TWO

Getting Started

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So you want to start a writing across the curriculum program. You wonder

What are the first things to do?
What are possible models for shaping a program?
What sequence of activities should I and my colleagues plan?
Are there things we should *not* do? Pitfalls to avoid?
Where can we get resources?
What will the initial program cost?
How do we restart a WAC program after a hiatus?

This chapter addresses those questions.

FIRST: FACULTY DIALOGUE

WAC began, and still should begin, with faculty dialogue. Administrators and students should be included in certain parts of the dialogue. But the core of the enterprise is faculty dialogue.

Twenty-five years ago, one of the first WAC programs in the country began at Central College in Pella, Iowa. To occupy the void when my Chaucer seminar didn't "make," I circulated an

invitation for any interested faculty from any discipline to meet every Tuesday afternoon of the semester from four to five p.m., in an empty seminar room, to talk about writing—how it was taught and learned on our campus and how we could improve both. There was a strong perceived need: from a faculty of 65, 14 volunteers from 8 disciplines showed up. We started, as many such groups still do, with a concern that our students could not write papers that met our expectations for thought, organization, or mechanics. We progressed, as most such groups do, to a wide-ranging exploration of language and learning in the classroom. During the semester, we read together from the available literature, discussed our concerns, examined samples of our own and our students' writing, and took turns buying the Oreos. The next year, other faculty who had heard of the meetings from their colleagues asked me to organize another one. After that, we thought we needed a longer workshop for still more faculty, so we explained to the dean what we thought we were doing, and he funded a summer workshop with a stipend of $75 per person for the week and all the Oreos we could eat. Eventually, we established an executive committee, politicked an assessment program through the faculty, wrote grants, got some released time for me as director, launched a writing center, and held regular seminars with bigger, grant-funded stipends and Dutch almond pastries. That WAC program, still going strong, has always had a basic foundation: faculty dialogue and faculty ownership.

When I interviewed in 1979 for a teaching position at Loyola College in Maryland, the administrators all knew what WAC was and that they wanted it, and they specifically asked me to begin a program. But I kept my mandate from the administration very quiet. Instead, I began by inviting faculty volunteers to gather each Tuesday afternoon between four and five p.m., to share Oreos and to discuss writing—how it was taught and learned on our campus and how we could improve both. Like the Central College program, Loyola's has been extraordinarily productive and long-lived, largely, I believe, because it began and continues as a faculty dialogue (Walvoord and Dowling).

One afternoon recently, a telephone caller introduced himself as the head of the English department at a school I won't name. "My dean says we have to start writing across the curriculum," he said in

a puzzled tone. "Could you tell me what it is and how I should go about starting it?"

"Start," I told him, "with faculty dialogue." It can be done even if the initiator is an administrator and even at a large comprehensive or research university.

MODELS FOR WAC PROGRAMS

The Faculty Dialogue Model

The faculty dialogue model for starting a WAC program has these characteristics:

- Initiators move as quickly as possible to include, in a workshop setting that encourages dialogue, a range of faculty colleagues from various disciplines as well as teaching assistants, students, and others who will be affected. These people have a chance to shape and to own the program from the beginning. Initiators are careful to share power and ownership.
- The dialogue starts from needs and concerns that the faculty perceives and to which the faculty is willing to dedicate time and effort.
- Initiators, even if they have training in rhetoric or in English literature, do not view themselves as the only "experts" or as the teachers of the group but as colleagues in a mutual exchange, where everyone learns and everyone contributes.
- Changes in such areas as curriculum, schoolwide assessment, and writing centers arise from the dialogue. They usually happen after, and as a result of, the initial workshop(s).
- Administrators enter as participants in the dialogue, with their own kinds of insight. They also function as facilitators and as providers of resources for the program. They should not be seen as dictators who select WAC participants or decide the features of the program.

> The goal of faculty dialogue is to explore language and learning on your campus. Faculty dialogue becomes the wellspring for changes in teaching and in other aspects such as curriculum and assessment.

Avoid the "Training Model," "Conversion Model," and "Problem-Solution Model"

As you plan the initiation of your WAC program, you may unconsciously be working from models that will prove problematic. One mistake is to envision WAC as "training" for "untrained" faculty. The terms imply that there are certain skills or procedures that you will train faculty to implement, and then they will go out and do what they have been trained to do. Also problematic is the conversion model, which assumes that faculty in other disciplines are heathen who must be converted to the Right Way. Both these models lead to the faculty bashing that I find all too frequent among writing instructors in WAC programs—the assumption that faculty in other disciplines are all content with simply delivering boring lectures to their students, not asking them to write in meaningful ways, or not working with their writing and thinking processes. There may be some such faculty on your campus, but you're not likely to get them into your workshops anyway, and if you do, they're probably not going to change. The people who are going to accept your invitation for dialogue are the people who already have a concern about thinking and writing, who have been working hard at the task of teaching, and who have much to offer as well as much to learn from others. What they need is time to think about writing and learning; resources that will help them think productively; and0 a supportive community to help them think, plan, and change. That's what writing instructors also need. If you are a writing instructor, be ready to listen and learn from your colleagues in other disciplines as well as to share with them what you know about writing and learning.

Another reason the training or conversion models won't work is that teaching methods suggested in WAC seminars may work very differently for different teachers, as has been demonstrated by studies of teachers in various disciplines who were using methods suggested to them through WAC seminars (Langer and Applebee; Marshall; Walvoord and McCarthy). The classroom teachers themselves are going to have to observe their own students and adapt what they learn in the WAC workshops to their own situations.

The problem-solution model is also dangerous. There may be problems on your campus that the WAC group will define and try to address, but if WAC is seen only as a solution to a particular problem, then everyone expects that, if WAC is successful, the problem will be solved and WAC can end. On the contrary, WAC helps people grow. We could have WAC workshops for faculty on every campus every year until the end of the world, because teachers always can be helped by dialogue with colleagues; always need to keep up with new research and theory about writing, thinking, and learning; and always need help in observing and learning what methods will work best in their own classrooms.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES FOR BEGINNING A WAC PROGRAM

Figure 2.1 proposes a sequence of activities for initiating WAC.

The Initiator

The initiator may directly plan the first workshop, especially if he or she is a veteran faculty member with good connections on campus, if other faculty trust the initiator's planning, and if the initiator, alone, can effectively recruit faculty into the first workshop. The initiator should consult widely, be careful not to push a rigid, preconceived outcome or agenda for the workshop, and avoid the trainer or "missionary" stance. The advantages are that an initiator can often move quickly and efficiently to get the first workshop off the ground. The disadvantage is that potential allies and participants might be more committed if they had been part of the original planning.

The Initial Planning Committee

Alternately, the initiator may choose not to plan immediately the first workshop but instead to invite a temporary planning committee to launch the WAC program. The committee, then, is where dialogue begins. The initial planning committee should include faculty from various disciplines, as well as others who are affected and who can make a contribution—administrators, staff,

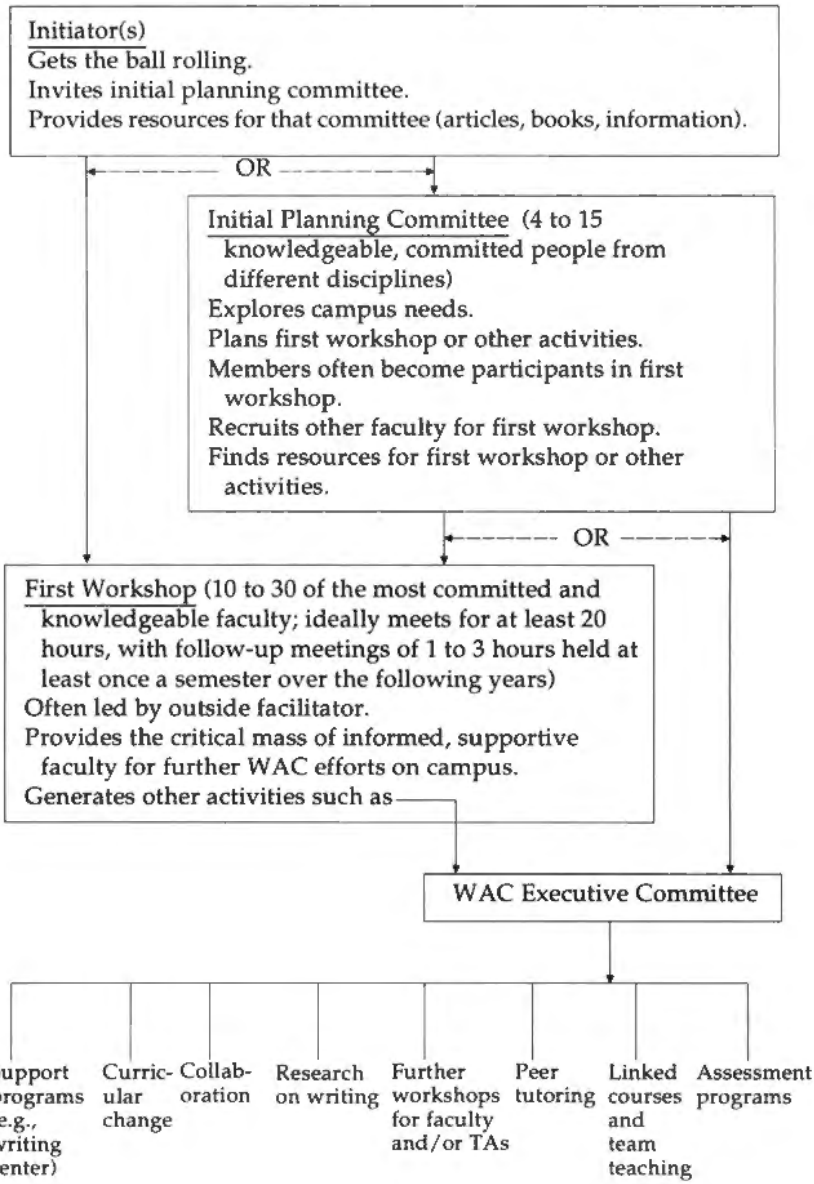

Figure 2.1. Initiating Faculty Dialogue

students, and teaching assistants (TAs). Its members should be the most knowledgeable and committed people on campus; do not use the committee appointment to try to make an ally out of a hostile or disinterested colleague. The committee may eventually evolve into a permanent executive committee, but it can begin as a temporary body, invited informally by the initiator. This committee model may be slower and more cumbersome than direct action by the initiator but has the advantage of enhancing faculty ownership and investment in the program. It's a very good option if the initial impetus for WAC comes from a person who is new to the faculty, who holds a staff or administrative position, or who might be seen by colleagues as an empire builder who needs some checks and balances.

Recruit people *in person* for the initial planning committee. Your invitation can focus on whatever issues or concerns you think are most compelling to your colleagues. You may not even mention the term *WAC* at this point, if you think it would be misleading or unfamiliar. You might invite people to a meeting to consider "students' writing and thinking" or "critical thinking" or "the place of writing in the upcoming core curriculum revision" or "problems with the freshman writing assessment program" or whatever else has been or might be the impetus for people to start reexamining writing and learning on your campus. It's fine to begin with what the campus perceives as a problem, provided the discussion broadens to the nature of language and learning, with the WAC literature as one resource among others.

You may find it more politic to work through an existing body to form the committee. I've known initial planning committees that were spawned by the faculty senate or by committees on core programs or on the freshman experience.

If you are the person who calls the initial planning meeting, you may act as facilitator and resource person, but you should be careful not to dominate. Your stance should be that anyone present at the meeting has worthwhile ideas to contribute, not that these are learners and you are the teacher.

The nature of the committee depends on the situation. I've seen initial planning committees the members of which are already quite knowledgeable about WAC and who, within a month or two, generate a plan and begin implementation. On the other hand, I've seen initial planning committees that spend several months or a

year in dialogue among themselves, reading and discussing WAC literature, attending conferences, visiting other schools, and sharing their own and their students' writing, and finally emerging with a plan for further workshops or other curricular and programmatic activities. In this case, the committee takes on aspects of a first workshop. For example, I visited a campus where the planning committee was composed of 16 faculty from a variety of disciplines as well as an assistant to the academic vice president. The committee had been called together by two faculty members in disciplines outside English, with the blessing of the academic vice president. The group had been meeting, reading, discussing, and planning for a year. At their invitation, I led a two-day workshop just for members of the committee, helping them build on what they'd already learned. We focused both on their own teaching and also on long-range plans for the WAC program. The next year, I went back to lead a three-day workshop, which the committee had planned for an wider and different group of faculty, this time focusing only on teaching, not on program planning. After this workshop, the original planning committee decided to restructure as an elected standing committee, smaller in size, with regular rotation. Some new graduates of the first workshop were elected, so the committee got a new shot of energy. They drew up a five-year plan, including further faculty workshops, a writing center, liaison with local kindergarten to 12th-grade (K-12) schools, and a WAC director with released time.

Activities and pace of the initial planning committee, therefore, may differ according to the nature of the committee. At the early planning meetings, the initial planning committee might do any of these things:

1. Elect a chair who will convene and chair future meetings.
2. Discuss whether the committee has the members and the representation it needs. Would you like to add students? TAs? administrators? Writing center director? Other faculty?
3. Define key terms, such as *WAC*, *critical thinking*, *writing*, and *assessment*.
4. Distribute resources for reading and later discussion.
5. Plan trips for committee members to other campuses and to conferences to discover more about WAC and about what other schools are doing.

6. Identify key concerns about learning, teaching, and writing, both in your classrooms and on the campus at large.
7. Plan for each committee member to bring an assignment he or she has used, together with two student papers written in response to the assignment. Each person explains the goals of the assignment, the strengths and weaknesses of the students' writing, and how she or he might do this assignment next time. This exercise helps committee members get a sense of others' goals and teaching methods, leads to dialogue about teaching and learning, and helps pinpoint issues.
8. Plan the first workshop.
9. Identify specific faculty who might be interested in the first workshop and plan how to recruit them.

If you are the initiator who convened the committee, it may work perfectly well simply to assume that you will chair the initial planning committee. However, you may ask the committee to elect a chair, particularly in certain circumstances—if, for example, you are in the English department and you wish to communicate that WAC is not solely an English department program; you are an administrator and wish to encourage faculty ownership of the program; you are a new faculty member, an adjunct, or a staff member, and you believe the committee needs the clout it can achieve if chaired by a veteran faculty member; or if you are afraid you may be seen as an empire builder and wish to demonstrate your democratic motives. I have worked on several WAC committees at different schools where someone else was the chair. I served as a source of information and resources because I had read widely in WAC literature and because I directed a grant or administered a program that had resources. You don't need to be the official chair to play these other important roles.

The initial planning committee can be a short-lived, temporary group that launches the program. Some of its members may eventually be members of the long-term WAC executive committee, but you may want to hold the first workshop before you set the governance of WAC too firmly, because often your best people emerge from the first workshop, sometimes in ways that surprise you. Also, committee membership is one good way to begin to give the graduates of the first workshop a chance to become owners and spokespeople for the WAC program.

The First Workshop

On many campuses, the first thing the initiator or the initial planning committee plans is a workshop for 10 to 30 faculty volunteers from various disciplines. Only with caution and after considerable thought should the committee move directly to instigate programmatic or curricular changes without introductory faculty workshops. Throughout the history of the WAC movement, the interdisciplinary faculty workshop has been the basis of the WAC movement, providing the yeast of understanding and commitment that leavens the curricular and programmatic elements of the WAC program.

As with the initial planning committee, do not invite into the first workshop your most intransigent colleagues in an attempt to win them over. On every campus there are three types of faculty: some who are already sympathetic or involved, a large middle group who potentially can be enlisted, and a group who are opposed or indifferent and who probably will never change. Begin by organizing and informing the most interested group so they become articulate and knowledgeable implementers and spokespeople. Then recruit the middle group. Leave the intransigents alone and try not to get them into workshops. Otherwise, their objections, voiced in the group, will co-opt the group's time and attention, preventing the group from getting on with the business that most people present are ready for. This means, in effect, never have a workshop that faculty are *required* to attend. You can use a required faculty meeting for a 10-minute announcement or an hour-long preview of the WAC workshops, but no more.

A typical phone call I received recently illustrates one ill-advised way to plan the first workshop. "We're starting a WAC program," the faculty member said, "and the academic vice president says we can have most of the day of faculty orientation in the fall. Could you come and do a workshop from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for our entire faculty?" This proposal is studded with problems. First, faculty are, if not required, at least strongly expected to attend, so there's a captive audience. What's likely to happen is that a few faculty will be hostile, and their objections will take up the attention of the group. Second, the length of this workshop is awkward. It's too short for getting past initial misconceptions and exploring language and learning in any depth. Thus you are not likely to see

lasting classroom changes in teachers as a result of this sort of workshop. Yet you've spent a considerable sum bringing in an outside consultant. The academic vice president is likely next year to say, "We did WAC last year; now we need something else." So that's the end of the resources for WAC, and you haven't gotten any bang for your buck. It would be far better to use 5 or 10 minutes of the general faculty orientation meeting for advertising, or an hour for previewing a later workshop that would enroll 10 to 30 volunteers and that would last at least two days (three days or more would be even better). That workshop could start with the concerns of faculty who were ready to move forward; it could help those faculty make lasting classroom changes; and it could create a knowledgeable and committed group who would then yield members for an executive committee, presenters for further workshops, and supporters for other changes on campus.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

In addition to the dangerous workshop scenario I've just outlined, the following activities, if launched before or just after the first workshop, may be problematic (they may, however, be appropriate later on as the program matures):

1. Administering a facultywide questionnaire or survey about current attitudes or teaching practices.
2. Writing or adopting a booklet for your campus that sets standards for mechanics in student papers or that offers advice for grading and writing comments on student papers in various disciplines.
3. Instituting a writing test for students that will be required for graduation.

The questionnaire that asks faculty about their current practices can be very threatening to faculty, intimating that the WAC program is going to nail them as shirkers and/or ask them to do more work. Faculty tend to fear that such a survey, despite your assurances of anonymity, may affect their standing with administrators; their reputation among other faculty; or even their tenure, promotions, and salary. Furthermore, the survey implies a problem-solution model of WAC. The intimation is that if the survey

results show the faculty to be incompetent, workshops will be instituted to change them. The success of the workshop will be judged by its ability to effect change in the survey results, and thus "fix" the problem.

Hanging the success of the WAC program on its ability to change results of a facultywide survey is dangerous for two reasons: first, though you certainly can get quantitative measures of the significant changes that faculty in the workshop institute as a result of the workshop, the survey cannot capture all, or even the most important, changes that take place—for example, changes in faculty attitudes toward students, changes in the tone and content of what they say to students about writing, and their renewed interest in teaching. Second, it's hard to get survey results that reflect significant changes in a faculty as a whole as a result of workshops, because the most intransigent 20% of faculty does not even enroll for a workshop. A far better way of measuring changes wrought by the workshop is to ask faculty enrolled in the workshops, on day one, to complete a questionnaire or to describe their current teaching practices. At the end of the workshop, have them complete the questionnaire again, but also have them write about how they've changed, perhaps using the early questionnaire as a reference to remind them of where they were. You are likely, then, to get specific information about significant changes that a questionnaire would have difficulty in capturing.

I would also advise against starting a WAC program by creating a booklet for the entire faculty that lays out campuswide standards or methods for grading student papers. Nor is it wise to begin by choosing a commercially published handbook that everyone will use and refer to. These initiatives are likely to give faculty and students the inaccurate impression that WAC is only a matter of grammar and punctuation, and/or that WAC asks faculty to write more comments on student papers, and/or that the chief focus of WAC is grading finished written products. Those are some major misconceptions you'll have to fight anyway, all through the WAC program; there's no sense making your job harder by starting on that tack. You may eventually decide to publish or adopt such a book, but it should be done only within the context of other activities and only by a knowledgeable, well-workshopped group of faculty that recognizes, and can communicate to other

faculty, that grammar and punctuation are only part of the broader concerns of writing and learning.

A good early project, however, might be a booklet of writings by faculty who have taken the first workshop. In the booklet, those faculty report what they learned and how they now teach, as a result of the WAC program. Successful booklets of that nature are Gestwicki, Griffin, Smith and Watson, Thaiss, and *Undercurrents*. Such reports of the workshop can also be disseminated through a newsletter to faculty. One of the most long-lived and useful newsletters distributed to a number of schools is *Crosscut*. Anyone interested in starting one could write to other schools for samples; the membership list of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs identifies schools that publish WAC newsletters.[1] Another useful booklet project that might result after one or more workshops is a booklet for students, in which the faculty of each department write to students about the importance of writing in that discipline and about how teachers in that discipline work with writing. Both Central College and Loyola College have such booklets. At Loyola, all students buy it as a text in their required freshman composition course (Bredihan and Mallonee).

The third way not to begin a WAC program is by instituting a test to make sure that no incompetent writers graduate from your school or become juniors. This test is likely to concentrate, or be perceived among faculty to concentrate, on grammar and punctuation, again giving a wrong impression of WAC. If the test does not concentrate on grammar and punctuation, some faculty may want it to. Moreover, collegewide testing of writing reinforces the notion that writing is context free and can be fairly tested by gathering students in a gym some Saturday morning and asking them to write on a topic of supposedly general knowledge for an unseen audience of teachers who gather on the following Saturday morning to decide who passed and who failed. Recent research and theory in writing has seriously questioned all these premises. For example, Frank Sullivan has investigated the complexity of raters' judgments of writers in these situations. Issues of whether the test is fair to various races, socioeconomic classes, and ethnic groups are extremely problematic. Testing all students to make sure they are competent writers before graduation may sound straightforward, but it is highly complex, questionable in many aspects, legally dangerous unless you have a well-validated test,

and it consumes many resources that might, instead, be used directly to help faculty improve classroom teaching so that every student could benefit.[2]

FINDING RESOURCES

Grants

It's a mistake to think that you can't have an effective WAC program unless you get a grant, but on the other hand, you should not overlook grant possibilities. Grants for traditional WAC programs are no longer available from national foundations that funded them in the past—foundations such as the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Some smaller, specialized, or local foundations, however, may still be possibilities; your school's grants officer can help you. Local donors are also possible; most schools won't let you approach them on your own—you should work through your development office. What happens, in my experience, is that the development office decides (or not) to give you a donor they know can be tapped. They may not give you that donor if their higher priority is to tap that donor for the current capital campaign. Thus sometimes you need the provost or president to help you persuade the development office that the WAC program should be assigned a donor. Also, help them think of donors who might not give to the capital campaign but who would give to WAC—for example, the local newspaper, publisher, or bookstore.

Another option is to shape your basic enterprise—helping teachers with language, teaching, and learning—into a grant proposal that someone will fund. Programs that address critical thinking, cultural literacy, or whatever the current buzzword comes to be, can be shaped to deal usefully with writing as part of their concern for language, teaching, and learning.

Collaboration With Other Schools

A common mistake is to think that if you can't get a grant you have to go it alone. Collaboration with other schools and organizations can provide important resources.

Piggybacking on someone else's conference is one route. A common way of initiating WAC is to send one or two faculty members to a conference. Popular conferences have been the Conference on College Composition and Communication (the key conference for college writing teachers) and the conference of the National Council of Teachers of English (which draws a more varied crowd that consists largely of K-12 teachers with some community college and college teachers). If you attend either of these two conferences, be sure to go to the session of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs mentioned earlier. There, you will have a chance to see some national WAC leaders who might be potential workshop leaders, a chance to discuss your own situation in small groups that these leaders facilitate, and a chance to join the National Network and receive its directory. The chief advantage of the conferences is the chance to see a variety of speakers. The disadvantage is that most presentations are pitched at professionals in writing. Faculty from other disciplines may find some presentations full of theory and jargon that doesn't mean much and may feel like ducks on a chicken farm.

The special-topic conference is another option. For three or four days, participants gather to hear speakers and to engage in workshop sessions on issues related to a particular topic. It is important to find out whether the conference is pitched at researchers and theorists or at practitioners. An example is the annual National Institute on Issues in Teaching and Learning at the University of Chicago. Find others advertised in current issues of *College Composition and Communication*.[3]

The most directly practical conference is the one that specifically addresses WAC. The longest-lived such conference that I know of is "Wild Acres," which has been organized by Sam Watson at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.[4] Here, faculty from UNCC and a variety of other schools attend a four-day WAC workshop at a lovely Carolina mountain retreat. Interchange among participants is much easier than at the typical Hyatt Regency where the annual professional meetings are held. It's a more interactive and focused look at WAC than you would find at a typical professional conference. The workshop is led by nationally known WAC leaders. A workshop such as this is the best introductory experience I know of for faculty members from all disciplines who are considering a WAC program.

A third option is to send one or more of your school's faculty to a workshop that some other school is giving for its own faculty. I've led a number of workshops at schools where one or two faculty from neighboring schools will have heard about the workshop through the grapevine and asked if they could attend. It helps them see what a WAC workshop looks like, it gives them a chance to see the workshop leader in action and decide if they might want to get that person for their own workshop, and it may be a prelude to useful collaboration between the WAC programs at the two schools. Call your neighbors and ask if any of them is doing a WAC workshop. Or contact schools that are listed in the directory of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs already mentioned or listed in the back of McLeod's *Strengthening Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum.*

Another option is to combine resources with nearby schools. A good example is the Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum (BACWAC). In its first few years, the consortium ran intensive workshops that enrolled faculty from a variety of local colleges, community colleges, and high schools. Each school paid $200 per participant for a 30-hour workshop. Then, using the annual $75 membership fees that each school paid, we established a structure through which member schools could hire the best of those workshop graduates as presenters for workshops on their own campuses, again at minimal cost (Walvoord and Dowling).

WHAT WILL A WAC PROGRAM COST?

The three largest expenses that a WAC program is likely to encounter are (1) released time for the director, (2) the cost of outside speakers and workshop leaders, and (3) possible stipends for workshop participants. The last two are discussed in the next chapter, on faculty workshops. The issue of released time for the WAC director deserves a further word here.

Initiators of WAC programs often work without remuneration as a service to the institution. They need to get *credit* for their effort within the university's reward system. They should, from the outset, keep accurate records of the time they spend on WAC, both for their own benefit and as a basis for the committee's later planning about how much released time will be required.

After the initial year, the ongoing executive committee probably will need to help the director get released time. Often the best way is for the committee to draw up a two-, three-, or five-year plan for WAC, detailing the resources that will be needed, including released time for the director. A good example is the five-year plan of Chesapeake College.[5] In estimating released time, early records about time spent organizing initial workshops or other activities will be valuable. If you need some idea of what schools of your type are providing in released time, contact schools like yours listed in the National Network of WAC Programs directory or in McLeod, mentioned earlier.

If, despite your best efforts, no released time is forthcoming, the program will proceed more slowly and in a more limited way. Probably the best arrangement is a large executive committee, the members of which can share the workload. It helps if the committee can be assigned a student helper, secretary, or administrative assistant who can do at least some of the work of organizing workshops, keeping records, handling correspondence, advertising WAC activities, and so on. Keep careful records of how much time committee members and assistants spend, and of initiatives that the committee would like to undertake but that would require a director with released time. Armed with these records, periodically repeat your requests for a director with released time.

RESTARTING A WAC PROGRAM AFTER A HIATUS

Increasingly, I am getting calls from people who are restarting a WAC program after what they, at least, view as a hiatus. Typically, the caller will say, "We had some workshops here about seven or eight years ago, but nothing much has been done in the last few years, and we want to get started again."

The advice about starting with faculty dialogue as well as the models discussed in this chapter all apply, but there's the additional consideration of how to integrate the earlier start into the new start. The most obvious dangers are that you will ignore people from the earlier round who could help you or that you will unintentionally offend them and/or their friends. The problem of ignoring competent former participants in workshops can be rem-

edied by making sure you inquire and publicize widely, so that you can identify all these veterans. Look for records and talk to a variety of people, so you are familiar with past history. A newly hired writing center director at one school recently called to find out whether I would meet with him to help plan a WAC effort on his campus. "Oh," I said, "I did a WAC workshop at your college about seven years ago." He was astonished—"You did?" He was not aware of the earlier effort or of the roles of its leaders, most of whom were still on campus. He needed to do some talking to people on his own campus before he came to me.

Once you have found out about earlier efforts, you must think carefully about how to manage the situation, especially if you are new. I saw this situation recently: A WAC workshop led by an outside leader had been organized about six years before, by a faculty member still on campus. This faculty member was respected for her accomplishments and intelligence but widely viewed as a difficult person to work with. There had been no effective follow-up to the initial workshop, and the program had lapsed. Now a new English department faculty member had been expressly charged at his hiring to restart WAC. He began wisely, as a new faculty member, by talking and listening. He countered his own status as new kid on the block by quickly appointing an initial planning committee. He decided not to invite the former organizer to serve on the initial planning committee, but he did invite a veteran of the earlier workshop who was well regarded on campus. Advertising for the workshop, he took care to separate this new effort from the old but also to acknowledge the contribution of the former workshop, but without naming names. The advertisement noted that the earlier workshop had laid a theoretical grounding, but the forthcoming workshop would focus on practical applications and was open to those who had or had not attended the earlier workshop. So far, so good. My mistake as the invited workshop leader was that, though I saw that phrasing in the advertisement, I did not ask who the earlier organizer had been and whether that person was still on campus. She showed up in the first workshop session, but at first I had no idea who she was. At the first opportunity, she sharply attacked my approach, making sure to work in the fact that she had initiated WAC years ago on campus. Fortunately, we were able quickly to turn the discussion into positive channels and she was able to contribute

positively to the rest of the workshop without dominating or disrupting it. Still, there were some tense moments not only for me but, to judge by the "here-we-go-again" looks on the faces of the other faculty, for them as well. Ideally, I think, it would have been good if the WAC director had alerted me to the possible presence of this former organizer, so that I could have immediately acknowledged her presence, her role in initiating WAC on that campus, and her value as a resource to the group. Then she would not have had to launch an attack to get her special status as an "expert" acknowledged. Perhaps even better, if there had been time, I might have had breakfast that morning with all the veterans of the earlier workshop to hear from them what had been done there. That would have recognized their experience and their special role, offered the former leader a chance to validate her approach, and established some trust between us. We needed, in other words, a little faculty dialogue.

So then, in summary, whether starting or restarting, whether on a large campus or a small one, with a grant or without, in the seventies or the nineties, WAC begins with faculty dialogue—a dialogue about language use in the classroom; a dialogue about thinking, reading, discussing, writing, teaching, and learning; a dialogue that we hope will continue, perhaps in different shapes and under different banners, on all of our campuses as long as there are learners in our classrooms.

NOTES

1. To obtain the membership list, send $5 to Chris Thaiss, Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

2. For help and information about assessment of students, contact the National Testing Network, City University of New York, 535 East 80th Street, New York, New York 10021; phone: 212-772-5175.

3. For the National Institute on Issues in Teaching and Learning at the University of Chicago, write to the Office of Continuing Education, 5835 South Kimbark, Judd 207, Chicago, Illinois 60637. If your library does not carry *College Composition and Communication*, write to the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

4. For further information, write Department of Religious Studies, UNCC, Charlotte, North Carolina 28223.

5. For further information, write to Gail Bounds at Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, Maryland 21679.

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