in our working conditions, salary and benefits, and overall integration in the professional life of the academy" (A1). Seventeen years later, this issue of *Forum* is published during an exciting time for contingent faculty and their allies, one in which the discussion of labor in higher education is getting more attention in the national media and in academic journals. Non-tenure-track faculty are now organizing in more and better ways to realize reform.

As I write this, several significant events mark progress in and attention for contingent activism. On April 15, 2015, Adjunct Action (associated with Service Employees International Union) held a day of action in support of three goals: "\$15,000 per course in total compensation," the identification of "bad actors in for-profit higher education," and making "higher education affordable and accessible for all students" ("Faculty Forward"). The Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor is planning its biennial Campus Equity Week, scheduled for fall 2015. This past March, Brianne Bolin, Joe Fruscione, and Kat Skills created PrecariCorps, a non-

Editorial Board

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About *Forum*

Forum is published twice a year by the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The incoming editor, Amy Lynch-Binieck, invites you to submit essays related to non-tenure-track faculty in college English or composition. Of particular interest are impacts on the professionalization of the field of rhetoric and composition, the creation of best practices models in diverse academic environments, and the impact of accreditation standards on contingency. Administrators of writing programs and scholars in the field are invited to write about the issues from their perspective.

Essays should address theoretical and/or disciplinary debates. They will go through the standard peer-review and revision process.

Submissions for the fall issue should be received no later than April 1; for the spring issue, the deadline is August 1. Note: Submissions will not be returned. Submit your work electronically and put the words “*Forum* article” in your subject line. Submissions should include your name, your title(s), your institution(s), home address and phone number, institutional address(es) and phone number(s), and if applicable, venue(s) where submission was published or presented previously.

For further information and to make submissions, please contact Dr. Amy Lynch-Binieck, Editor, *Forum*, at lynchbin@kutztown.edu.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified. Similarly, opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

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profit offering material support to adjuncts struggling to pay their bills. By April they had already provided funds to four such faculty and had plans for a fundraising push “to boost our funds for the summer, when adjuncts usually need money the most” (Fruscione).

Perhaps garnering the most press was the first National Adjunct Walkout Day (NAWD) on February 25, 2015, drawing national attention to adjunct issues, while bringing opportunities for solidarity to more of our colleagues both on and off the tenure track. In her essay in this issue of *Forum*, “National Adjunct Walkout Day: Now What?,” Natalie Dorfeld reviews the many ways adjuncts and their allies found to voice their concerns, from job actions to grade-ins. She further suggests that both tenure-track faculty and the general public should not ask, “Why do they teach in such conditions?” but rather, “Why haven’t we helped them sooner?”

Of course, this surge in activism has been organized in response to the continued, widespread abuse of non-tenure-track faculty, evidence that *Forum* still has much work to do in promoting discussion of the labor system in composition programs and in higher education writ large.

With that in mind, I would like to position *Forum* as a place not only of scholarship, but also of advocacy, knowing that pairing these activities is not without controversy. Rather than falsely position myself as a dispassionate observer, I assert that we can and should use our scholarship to effect change, address injustice, and offer guidance for future action.

In this way, in “Contact Zones and Contingent Faculty: An Argument for Conversion,” contributor Patricia Pytleski encourages researchers to “examine the essential roles contingent faculty hold and how they factor into the power relations within the college and department community.” Using Mary Louise Pratt’s contact zone as a frame for her own professional experience, Pytleski positions conversion to the tenure track as a useful means of meeting a department’s needs while also acknowledging the indispensable nature of contingent faculty’s work. At the same time, she allows that power dynamics can complicate any potential solution.

In “Making Visible Labor Issues in Writing Across the Curriculum: A Call for Research,” Michelle LaFrance cautions us that while WAC programs may be complicated by contingency, very little scholarship has examined the relationship between the two. She suggests “it is time to make labor concerns a central component of forthcoming statements in WAC/WID programmatic work. . . .”

My hope is that *Forum* can be a space where our colleagues—interested not only in covering social justice in higher education’s curricula, but also applying social justice principles to its labor system—can speak to the disciplinary community in ways that encourage reflection and action. I am especially interested in research, analyses, and strategies that are grounded in local contexts, given that labor conditions and the needs and aspirations of contingent faculty vary greatly with geography, institutional settings, and personal circumstances. The three articles in this issue reflect that consideration of context.

When I was an adjunct, one thing I lacked in my own context was scholarly mentorship. Without the same academic resources and departmental inclusion enjoyed by my tenure-track colleagues, and occupying a space between graduate student and professor, I had no guidance in my research and scholarly publication. I had to beg members of my old graduate school cohort to read drafts or badger my nonacademic friends to give me feedback on work far out of their expertise. With no funding to attend conferences, my ability to network with other composition scholars was limited, and I was often the sole compositionist in the English departments that employed me.

Therefore, I hope that those potential contributors to *Forum* who work in contingent positions will view the submission process as an opportunity for mentorship, if needed, knowing that the editor and the editorial board understand the contexts in which many of you compose scholarship. I do not mean to imply that the peer review process is not rigorous; rather, I intend to make that process as transparent, constructive, and productive for writers as I can.

Finally, I will follow-up on Vandana Gavaskar’s vision of *Forum Online*, a dedicated digital space in which we can feature more and longer articles, video interviews, and a podcast. Each of the authors in this issue could have written in greater

depth, but had to make concessions to space. While I am grateful for the precious print space we have, I am also keenly aware of its limitations. As the only academic journal in our field dedicated to the issues of part-time and contingent faculty—a full 75 percent of higher education’s workforce—we need more room and opportunities to research, explore, and connect in the context of our scholarly publications. I am thankful that NCTE and CCCC are supportive of this endeavor, and I hope to bring you our first online edition soon.

I welcome your feedback and your submissions at lynchbin@kutztown.edu.

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Contact Zones and Contingent Faculty: An Argument for Conversion

Patricia Davies Pytleski

Current scholarship argues for the rights and considerations of contingent faculty by discussing working conditions, conversions to tenure track, and the inclusion of benefits and salaries comparable to tenure-track faculty, yet more of these studies should examine the essential roles contingent faculty hold and how they factor into the power relations within the college and department community. As Gravois observes, “The sweeping shift toward non-tenure-track academic labor has been one of the most worried-over trends in American higher education. But it has been charted mostly with broad-brush data, which give little indication of the trend’s progress at the institutional level” (A8). This despite the fact that in 2006, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) released the Contingent Faculty Index, a compilation of data collected by the US Department of Education showing the increase of non-tenure-track positions and a decrease in tenure-track positions (AAUP).

I am currently in my eighth year in the English Department at Kutztown University, which is unionized and part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and in my final years on the tenure track. My first five years were spent working on temporary, year-to-year contracts before my appointment was converted to the tenure track. Even though my experiences have been largely

positive and greatly supported by tenure-track and tenured faculty, I want to acknowledge the difficulties faced by indispensable contingent faculty with regard to possible contact zones that can exist at the university and department level.

In "Arts of the Contact Zone," Mary Louise Pratt defined contact zones as

social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths. . . . [She] uses the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today. (34)

These contact zones might negatively affect or exclude contingent faculty with regard to office space, meeting inclusion, voting privileges, and program development.

The dependence on contingent faculty to teach a variety of introductory level courses is not new: "For more than two decades, NCTE, CCCC, MLA, and related organizations have struggled to address the status of faculty members serving in contingent positions" (Palmquist 356). Yet even with improvements in treatment, compensation, and environment, colleges still find it difficult to slow the growth of and dependence on these positions. According to the AAUP and a subcommittee of the Committee on Contingency and the Profession, this reliance on "teaching-only" contingent faculty has "had severe consequences for . . . faculty . . . , producing lower levels of campus engagement across the board and a rising service burden for the shrinking core of tenurable faculty" (AAUP 90).

Studies generally offer two solutions, either creating "long time security of employment" without the possibility of tenure, or conversion of temporary faculty to the tenure track. In the "Statement on the Status and Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty," the NCTE College Section Working Group proposes an approach that they claim recognizes the current economic realities in higher education, asking not for conversion or the invention of more employment lines, but for an "expanding [of] the current tenure system to creat[e] a structure that provides long-time security of employment for faculty who are not hired into traditional tenure lines" (Palmquist et al. 357). In order to improve the situation for temporary or contingent faculty, this NCTE group asks for a change in the relationships between contingent faculty and the universities for which they work. It argues for the inclusion of contingent faculty in "program governance" and the embrace of "the concept of greater specializations in position descriptions" to help contingent faculty "play a more active role in changing their circumstance" (357). Thus it is argued that the asymmetrical power relations of this contact zone would be seemingly more evened out for contingent faculty. Although the terms of this proposal could greatly improve circumstances, involvement, respect, professional development, and conditions for contingent faculty, they would still be relegated to a place of lesser power. They

would remain in a contact zone, referred to as a different group and separate from the tenure-track and tenured faculty, who hold most of the power within the department and university. Only possible advancement or conversion to tenure-track lines would improve the asymmetrical power relations.

However, with state and federal higher-education budget cuts, fewer faculty are hired into tenure-track lines and more and more college classes are being taught by temporary faculty; additionally, most departments receive fewer tenure-track lines yearly. At Kutztown University, regardless of available tenure-track lines, temporary faculty can be converted to the tenure track after the fifth year of employment if they are rehired yearly and meet the expectations of their department with regard to teaching, service, and scholarship. According to the most recent Agreement between The Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), "a full-time, temporary faculty member, who has worked at the university for five full consecutive academic years in the same department, shall be placed in tenure-track status if recommended by the majority of the regular department faculty in accordance with the procedure developed by the department faculty" (22).

Conversion of contingent faculty to tenure-track positions is by no means entirely positive or possible in all situations, especially in nonunionized schools, but it is one possible means of promoting and valuing contingent faculty. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* "News Analysis: Converting Adjuncts to the Tenure Track Is More Easily Discussed Than Done" (June):

Although some part-time and full-time adjuncts have managed to gain better working conditions and benefits, tenure and its protections have been elusive. While some institutions have shifted some of their contingent faculty members, nearly always full-timers, to the tenure track, that's rare. And so even as the association works to fine-tune its case for "stabilizing the faculty," its toughest task will be getting colleges to actually do what it takes to make that [the conversion of contingent faculty] happen.

My experience within the contact zone of conversion, moving contingent faculty to tenure-track faculty, demonstrates conversion working to meet the needs of the department. Hired into a yearlong, temporary contract in fall 2007, I was useful to KU's English department because of my composition/ rhetoric degree and my prior teaching experience in secondary and college classrooms. By my fifth year, I was part of many committees and co-chair of some of them, while also serving the university as a secondary education practicum teacher and student-teacher supervisor. In the past, this position has been difficult to fill at Kutztown University, as it requires both a doctoral degree and secondary teaching certification. With my unique qualifications, I have been able to meet these needs of the department, and for that reason, I believe, my employment has continued.

It should be noted that the NCTE College Section Working Group on the Status and Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty acknowledged that “faculty members in contingent positions teach a majority—in some cases, an overwhelming majority—of composition courses and a significant number of introductory courses offered in departments of English” (357). I don’t know if it’s related to my disciplinary degree focus on and interest in composition and rhetoric or not, but the majority of courses I have taught at Kutztown University are introductory and/or writing courses. Although having contingent faculty teach these courses alleviates some of the burden for tenure-track and tenured faculty, it adds pressure and burden to contingent faculty with the associated increase in grading load.

Despite my value to the department, I was still in a place of lesser power and unsure of my footing. At the end of each academic year, I was reinterviewed or “rolled over” for another one-year appointment. Yearly on the job market, I worried if I would be rehired, would need to relocate my family for a job, or would be unemployed; even though my peer observations and student evaluations were extremely positive, and I contributed greatly to the department in service and taught whatever was asked of me, each year I felt my placement within the power relations of this contact zone.

These power relations were evident in my office space and voting privileges. I have always had an office space. At first, my office was shared by many temporary faculty; then I shared space in a trailer near the department; I next shared an office with one other temporary faculty member. Now tenure-track, I work in a single-person office. While I initially felt comfortable in the trailer office, students asked me if I were still a part of the department, moving me to acknowledge my secondary role.

Always feeling welcome at meetings, I have been encouraged to vote on non-hiring issues, have been allowed to teach various classes, and have been well compensated. Also, “Under the collective agreement [of APSCUF and PASSHE] . . . [non-tenure-track faculty] are paid according to the same scale as tenure-track faculty and receive full benefits” (AAUP 93), thus I have been compensated well in salary and benefits. My years as a contingent faculty member have been a lot better than some others at many colleges, and I have been mentored by tenured faculty working hard to improve the status of contingent faculty at Kutztown University. Of course, even these good practices are beset by the challenges of the contingent system.

Power relations exist within all places of employment. The term “temporary,” when referring to higher education faculty working on year-to-year contracts, acknowledges the uncertainty of their futures as college educators. Yet, when considering the term *contingent* in relation to these same year-to-year university teaching positions, it is interesting to note that the word can mean “dependent for existence

... on something not yet certain; conditional" ("Contingent"). Although the definition suggests that these faculty are dependent on the university for their salaries and their lives (existence), there is irony within the definition. Universities are also extremely dependent on these temporary, "contingent" faculty to teach their bread-and-butter courses, ones oftentimes required of all students, like first-year composition. It is ironic to call these faculty "contingent" since the university would not be able to function without them. Even when the possibility of conversion is evident, the situation can still be difficult; the contact zone does not completely disappear, but it can be mitigated.

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National Adjunct Walkout Day: Now What?

Natalie M. Dorfeld

The long-standing plight of adjuncts is nothing new to those slogging away within the ivory tower's walls. Current data suggests that 75 percent of those teaching at

the college level are now considered part-time or contingent labor, earning an average of \$20,000–\$25,000 per year (Sanchez). To many outside of academia, however, this context was not widely known. In fact, it wasn't until the tragic death of Margaret Mary Vojtko that mainstream media sat up and took notice.

Professor Vojtko taught French for 25 years at Duquesne University, grossing just \$10,000 per year. The school ultimately decided not to renew her contract, and she subsequently passed away, impoverished and essentially homeless. The national backlash, sparking anger and outrage, left many in and outside of academia asking, "How can schools that make millions of dollars be so heartless? Why do working professionals put up with it? Why don't they fight back?" On February 25, 2015, many did just that (Mahoney).

What began as an unassuming suggestion from Leah Griesmann, a lecturer at San Jose University in California, blossomed into National Adjunct Walkout Day or #NAWD (Flaherty), a united protest over everything that comes with being a part-time professor, including dismal wages, lack of security, and the absence of benefits (Kezar and Maxey). Thanks in part to the wildfire effect of social media, adjuncts from around the country lobbied for change in their working conditions (Dunn). With power in numbers, how did National Adjunct Walkout Day pan out? Like all proposed solutions to the contingent labor issue at large, one could safely say the results were mixed, in part due to differences among state labor laws and geographical locations. But a range of activities brought much needed attention to the issues.

Walkouts

In a fervent display of solidarity, hundreds gathered to support adjuncts as they stormed the quad at Seattle University, San Francisco Art Institute, and the University of Arizona (Bullard). At Seattle University, in particular, one message was abundantly clear: unionization is on the horizon. Armed with megaphones and colorful signs saying, "All faculty need a voice," "Professors deserve a living wage #NAWD," and "Jesus wouldn't union bust," the protesters highlighted both their inadequate working conditions and the administration's legal fight against adjunct unionization "on the grounds they deserve religious exemption from labor law" (Garland).

A number of the 400+ supporters were students, thanks in no small part to a student-produced YouTube clip entitled "National Adjunct Walkout Day - Seattle University." Narrated by Josh, a concerned student, the video encouraged students to get involved because of a recent 4.8 percent tuition increase. With the average student debt rising to \$150,000 over the next four years, Josh made a case for professors who "receive the support they need to provide the best education they can." That includes educators who are organized, available for conferences, and with

office space on campus. The video's bottom line was clear—when administrations invest in their faculty, they advance their students' education ("National Adjunct Walkout Day-Seattle University").

Likewise, at the San Francisco Art Institute, over 100 supporters staged a walkout at noon. The chief organizer, Jennifer Smith Camejo, backed by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, stated she wanted "to bring attention to the current trend in higher education nationwide" ("SF Art Institute"). Grievances included the lack of adjunct participation in faculty governance, no job security from semester to semester, wages below the poverty line, and the absence of health benefits. Jessica Beard, an Art Institute adjunct instructor, put these issues in perspective, noting, "If I were to lose my very rent-controlled apartment, there's no way I could afford to live here on what I make teaching at two different schools, sometimes a full load; two courses at each school" ("SF Art Institute").

Some administrations took public notice. At the University of Arizona, where more than 300 gathered in red shirts to demand a living wage for adjuncts, Lisa O'Neill, a writing instructor at the college, said the adjunct faculty teach more than one hundred writing courses to over 2,500 students each semester. This protest was not lost on Tom Miller, vice provost of faculty affairs, who said adjunct wages, or the lack thereof, have been an issue for many years. He added:

We need to acknowledge our non-tenure-track faculty are in some areas significantly underpaid . . . It's silly at an institution like this. We're not going out of business any time soon. There's always going to be budget cuts, but we can expect that we're going to need these people, and we should be thinking long-term how we're going to support their development. (Flaherty and Mulhere)

Once more, students were involved in the movement. Cynthia Diaz, a sophomore, said she "didn't know anything about adjunct pay until a rally organizer there contacted her last week." While she appreciated her professors, she never thought once about their working conditions. Since being educated about this issue, she spoke at NAWD events at the University of Arizona and plans to organize future student support. She relayed, "We know what our teachers are going through, and we want to change that. We want them to be happy and [to get] a fair wage . . . what they deserve because they work hard for our classes" (Flaherty and Mulhere).

All three schools, while different, shared a common thread: support. Whether it be via union backing or geographic locale—mostly urban and leaning to the left politically or in states without right-to-work laws—strength came together in numbers.

Unfortunately, not all adjuncts have union or state protection from retaliation for walking out. For instance, an anonymous adjunct at Eastern Florida State College

explained, “While I am with everyone in spirit, I live in a right-to-work state. There is also no tenure here. If I stir up shit, I will not be fired. I will just not be renewed, which is a gentler way of saying, ‘You’re fired.’” Others simply could not afford to leave their classrooms. Thus, alternative activities were planned to make the general public aware of the current academic labor landscape.

Alternative Activities

In a moderate, but still effective, demonstration of solidarity, faculty members that chose not to participate in the walkouts, many because it would violate their contracts or state labor laws, did day-in-the-life reenactments or other activities in order to send a strong message to administration.

At the University of Maryland, the Women’s Studies Department used a furlough day to highlight the policies being disproportionately employed in universities internationally. They added, “After a single year’s respite following four consecutive years of zero merit raises and on-going furloughs, we are now being required to give back any possibility of cost-of-living increases or raises, while tuition is also being increased. Student learning conditions rely on reasonable working conditions for all faculty” (“Department”).

Teach-ins, in which classroom time is used to educate students about the movement, also gathered momentum. At George Mason University, participants addressed the personal struggles of contingent labor issues in academia. Basak Durgun, a female graduate student living out of her backpack, said the teach-ins were intimate and encouraging, saying:

We invest significant time, energy and money, and sacrifice quite a bit from our personal lives to be in these classrooms. Teaching at a university and doing research that will have some social justice impact is all I wanted to do since I was a freshman in college. Essentially, I am fighting to get the only thing we ever wanted: dignity. (Bullard)

In addition to teach-ins, grade-ins and information tables were set up in areas with high student traffic. Adjuncts gathered to grade papers in public spaces in order to emphasize that most do not have office space, and if they do, it is shared with a dozen other adjuncts. Information tables, such as those at Montclair State University, provided the public with information “about what it means to be an adjunct in terms of pay, benefits, working conditions, and job security” (Heyboer). Again, most students were taken aback by what they learned.

Regardless of the medium, alternative activities made the public aware of the problem. Those who feared backlash could still participate by educating the general population as to the adjunct’s plight.

In the end, there are no quick fixes to the adjunct crisis. It is a circular problem—too many willing professors and not enough full-time positions. Many come into teaching for the love of the craft, “holding out hope for a tenure-track position or at least a contract. Because it’s all they’re trained to do. Because they’re stuck. Because it is extraordinarily difficult to change professions—or even search for another job—while working 60-hour weeks and commuting two hours a day” (Haber). Because administrations know this, contingent faculty are often mistreated in an academic caste system of haves and have-nots.

The good news is that many administrations are now sitting up and taking notice. The tide is beginning to shift. Adjunct unions are forming, over thirty thus far (Mahoney). Leah Griesmann, founder of NAWD, reflected on the day:

National Adjunct Walkout Day has been a success . . . in raising awareness, providing a network for adjuncts to connect from campus to campus, getting allies (students, faculty, departments or professional organizations such as the MLA) involved, uniting adjuncts not only in the U.S., but also in Canada, generating lots of discussion about adjunctification, and garnering local and national media attention on the adjunct issue and how it impacts higher ed. (Flaherty and Mulhere)

While previously not identifying as activists, many reported feeling a kinship with fellow teachers in coming together over issues of contingency.

Margaret Mary Vojtko, regrettably, didn’t live long enough to see the new faculty majority push back and demand equitable working conditions. Nevertheless, her story sparked an outcry, both in and out of academia. In fact, “the Service Employees International Union’s adjunct-organizing campaign recently set a goal of securing adjuncts \$15,000 per course in pay and benefits” (Schmidt). Mind you, Margaret did not make that much in one year. It is an aspirational goal, indeed. But instead of asking the obvious question, “Why do they teach in such conditions?” a better question might be, “Why haven’t we helped them sooner?”

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Making Visible Labor Issues in Writing Across the Curriculum: A Call for Research

Michelle LaFrance

As a member of the scholarly community of writing program administrators, I have been well versed in the institutional and material contexts of composition and first-year writing. In the past forty years, as we've moved from a tenure-line to a mostly contingent work force, the literature in the field has engaged in materialist critiques of the "terms of our work" (Horner), theorized the managerialism of the corporate university (Bousquet; Strickland), raised awareness of the material conditions of writing programs (Schell), and discussed the impact of contingency upon pedagogy (Jaeger and Eagen). Assuming the directorship of a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program, however, opened my eyes to a world of contingent-faculty issues that I have not often heard discussed in relation to WAC program work. As adjunct-

fication continues to spread in institutions of higher education, inevitably it troubles the dynamics of WAC programs, as well. But there is almost no research that takes on the labor dynamics of these programs or that seeks to understand the relationships between the material conditions of WAC programs and the pedagogies or best practices long espoused by WAC professionals.

The statistics about contingency are increasingly compelling, nationally and locally. In their 2014 study about the working conditions of contingent faculty at George Mason University, “Indispensable, but Invisible: A Report on the Working Climate of Non-Tenure Track Faculty at George Mason University,” Allison, Lynn, and Hoverman note that “adjunct and other contingent faculty made up 71 percent of the total faculty at George Mason University.” Further, unpublished institutional data from the fall of 2012 demonstrates that up to 30 percent of faculty teaching general education courses at Mason—such as the writing-intensive (WI) courses at the center of Mason’s WAC program—have contingent status (“General Education”). Summarizing findings from the study conducted by Allison, Lynn, and Hoverman, *Inside Higher Ed* (“George Mason”) revealed:

“Significant minorities” of respondents didn’t receive course resources such as curriculum guidelines (29 percent) and sample syllabuses (19). Some 40 percent said they didn’t have access to a computer and 21 percent said they didn’t have access to copying services. Most are using their own computers (77 percent) and office space (56 percent). Most (79 percent) say they have not received training to accommodate students with unique or special needs.

It is chilling to consider what such findings mean for those teaching WI courses on our campuses.

Contingency often disenfranchises teachers from the broader contexts of pedagogical conversation, curricular planning, and student needs on a campus (Doe et al.). Contingency may simply place significant limitations on an instructor’s ability to prepare for the special contexts and understandings that are essential for teaching in WAC programs.

The literature of the WAC movement has not entirely ignored labor, of course. Most recognizably, in *WAC for the New Millennium* (2001), McLeod and Miraglia unpack the tenuous backdrop for WAC programs by noting the declining labor conditions in higher education at large—decreasing tenure lines, low salaries, the continually poor job market, and increased corporatization (2). McLeod and Miraglia do situate the continuation of WAC programs within these conditions, but then turn to purely pedagogical concerns without exploring the connections between material conditions and pedagogy. Workload issues also make some appearances in the field’s discussions, but typically take the form of concern for enrollments, release time for directors, and “recognition” for faculty involved in WAC programs.

In “Writing Intensive Courses and WAC,” Marty Townsend, for instance, notes the importance of limiting enrollments (and thus faculty workload) in WI courses, providing TAs for larger courses, and recognizing faculty’s professional development efforts. But direct statements about the labor conditions necessary for the success of WAC programs are simply too thin to be helpful in conversations about staffing courses.

In many of the field’s most high-profile documents, overt concern for contingency is simply nonexistent. The recently drafted “Statement of WAC Principles and Practices,” endorsed in 2014 by the International Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs, for instance, attends to issues of disciplinary expertise and workload expectations for the directors of WAC programs—necessary points of reference in ongoing WAC program work. But while this important document takes significant steps toward codifying the moves central to WAC program success, it completely elides information about the optimal enrollments for these courses, standards of compensation for faculty development, and the difficulties that adjunct faculty may face as they try to negotiate the curricular requirements and pedagogical agreements that are central to WAC program philosophy. There’s little wonder that this document does so; few researchers have explicitly addressed the special issues of contingency that subtend WAC programs. In a field that offers so much attention to the details of programmatic and institutional success, this gap is a significant blind spot.

It is time to make labor concerns a central component of forthcoming statements in WAC/WID programmatic work and a more central component of research in this subfield of writing studies. Our research might uncover the complexities and contexts of contingency both nationally and in specific sites. How do different institutional contexts influence faculty as they design and implement their courses? How might faculty off the tenure-track be better enabled to partake in community building, collaboration, and professional development? And how might our pedagogical ideals recognize the issues that arise via contingency? Research into these questions could teach us much about the successes and failures of WAC programs and the core pedagogies of the WAC movement. Much has been made in the field of the institutional investment, infrastructure, and planning necessary to ensure the sustainability of these often decentralized and highly localized programs. Without adequate attention to the ways local conditions are also material conditions, we run the risk of holding onto unrealizable ideals, envisioning a future that cannot come into being.

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