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Writing Program Administration

Writing program administration (WPA) isn't defined by one kind of structure or role/position. It covers a lot of ground. It might mean directing a first-year writing program, basic writing program, second-language writing program, writing across the curriculum program, or writing center. These are distinct *writing programs* that carry their own tasks and responsibilities. This section, then, attempts to highlight conversations around different writing programs and administrative positions. Writing program administrators (WPAs) are often responsible for several things, including developing and mentoring faculty and students, establishing objectives and outcomes for their respective programs, building curriculum, conducting assessment and placement, staffing and scheduling, collaborating with university stakeholders, working with textbook publishers, and advocating for instructors and students. It's difficult to make a list of what writing program administration encompasses because these programs and roles/positions vary across institutional contexts (e.g., private universities, public institutions, two-year colleges, four-year universities).

That said, first-year writing program administrators often operate in precarious positions between upper administration (e.g., deans, provosts) and English departments. This has its advantages and challenges. Some WPAs have little to no department or institutional authority when it comes to making curricular or assessment decisions, while others have more autonomy to create change. Some WPAs have "authority but no power" (Ostman, 2013, p. 4). WPAs are always negotiating and shifting roles. Heather Ostman talks about writing program administration in the context of two-year colleges like this:

The WPA in the two-year institution holds a unique responsibility: to administer a writing program, or a core of writing courses, that meets the literacy needs of every student who walks through the college's doors; to simultaneously engage a faculty and an administration who may or may not have the time, energy, or background to support such a program fully; and to learn from and respond to the ever-changing environment of the community college. (2013, p. 4)

Each institution has its own set of expectations for WPAs. Some WPAs are more involved in conversations on staffing and cap sizes or enrollment, for example, whereas others are commissioned to do what they can with what they have. Some roles are focused on undergraduate students, whereas others are primarily connected to graduate students. All these different material realities and conditions shape what WPAs can/cannot do. Thus, the WPA position by nature is dependent on the context, environment, needs, opportunities, challenges, and demands of the program.

Nonetheless, there are a few institutionally overlapping tasks that WPAs are expected to perform. Most first-year writing program administrators are responsible for overseeing "first-year writing" or "first-year composition" courses. First-year writing courses are often connected to colleges and universities general education curriculum (GEC), and many students take first-year composition during their first year of college. WPAs are tasked with establishing program outcomes and goals that evolve from local aims and are tied to national organization statements for best practices of teaching writing (e.g., WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition). WPAs develop curriculum and mentor instructors teaching courses. One element to this is increasing awareness to composition pedagogies and theories, or different practices and approaches to teaching writing. First-year writing classes are dynamic, innovative spaces that engage in language and learning. WPAs have to think about how to best provide professional development and training for teachers, which also means WPAs need to know trends in research and scholarship.

Alongside curriculum development and serving as a mentor for writing instructors, WPAs are often expected to assess program

outcomes and goals. WPAs coordinate program assessment which might take the form of randomly collecting student portfolios in first-year writing courses, collaborating with colleagues, conducting norming workshops centered on program standards and outcomes, and writing a report based on assessment results. This work can be used to help improve classroom teaching, or revise program policies and objectives. Program assessment helps administrators identify what is and is not working from a program perspective. And it ultimately provides insight into learning: "WPAs are usually called upon to provide data that show what and how the students and program are doing" (McLeod, 2007, p. 92). In addition to writing program assessment, WPAs are usually in charge of student placement into first-year writing classes. Of course placement takes different forms (e.g., indirect measures, direct measures) given institutional contexts and state mandates or policies. WPAs serve major leadership roles for programs and universities.

Writing program administration can be exhausting and energizing: "Administering a writing program can be equally exhilarating and tumultuous" (Costello & Babb, 2020, p. 5). For instance, being a WPA might mean producing a lot of labor with little to no recognition which can lead to burnout (Wooten, Babb, Costello, & Navickas, 2020). Conversely, being a WPA could mean having new opportunities and discovering personal and professional successes. Courtney Adams Wooten, Jacob Babb, and Brian Ray (2018) use "traveling" to describe WPA work:

> Traveling is never easy. Trips often involve sweat, tears, crying children, barking dogs and meowing cats, moving trucks, crowded airplanes, and cheap food. However, trips also open up new lives, lead to laughter and memories, and hold the promise of the unimagined and exciting. (p. 3)

The WPA role has come a long way since its beginnings due to the growth of first-year writing courses and writing-driven curriculum across colleges and universities. Susan H. McLeod (2007) reminds us of its history: "Although the work involved in writing program administration has existed for some time, it was not until the formation of the Council of Writing Program Administrators in the late 1970s that the work was dignified with a title that aligned it

with other administrative positions in the university" (p. 3). Now, writing program administration is robust in theory, research, and praxis.

<div align="center">INTERVIEWS</div>

In this chapter, I talk with Staci Perryman-Clark, Iris D. Ruiz, Melvin Beavers, Jacob Babb, and Elizabeth Wardle about recent approaches to writing program administration and different aspects of being an administrator. Perryman-Clark talks about what makes being a WPA rewarding and how programs can embrace more inclusive, equitable practices and policies. Ruiz intersects decolonial theory with WPA leadership and addresses future directions for antiracist writing program administration scholarship. Beavers describes how he mentors faculty and provides opportunities for professional development, and he talks about how he uses online writing instruction (OWI) principles in his program. Babb shares his advice to new WPAs: "You have to build trust among the people that you work with." He also discusses how WPA scholarship has influenced his administrative practices. Wardle concludes by reflecting on her work as a WPA in different institutional contexts and adds that "real change happens from the bottom up out of intellectual curiosity and interest."

Shane to Staci Perryman-Clark: What has been the most rewarding aspect for you as a WPA? [Episode 17: 01:26–05:22]

> This is going to sound cliché, but I'm going to unpack it a little bit. When we think about higher ed administration, one of the big trendy things to talk about right now is *student success*. Often they define that in terms of retention and graduation metrics. I'm going to start there . . . part of the reason for naming student success is because it directly impacts students. One of the things I loved when I was a WPA was the fact that I could take on a quasi-leadership role and it'd have more of a direct impact to students. I've been a dean, associate dean . . . but the one thing about WPA leadership is you get to work directly with students and with instructors teaching students. You get to actually design the curriculum that students will use to impact students.

When you're at a department chair and deans or associate deans level, the practices and policies you implement . . . sure they have impact on students, but it's not as direct. You're not necessarily designing pedagogy. You can't do it by yourself . . . when you're a WPA, you're doing the designing, you're doing the assessment, and yes, it requires some collaboration, but it's directed by you. You can implement specific pedagogy, specific assessment practices, and also retention initiatives.

When you can see the impact of that as far as students who would normally not come back to college coming back another semester, then eventually graduating, that's when you actually get to see the fruits of your labor. So yes, that is what student success looks like. Even though it does seem cliche, we do need to talk about our success in relation to retaining students in higher ed and graduation. Because if those things don't happen, then what are we doing? Why are we here? Why are we in higher ed? One of the things I think in terms of our discipline is that we need to be more active with the fact that higher education *needs us*. They need us for students. They need WPAs. They need first-year writing. They need writing across the curriculum programs. They need writing centers. All those things impact student success so students can be retained.

Shane to Staci Perryman-Clark: Your coedited collection *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration* includes experiences with issues of racism, institutional constraints, and challenges WPAs of color face. You talk about Blackness as a cultural epistemological framework that influences your work as an administrator. Can you talk more about this framework and how you encourage new teachers or instructors to embrace more equitable, inclusive, and accessible pedagogies and practices? [Episode 17: 11:40–18:00]

Recognize and empathize with what it feels for historically oppressed communities to have that discomfort by you feeling it yourself. This world could use some empathy, particularly right now. I recognize every instructor is not

going to have the same expertise in Afrocentric language and pedagogy that I have. But you can design very broad assignments like personal narrative, learning outcomes that are really consistent, and pick a content that revolves around historically oppressed populations.

Afrocentric is one center, but we don't have to just have one center. We can have multiple centers, right? The other thing is the materials you include. Being very, very deliberate about what you include in a custom textbook and what you don't: Having the widest range of diversity content from the widest range of historically oppressed communities, even if that makes the volume look a little more massive. It's fine. The point is that students want to see themselves included. Those are a couple of things.

This is really where we need to start learning from HBCUs. The reason why I was so deliberate about putting them in the book is because, even in our field, the HBCU narrative is that they're way more traditional and more "skill and drill" than predominantly White institutions (PWIs). That they're a little stricter with language conventions. But that is not necessarily the case. For every HBCU that you find where you have "skill and drill," you can find a PWI that has a similarly backwards pedagogy. But often that was seen as the master narrative of HBCU experience, even in essays written in our field . . .

Now, as far as institutional policies, I haven't seen any, especially at Western Michigan. Part of the reason why is because institutions aren't ready to get real yet. They will say they have things, but they won't use those things to change systems. They will post an article in their magazines, or on their new sites about some sort of new initiative that's helping people of color. They'll have a few students of color the face of something, some success stories . . . you see these kind of surface, superficial things. They say, "Look, we celebrate diversity. We honor it." I know you don't honor it and celebrate it because the system hasn't changed.

When you still have lower graduation rates for African Americans; when you have zero African American deans or provost; when you have an institution that's got 20,000 students and you've got two Black department chairs, so hardly any in leadership, then the system is not changing. I can't lie and say I'm seeing policies that are embracing Blackness as a cultural epistemological framework.

Shane to Iris D. Ruiz: Your research focuses on decolonial theory and program administration. Can you talk more about how these intersect? [Episode 27: 11:06–14:05]

When we're thinking about administration, that's already a colonial construct in terms of all of the ideas and concepts that it invokes. The practices that administration invokes is to regulate. So we have to think about how that type of regulation or approach to regulation centers on a top-down approach than on a communal approach or collaborative approach. We have to think about the ways in which that program values the various voices of the educators that they're working alongside with. What do they value? What is their program's assessment built upon? What is the verbiage or the checks used within writing programs? Course learning outcomes or program learning outcomes? What kinds of skills are they valuing of their educators? What kinds of skills are they trying to impart and put value on that they're teaching students? How do those affect and apply to the student?

For me, that's decolonial practice. It's going to ask you to think about your own power position. It's going to ask you to think about how do you empathize with your potentially marginalized faculty, or your first-generation minoritized students as well? How are you going to be able to train your faculty and give them the ability to be able to value a diversity approach if you yourself don't value that? All of those questions and reflections are very decolonial. One of the actions I would say that really resonates with decolonial practice is self-reflection. Thinking about

oneself in the world. Thinking about how others are a reflection of yourself. Thinking about the ways that you act upon the world and the way that the world then responds to you. This is a type of decolonial consciousness, I guess, state of mind.

If one does not have that experience or foresight or worldview, then they might have more of a top-down approach where we're not considering who our educators are; we're not considering who our students are; we're just considering we need to have these course-learning outcomes met and these learning outcomes met and that's all we need to worry about. That's a recipe for failure because, as we know, the demographics all over our country are changing. They're changing in a way that challenges that older structure that we could possibly call a symptom of settler, colonial structures within the university.

Shane to Iris D. Ruiz: In "Race, Silence and Writing Program Administration: A Qualitative Study of US College Writing Programs," you talk about the underrepresentation of teacher-scholars of color in writing studies and the silencing of teacher-scholars of color. What future direction can we take as teacher-scholars to amplify antiracist initiatives and aims and to intersect race and administration so that we can resist White supremacy? [Episode 27: 14:38–18:40]

I don't know if I could speak so much to scholarship as I would actually just speak to practice because . . . I really want it to be implemented and for people to be able to take action based upon our research. I was shocked, in some ways, with some of the responses that we had in our interviews. I understand that there are writing programs who are really struggling with how to implement antiracist measures in their programs. Locally, I would say for about the past two years, we've created what is called a diversity initiatives committee that is headed by a diversity initiatives chair. It's not necessarily only comprised of faculty of color because as a matter of fact, we have very few faculty

of color in our writing program. It's comprised of who's ever interested in contributing to this particular conversation about diversity, about what it means, and about the mission of the program.

It does call for a commitment to creating structures, but also the commitment to being able to be open to revising current structures. To be able to understand the necessity of committing oneself in terms of your time and your labor to the practice of restructuring or revising a current program to value diversity. Bringing the value and meaning of diversity to the center and being able to have programmatic conversations about what does that mean to every individual. Why are some definitions proliferating more so than others? In which way is the department or program lacking in their understanding of diversity? So once you start getting those conversations taking place, then you start opening the doors for looking at deficiencies, possible deficiencies, or just possible places to grow within your program that are maybe your weak link right now as far as diversity awareness.

In our article, we mentioned that diversity is one of those standalone metatypical words that tries to bring up issues of race. But it doesn't necessarily go far enough. Some people are not ready to talk about *race*. They're not ready to talk about *antiracism* right off the bat. We get into those conversations in discussing *diversity*. Then, we can talk a little bit more about what race means and how we're valuing the race of our students, our own racial histories within the United States, our complicities and acts of bias. It kind of opens up the door to be able to talk about these things.

Then, it branches off into various areas. We branched off into bringing in a new mission statement for our writing program that values the students' diversity. Then we branched into discussions of course learning outcomes and how we could also revise those to reflect more of a commitment to diversity. Those are just a couple of suggestions of

how you take what we studied and what we learned about some of the misgivings, or the misunderstandings about the role of race and diversity in writing programs. Take some of our findings and try to put those within practice in your own institutions.

Shane to Melvin Beavers: Your research focuses on preparing and professionalizing part-time contingent faculty, including providing pedagogical development for teaching writing online. Can you talk more about how you do this work as a WPA? [Episode 47: 06:00–08:57]

> Part of why I focused a lot of my research on part-time faculty is because I was one for so long. I was trying to marry my experience and my research interests together. They came together within part-time faculty interests, concerns, issues with OWI training, and teacher preparation. Some of the approaches that are helpful and useful really come out of my dissertation research. Part of what I like to do or like to think of as training is the idea of being in the moment. When I say that, I think of things like . . . an open door policy. If someone comes in my office and they want to talk about their course syllabus, or they want to talk about an idea for an assignment, and it could connect to OWI, it may not, but if it does, that's an opportunity for me to talk them through their idea.

> What do you want to do? What's the purpose of this? How are you going to present this information? What kind of language are you going to use to talk to your students and how is that different from how you might do something in the face-to-face setting? Or talk to them about accessibility issues, making sure that students have access to the materials or giving them materials in multiple ways, whether that's an audio recording, PDF file, or a recording of instructions, in addition to giving them a hard copy that they can read. Just being able to give somebody information or help them think through something. That's one way of approaching it.

Another way is providing all kinds of resources . . . you've got your OWI community. That information is readily accessible and I try to make sure that folks know about what's going on with the OWI community. If they want to participate in a workshop, or if they want to have access to a new book that's out, I make sure that they have those materials. If they have questions about it, then we can have a conversation. Ultimately what I try to do is make myself available if faculty want to have those conversations or share ideas.

Shane to Melvin Beavers: Is there a core principle that stands out to you, maybe more so than others, or one you emphasize more in your program as imperative to teaching writing online effectively? [Episode 48: 08:58–12:19]

Yeah, so you have the OWI principles of effective practices. That's an exhaustive laundry list of check marks. It's like, am I engaged in my course? Have I made it accessible? Am I doing things to be personal and interact with my students? This is really interesting that you asked me this question because I actually was thinking through the idea of engagement with students and increasing your presence and your interaction with your students.

 . . . I don't really want to speak for the entire community, but I want to say that sometimes it seems that the push toward making sure that all these boxes are checked, I wonder if we're missing something in terms of just realizing that we're teaching something. I'm thinking about Marshall Gregory's article called "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacherly Ethos." Part of that is thinking through what we are teaching and how we're conveying that information. Not necessarily thinking about what we're doing as the banking concept of pouring information into brains, but really thinking about how am I developing the course? How am I making sure that my students are learning and I'm actually teaching them something?

I think sometimes we get so involved in the design and in the ideas about engagement and presence and rapport and

interaction. I think those are good. I think those are strong points to put on that checklist, but I guess I'm saying is to pay attention to those organic teacherly moments and that teacherly ethos you want to develop with your students. Remembering that our charge is to make sure that our students learn. To really coach our students through, whether it's writing or whatever the discipline may be. Sometimes I think maybe we need to take a step back and we just need to look at what we're doing inside the course . . . let's not forget that we are . . . especially in rhet/comp programs, teaching is our focus. That's one of the things I really try to emphasize with my graduate students. Think about who you are as a teacher. How do you see yourself in that role or within this online space?

Shane to Jacob Babb: Your coedited collection, *WPAs in Transition*, offers narratives and frameworks for teacher-scholars who are entering, navigating, or exiting WPA work. I was hoping we could talk about these transitions, specifically the person who is hired to be a WPA or inherits the role. Talk us through this transition and share how you would help someone navigate this new role. [Episode 50: 14:19–18:21]

> When someone is transitioning into the WPA role, it is impossible to be invisible. All of a sudden you are in a role that everyone else has seen someone else in. Everyone is looking to you a little nervous and a little anxious to see how you're going to operate. Inevitably, no matter how smoothly a transition goes, no matter how much time people have had to prepare for a transition, no single person is going to perform this role like any other person. There are always going to be differences in the way that we approach these positions. For somebody stepping into the role, a few things to bear in mind. First of all, you cannot solve every problem immediately. The best thing you can do is to sit back and listen for a little while and try to create a list of priorities. What are the demands that this job put on you and what are the kinds of things that you want to accomplish? What are the kinds of things that other people

in your department want you to accomplish? If you have interaction with other administrators, say for instance, deans, what are they looking for from you? Do your best to understand the landscape that you have stepped into. That's going to take time and patience.

One of the best pieces I've read in our scholarship . . . is by Laura J. Davies. She wrote a piece called "Grief and the New WPA." She published it in the *WPA* journal. It is a really effective examination of the emotional response of other people in a department when a new WPA steps in. It's a type of grief which is an understandable response to an absence. Those people need that time to make adjustments. In the beginning, while you are gathering your ideas of how to respond to the role, that same time that you are taking to do that is the time that others around you get to look at you and start accepting you in the role. So a bit of slowness in the beginning is really valuable for everybody involved.

Shane to Jacob Babb: You're the coeditor of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. What scholarship has influenced your practices and the ways you've developed your program at Indiana University Southeast? [Episode 50: 01:47–06:00]

There are so many different avenues of scholarship to talk about here. For instance, I think about the types of scholarship that made me interested in doing this work to begin with: *GenAdmin*, a book that was published about 10 years ago now. *GenAdmin* helped me to think about my own scholarly identity and to think about how the work I had already been doing at that time in my PhD program and prior to coming into my PhD program shaped the kind of work that I wanted to do. Ever since I have been involved in studying writing, I had been involved in some form of writing program administration, whether it was helping to run a writing center or operating as an assistant director for different writing programs. I've always found that work to be extremely engaging and knew that that was a big part of

who I wanted to be as a scholar and as a teacher. *GenAdmin* really captured the idea that WPA isn't just a job that we do. WPA is what gives shape to the work we want to do. It's what gives shape to the kinds of questions we ask in our scholarship. It gives shape to the types of communities we want to participate in.

I also think about pieces of advice I've gotten from WPAs over the years. One article in particular . . . Laura Micciche wrote about "slow agency." The idea that WPA work pushes us to feel like we have to solve problems quickly. We are always reacting. We're always responding to other things going on. But we need to think about how to slow down our work. We need to cultivate a philosophy of taking a slow approach to writing program administration. Because most of the types of problems that we wrestle with as WPAs can never be solved quickly. In fact, trying to solve problems quickly typically makes situations worse. When I was becoming a WPA here at IU Southeast, I participated in the WPA workshop that happens every year at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference. One of the people facilitating that workshop at the time was Linda Adler-Kassner. We had a meeting during this workshop to talk about the kinds of specific issues that I was trying to deal with as a new WPA, the kinds of curricular issues, whatever it was that I wanted to take on in this role.

I was brand new, not only to the role of WPA, but to the institution. I had only been here for a year and I wanted to solve everything. I wanted to do it now. One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was from Linda saying, "Be patient. You're not going to be able to do all of this at once. In fact, if you try to do all of this at once, you're probably going to burn many of the bridges that you need to try to wrestle with different issues." It's the advice that we have to pause and think what kinds of short and long-term plans do we want to make.

Shane to Jacob Babb: That's really good advice. What did you do, or how did you use that advice to come up with a plan or goal that you wanted to work on in your writing program? [Episode 50: 06:01–07:41]

> What it really involved was mapping out challenges and issues that I face at my institution. Heeding this call was valuable because it made me pause to look around and say, "Okay, what is it exactly that I think needs to be done most? Not necessarily what I, in particular, want to focus on, but what would be most beneficial to focus on?" That meant getting to know our part-time instructors. At IU Southeast, we don't have a graduate program. There are ten of us who teach writing full-time and the rest of the faculty are part-time instructors.
>
> I knew some of them reasonably okay in the beginning, but I didn't know them that well. In order to do anything else in a writing program, you have to build trust among the people that you work with. So for the next two years, it became a priority for me to get to know our part-time in-structors, to observe their classes, to meet with them from time to time, to go into their shared office space and strike up conversations with them. Just to get to know who they were, get a sense of what they thought the challenges in their classrooms were like, and to get an idea of what they wanted from me as a WPA.

Shane to Elizabeth Wardle: You directed the writing programs at the University of Central Florida and the University of Dayton. I'm interested in what you learned about writing program admin-istration from these earlier experiences and how those experiences helped you develop as a writing program administrator? [Episode 56: 01:29–06:01]

> At University of Dayton, I was just out of grad school. I had not gone there to be the writing program director. Then, halfway through my first semester, they were like, "Hey, would you like to be the writing program director next

semester?" I think most of us learned that job by just doing it. Very few of us are lucky enough to have extensive mentoring in it before we do it. In that particular job, I learned a lot of things about what it means to have authority or not have authority and how you help guide a program when you don't really have any institutional authority.

. . . I didn't hire people. I couldn't fire people. I didn't evaluate anyone. A lot of the people teaching in the program were literature faculty who really didn't have any interest in writing studies scholarship. Looking back now, I think, "Well, what actually was that job?" . . . the main lesson I learned from that is that if you can tap into people's intellectual curiosity, you can actually start working toward a really interesting and comprehensive program without any of the institutional authority. So that sort of ground up, "What are you interested in? Let's learn more about it together. What would you design out of your expertise if we were working from that together?" . . . I think that that was probably a really important lesson because even when I had more institutional authority, I still felt like that was a better way to do the work.

I think if you learn anything as a WPA, or just an administrator in general, it's that you can put things in writing and say that this is our policy about what you'll be doing in your classroom, but when people go into their classrooms, they're going to do what they want to do. Unless everybody has a collective interest and will in making a new curriculum, they're still going to be doing what they want to do. Mandating things from the top, even though it might feel satisfying, I actually think is not really how good writing program administration actually happens. I was really lucky to learn it that way at a place where I didn't have any authority, so I had to do it like that.

At UCF, I had more institutional authority, but I think that I still did it the same way. When I got there, I said, "Is anyone interested in piloting something new?" I didn't

know anyone. It was a huge school. We had thirty-three adjuncts and a bunch of them just said, "I don't know you. I have no idea what you're talking about with writing about writing, but I'm really bored. I'd like to try something new." That's actually how we moved toward a writing about writing curriculum at UCF. It was not through me coming in and saying, "Now this is what you're all going to do." The entire project really came about because people were interested. We had reading groups, we shared teaching materials. Those people tried things. Then, they told their colleagues, "This was amazing, maybe you should try it." So about two or three years in, then we started saying, "Enough people are doing this. We have good assessment on it. We're going to start moving the program toward this." But it's because we already had like a tipping point of who said that this was working.

What's the principle here? I think that real change happens from the bottom up out of intellectual curiosity and interest, not really top-down mandate. So even if you have institutional authority, that's probably not the most effective way to run a writing program.

Shane to Elizabeth Wardle: Writing program administration is tied to local contexts and the affordances and resources, or perhaps constraints attached to those places. What have been some guiding principles or what tenets have helped shape your administrative philosophy? [Episode 56: 06:02–10:23]

I'd like to go back to your comment about everything is tied to local contexts. I think that is true, but I also think as a field, sometimes we cop out on that or like, "Everything is different, so there's nothing that we can say is true across every context." But I actually think that there are real principles that could be at work across contexts. At least for me, there are things we know from the research to be true about writing and how writing works and those should inform whatever we do. I think that's true with anything, right? What's the point of expertise if we don't act from it,

right? I also think there are principles about how people do their best work: If they're acting from their own expertise and if they're able to have ownership and agency of something that they built together, then that's more effective than telling people what to do.

Regardless of the vagaries of the institutional context, I still think we can say, but some things are still just always true, right? Which is—we have research. We should see what it says. We should act from it. Otherwise, why do we have all that research? Then, there's just truths of our human nature. There's also quite a lot of stuff about leadership and change that, as a field we've not been as familiar with as we should be, that can really help us think about how to get things done. Really my principles have been act from the research and best practice, above all, but also empower people to act from their own expertise and have agency in terms of how curriculum operates so that everybody feels ownership over it.

 . . . to be able to action those two principles empowers people to act from best practice, but also to have agency in terms of ownership over the curriculum . . . those two principles, I think gets you a long way toward having a program that is functional and also intellectual and where people also have a lot of goodwill toward each other and recognize each other's expertise.

DENOUEMENT

WPAs are committed to writing instruction and are always responding to local and national trends in higher education. WPAs fulfill the role of an administrator, leader, teacher, mentor, and colleague, and are primary sources of information on teaching writing for faculty, students, and other college administrators. Their roles are multifaceted and complex, and their work is inherently connected to institutional and program systems and needs. These interviews show how WPAs use research and theory to produce action for the betterment of teachers and students. Moreover, this conversation shows the joys and challenges of writing program administration,

and the kind of dedication it takes to create sustainable systems and structures that empower teachers and students.

For additional resources on writing program administration, I recommend reading the journal *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, Susan H. McLeod's (2007) reference guide titled *Writing Program Administration*, Staci Perryman-Clark and Collin Lamont Craig's (2019) coedited collection *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration: From the Margins to the Center*, *Landmark Essays on Writing Program Administration* coedited by Kelly Ritter and Melissa Ianetta (2019), and *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* coedited by Bryna Siegel Finer and Jamie White-Farnham (2017). I also suggest reading *WPAs in Transition: Navigating Educational Leadership Positions* coedited by Courtney Adams Wooten, Jacob Babb, and Brian Ray (2018). I offer the following questions for you to consider on writing program administration, as well:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your writing program?
- What responsibilities do you want to prioritize as a writing program administrator?
- How are you shaping policies that complement your program's mission and aims?
- What resources are available to you, and how might you use those advantageously to support teachers and students?
- How are you considering the different needs of faculty and students, and in what ways are you drawing on their knowledges and skills?
- What theory and research inform your administrative philosophy and your program? What research can you do within your own program?
- What short-term and long-term goals do you have as an administrator?