Many established programs in writing across the curriculum are coming to the end of their outside funding. What are the options open to leaders of such programs?

Continuing Funding, Coping with Less

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In well-conceived WAC programs, the ideal situation, obviously, is that money and other forms of support do *not*, in fact, run out. If we recognize in the WAC movement not just a goal of improved literacy—or even just a goal of improved learning through the appropriate use of writing in all fields—but also a radical challenge to many of the most debilitating features of academic life as well as a supple and powerful approach to collaborative staff development among academics, then we know that the money and support should *not* run out and that the work we have begun should not end.

But we had better recognize early on that strong traditions and forces around us are automatically engaged against the longevity of our programs. Among these is the tradition among both academic administrators and funding agencies of wanting something new roughly every twenty-four months. Whether or not this is something we inherit from our frontier history, it is surely a pervasive expectation: In staff development as in automobiles, Americans want something new every two or three years. Reinforcing this attitude, in many situations, are the career goals of those administrators who offer support for our work; a program started under a former dean doesn't offer much in the way of glamorous résumé entries for a new dean.

Because for years, on many campuses it has been the tradition to crank up some new whizbang answer to all problems every two or three years, administrators and funding agencies alike are apt to think of even the most vital WAC program as "something we've already done." Foundations as well as administrators exhibit the infuriating need to own new ideas; a representative of a major foundation once said that he would not provide money for the National Writing Project because "the National Endowment for the Humanities has already done that." The word "done," of course, contradicts our sense of the rhythms, timelines, and depth of the changes we are instigating. We need to be clear on these matters if we are to counter the notion of having "done" WAC. (There are some exceptions to this general rule of foundations funding only ideas that have never been funded before; some private foundations, such as Mellon, Lilly, Ford, and Pew, are still providing funding to start up WAC programs. The federal government is also funding new WAC programs through Title III grants.)

Another problem facing programs supported by "soft" money (grants from private or government agencies) amounts to a kind of paradox: Such agencies almost invariably see their role as providing seed money, not continuous support, yet the institutions usually seek outside funding in the first place because they cannot support grant-worthy programs from their regular sources. The outside agencies hope for a commitment from the institutions they support to absorb successful programs into their ongoing funding. The traditions already cited work against that happening, and so does the fact that, in the case of WAC programs, their energy-intensive nature leads to serious problems of burnout among key leaders.

Finally, administrators may be tempted to see staff development as something that should not *require* support; I was told quite seriously once that faculty are professionals, like doctors, lawyers, and accountants, and that, like those professionals, they should pay for their own professional development. I had to point out that sabbaticals seemed an exception to such a rule, but sabbaticals, this university vice-president thought, were "traditional"; he also did not feel, when I asked, that his own faculty were overpaid, as some of the other professionals he mentioned are.

Working for Continuous Funding

What, in such an unpromising context, can we do? Several things come to mind:

1. From the day support is granted, in whatever form, look ahead and make plans for securing its continuation. If you have not thought that far ahead during all the processes of winning support, the hours you spend celebrating the green light for your program are a good time to start.

2. Analyze your own context and the people in it, including those joining you in leading the program—and do this in writing. Set a calendar for yourself that includes stages of evaluation and reporting, for reports can be a form of educating others both on your blazing successes and on your evolving program needs. Include time in the calendar for program leaders to reflect, assess, and act on the strategies for winning permanent status and full support for the program.

3. Advertise in a decorous, genteel, academic sort of way. We were all taught not to boast, but if you neglect an opportunity to talk to key supporters about your success, you have committed a tiny betrayal of your program. Choose a manner that's comfortable but effective; you should have no trouble expressing genuine excitement and pleasure about the remarkable attitude shifts a specific colleague has undergone, as supported by direct quotes. Some of this is entertaining, but it is functional as well. For example, in Minnesota we treasure the moment when a workshop leader referred to saturation marking as "the 'Conan the Grammarian' approach" to student writing. It's fun to tell this story, *and* telling it chips away at certain Neanderthal attitudes and preconceptions. Suggest to responsible program participants that they address a memo to a key administrator, expressing their gratitude for the opportunity, noting highlights and impressions. This is known as a "win-win" move, one in which everyone comes out ahead.

4. Assess carefully what is essential to your program and what is not, and prepare well in advance to make the case for continuation of the essentials. A year or, better, two years before your program is to end, make a formal presentation to the decision makers on your bottom-line needs for support past the terminal point. Whether you are trying to persuade a foundation to change policy or an administrative group to provide line-item support from campus budgets, you need to know *their* calendar for setting budgets and policies, and you need to make a crisp, clear, and compelling case for continuation.

5. Assume that your claims on resources are only one set among many. This means that you must cultivate "change agents" and others who have influence on your campus. Drinking gallons of coffee in the right locations is one way to learn your way around campus, outside your own department. Consider (very carefully) inviting administrators to attend your program. At Moorhead State University, we were fortunate to have the participation of key people who had great credibility with the faculty; first our president and then our vice-president participated fully in five-day workshops.

6. While you're drinking all that strategic coffee, ask for advice. People love to give it, and often it's useful. Before the Minnesota Writing Project began, a colleague pointed out in casual conversation the problem of absenteeism in workshops, as in conventions, and we worked out a

scheme of prorating stipends on the basis of attendance. That policy produced between 96 and 100 percent attendance in forty-hour work-shops, with as many as fifty-seven participants; those are impressive figures for a funding agency to receive.

Semi-Ideal Strategies

Assume that you've had little or no encouragement from the sources of support for your continuing WAC program, yet you are fully convinced of its value and of the continued interest and need of your colleagues. What then? There are ways to "advance to the rear" without actually retreating.

First, there is the goal of seeing writing incorporated in many class-rooms across the campus in appropriate and productive forms. Susan McLeod addresses this issue in Chapter One. Any strategy that can produce support for this goal is worth pursuing.

Second, you may have to consider cutting back past the bare bones, the essential core of the program. Having established a precedent of treating faculty like professionals and paying them at least modest stipends for their time, I'm unwilling to revert to volunteer sessions, but a case *can* be made for them. WAC leaders who have established strong credibility with both administrators and colleagues might propose a kind of seminar on classroom uses of writing for interested faculty and arrange for that seminar to be treated as part of the leader's course load. At St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, such seminars, as led by Phil Keith, have had the advantage (compared to summer workshops) of dealing with problems as they come up during the school year. The investment is modest, but the case for such a course assignment still must be made carefully, including evidence that many faculty want to take advantage of the seminar.

Third, the process of refunding a program is likely to be daunting, and the prospects may seem remote. Approaching a new foundation purely for continuation of a program closed out by another agency has little chance of success, so some kind of redesign is advisable. On the other hand, here and there small sources of funding can be found. One ingenious director in our region makes pitches to local "animal clubs"—Moose, Elk, and so on—and picks up $300 to $500 per visit. Newspaper publishers have been approached successfully, with the angle that they have a stake in ensuring that students learn how to write well. Of course, individual efforts to raise funds must be cleared through the campus official(s) in charge of fund raising, or you may find yourself interrupting a long, careful, and major courtship for reasons you know nothing about.

As part of a long-term effort at refunding, you might keep in touch with your original sponsors. In effect, there need be no such thing as a "final" report; as long as you can report on continued activity that grows

out of the original investment, those agencies will be pleased to hear of it. Even if doors never reopen, such updates are both professional and courteous.

Much more demanding, but potentially more rewarding, would be a major redesign of what you've been doing. In Chapter Eight, Lucille McCarthy and Barbara Walvoord discuss collaborative research as a kind of second-stage design to supplement a workshop series. My own interest and institutional context are leading me to plan teacher-research seminars. These should be selective, I think, enrolling only those past participants who have been most responsive to WAC workshops, with the expectation of long-term involvement and at least modest but tangible rewards. Such seminars would involve faculty first in studying some of the literature of teacher or action research, in keeping teaching logs on specific courses they regularly teach, and in meeting together to design, implement, and evaluate the use of writing to learn in those courses. As those discussions begin to incorporate general issues of learning theory and discipline-specific teaching methods, I would expect research on new classroom teaching methods to emerge.

What is truly intimidating for the WAC director approaching redesign is not so much the process of gaining support for a different and less-inclusive program, but the kind of careful and collaborative analysis that should precede it. That analysis should take place cooperatively among the program leaders still committed to working with WAC ideas. It should involve a series of brutal writing assignments on which all agree and that address these specific questions.

- What is our core mission?
- What are our resources (in time, energy, and commitment) as a program staff?
- What support can we realistically expect?
- What level of credibility do we enjoy with current administrators?
- What are our liabilities in the preceding areas? (For example, are some staff now committed to new and different tasks?)
- What can we learn from a rigorous and skeptical review of our work to date?
- What does our own pattern of growth as the faculty most centrally involved with WAC ideas suggest about the design of a next stage?
- What are our accomplishments, and are these areas of strength on which we can build a new program?
- What are other recent initiatives in the institution (such as a new core curriculum), and can WAC activities be funded as a part of them?

None of these are quick freewrite topics, but all should be examined carefully by the core leaders before committing themselves to new program shapes.

As if the need for such analysis were not daunting enough, I also anticipate that some program staff may not welcome new directions and that some painful changes in staff may have to take place.

Finally, it may be natural to expect a second stage to start out on the same vigorous, expansive level as the initial stage at its peak. But remember that each year people drown at the beginning of the swimming season because they think they can go as far and as fast as they did at the end of the last summer. A new design will carry with it some of the same obligations to win support, some of the same likelihood of awful mistakes, some of the same difficulty securing enrollment, and so on. Still, while it is true that the workshop experiences we have provided continue to have value, for many WAC programs it is time to look ahead to new designs.

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