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Writing Program Building in a Compromised Space: Relative Agency in a Small College in a Public University System

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Abstract: This program profile examines efforts by WPAs at York College, a senior college in the CUNY system, to adapt to externally imposed changes and develop a locally meaningful writing program. 1999 marked the end of remediation at four-year (senior) colleges in The City University of New York. The elimination of developmental writing at CUNY's senior colleges was accompanied by a university-wide mandate for WAC. Fall 2013 marked the start of a university-wide set of general education requirements that will partially eclipse existing local requirements. Between these two bookends, WPAs—drawing on a mindset of relative agency and informed by an awareness of the curricular and institutional positioning of writing—carried out local efforts to build a more effective and coherent program.

Every educational reform [is] the product of a series of complex, contradictory, compromised and contingent solutions whose permanence is never assured. … By attending to the play between the policy statements and the enacted pedagogical practices of the administrators, curricular planners, teachers, and students, one finds a place where individuals acting alone and collectively have an opportunity to express their agency, albeit in the highly restricted realm of relative freedom.(Richard E. Miller, *As If Learning Mattered*, 8)

Writing programs must adapt to externally imposed changes and seek creative solutions to internal challenges in order to remain relevant in their local contexts. Effective, enduring programs locate ways to retain core elements in times of externally imposed change, to take advantage of opportunities to strengthen their presence on campus, and to address internal weaknesses. Viewed from this perspective, a writing program is an institution always in motion, an ever-adapting structure that organizes a set of graduation requirements, develops and assesses writing curricula, offers faculty development, provides student support, and represents writing matters to the academic community of which it is a member. This program profile traces the movement of writing at York College, a senior (four-year) college in the City University of New York (CUNY) system, over a thirteen-year period from 1999-2012. We have chosen this period because it is bookended by two major CUNY-wide curricular changes: the end of remediation at CUNY's senior colleges in 1999, a mandate that also required each CUNY college to develop a WAC program; and the development of a common General Education core—"The Pathways to Degree Completion Initiative" (*Pathways*)—for the university's 19 campuses, which officially began in June 2011 and was implemented across CUNY's colleges in Fall 2013 (CUNY, "Pathways to Degree Completion"). *Pathways* requires all CUNY students to complete a 30-credit core curriculum, with an additional 12 credits to be completed at the senior colleges. The courses that fulfill the core requirements are all 3 credits, and share common learning objectives (decided upon at the University level) and thus are to be counted as being automatically

equivalent throughout the university system. In 1999, the end of remediation at CUNY triggered the development of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs across the university and helped to shape key structures for writing at York College. Now in place for more than a decade, at least some of these writing structures are certain to endure long after the *Pathways*initiative is fully implemented. Between these two university-wide changes exist many externally imposed and internally generated adjustments to writing at the college level.

How does a writing program keep its bearings as the landscape continues to shift? What are the core elements of writing at York College, and how do these elements remain meaningful over time? Taking our cue from the epigraph by Richard Miller that opens our Program Profile, we maintain that a mindset of*relative agency* can help WPAs advance their program goals when conditions permit and, conversely, limit the erosion of core program elements when external forces threaten key gains. In practice, relative agency requires a WPA attuned to the curricular and institutional positioning of the writing program within the larger college. By taking advantage of that positioning, the WPA can identify relevant allies and develop overlapping constituencies served by the curriculum and the institution. Additionally, it requires a WPA prepared to make productive use of the language the school uses to describe the purpose, place, and value of writing for learning. Enacting relative agency involves using locally meaningful terms of discourse—the keywords and concepts (examples of which will be described further in the following sections) along which an institution aligns as it imagines and describes its writing program, its writing curriculum, and its writing objectives. The WPA can draw on this shared language to help frame new proposals, to articulate reasons for adjustments to existing programs, or to blunt the impact of externally-imposed changes to existing structures. The use of the language of the institution is at least as important to the WPA as the structural position of the Writing Program in determining what the WPA is able to do. These locally relevant terms and concepts also offer the WPA attuned to existing and emerging trends and practices in the field of composition a way to bring those practices into the campus conversation. When viewed this way, local keywords create relative agency, enabling the WPA to inject new ideas while ensuring a sense of institutional, curricular, and conceptual continuity. Importantly, these local keywords are often also recognizable in the broader Composition and WAC/WID fields, offering WPAs a way to communicate their work to the larger professional community. This interplay between the trends in the field and the local context, a key factor in relative agency, is strengthened when WPAs are themselves connected to the larger professional community.

By treating what are certain to be seen as two historic changes to education at CUNY as bookends, and by articulating the ways that structures for writing at York College adapted—and continue to adapt—to a changed and changing landscape for writing, we aim to show that WPAs can retain considerable control over the specific contours of the programs they oversee. We examine the choices that WPAs have made over this thirteen-year period, the pressures that led to those choices, and the implications of those decisions for the ongoing health of the Writing Program. Our intention is not to suggest that the responses by WPAs to the specific challenges at York College were (or are) the correct ones; rather, we are advocating a particular mindset or stance toward Writing Program administration—the embrace of relative agency—and charting specific ways this mindset has helped WPAs at York College navigate a series of challenges that are not unlike those faced by WPAs at other institutions.

Structural Description

The York College writing curriculum has long been described on campus as a “spiral writing curriculum,” a local key term that reflects the ways in which writing development in the freshman

year is reinforced through a series of courses interspersed throughout the undergraduate curriculum. This spiral writing curriculum is an application of Jerome S. Bruner's spiral curriculum, a central component of his theory of learning. For Bruner, a spiral curriculum is one that"turns back on itself at higher levels," as a student revisits core ideas and practices in environments that become more challenging over time (13). York's spiral *writing*curriculum (Table 1) consists of a sequence of five writing courses: freshman composition; two writing intensive-designated courses taken in the general education core; a second composition course taken in the junior year and focused on the development of academic research and writing; and a third writing intensive-designated course taken in the major and focused on writing within a specific discipline, also a general education requirement at York. Each course in the sequence employs a combination of informal and formal writing, drafting, revision, and attention to rhetorical and stylistic conventions appropriate to the particular assignment and course. A student progressing through the curriculum revisits a set of writing process activities first introduced in freshman composition, though he or she uses those activities to undertake increasingly complex projects.

Table 1: York College's Spiral Writing Curriculum

Year	**Course**
Freshman Year	First Year Composition
Freshman/Sophomore Year	Writing Intensive Course #1
Freshman/Sophomore Year	Writing Intensive Course #2
Junior Year	Writing 301/302/303
Junior/Senior Year	Writing Intensive Course #3

The spiral writing curriculum concept at York predates the 1999 CUNY mandate. By 1997, it had emerged as a framework for understanding the relationship between a freshman composition course, newly reconceived as an introduction to college writing, and the junior-level writing course (Kirkpatrick 4). This idea of the spiral, a local manifestation of the concept WPAs recognize as a vertical writing curriculum, was well-suited to the inclusion of WAC program elements following the 1999 CUNY mandate. As the WAC program was being developed, the importance of writing beyond the first year, the value of the writing process in all courses that include writing, and the idea that majors benefit from writing in discipline-specific genres all found expression as key components of a coherent spiral writing curriculum. By fitting the relatively new pedagogical practices and curricular requirements of WAC into an existing conception of the writing curriculum, WPAs helped the community see a mandated new program in ways consistent with an existing understanding of the writing curriculum.

There is much to commend this structure. In terms of curriculum, the interspersing of composition and writing intensive courses offers students the ability to extend learning in composition courses to writing tasks in discipline-specific writing situations. The inclusion of lower-level writing intensive offerings is an intentional effort to encourage ongoing writing development between the freshman and junior years. The inclusion of informal writing in all general education courses enables students to continually revisit this tool for learning. The placement of a composition course in the junior year both reinforces writing development after the freshman and sophomore years and provides transfer students with a York-specific writing course. And the inclusion of an upper-level writing in the disciplines requirement ensures that students will write in the conventions common to their fields of study. Together, the umbrella concept of a spiral writing curriculum and the concrete course components that define the path of writing development worked together to create a space for relative agency as WPAs at York navigated a range of challenges over the 1999-2012 period. The discourse of writing at York, the set of locally relevant keywords and concepts described above, ties all the elements of the writing curriculum together and has institutionalized writing at York in such a way that, even with administrative instability and curricular change, WPAs have been able to adapt the writing courses and administrative structures to ensure a continuity of vision—and writing's presence—at the college.

Administrative Structure

The period covered by this Program Profile includes a number of significant changes to the administrative structures for writing, including the development of a WAC program. Rather than describe these changes here, we treat several key adjustments as moments of relative agency and take them up in later sections of the Profile. In this section, we outline the structure in place from the implementation of WAC in 2001 through 2008 to establish the baseline against which later changes can be understood.

Writing at York, as conceived in 1999, was held together conceptually by the spiral writing curriculum; structurally, however, writing had been divided into three relatively distinct components. Within the English Department, a course coordinator oversaw freshman composition, while a director led the Writing Center, supervised two full-time staff, and worked with Academic Affairs on issues of budget. While the writing center director had stable reassigned time to lead the center, the freshman composition coordinator lacked such stability. A faculty coordinator led the College-Wide Writing Program, an independent unit reporting to Academic Affairs and offering the junior-level Writing 301/302/303 courses. The College-Wide Writing Program coordinator's reassigned time fell just below that allowed for department chairs for work that included supervising roughly a dozen part-time faculty and overseeing approximately seventy sections of writing each year. The WAC program, another independent unit reporting to Academic Affairs, was at the time administered by four coordinators who each received one course release per term: the WAC coordinator, an English faculty member with WPA experience and a background in composition, who oversaw the entire program; a Writing in General Education coordinator who oversaw the general education component of WAC; a WID coordinator who oversaw the writing intensive components of the program; and a Writing Fellows coordinator who supervised the program's six graduate student Writing Fellows, whose role continues to be one of supporting faculty in implementing writing-enhanced and writing-intensive courses, in addition to assisting in both resource development and assessment.

Tenured or tenure-track faculty held each of these administrative positions. Officially, there were—and are—no full-time WPAs at the college. At times, owing to vacancies in roles, one person has been

a*de facto*full-time WPA, with almost complete reassignment from teaching. For much of the 1999-2012 period, faculty in English, mostly individuals with some expertise in composition and/or administration, have led freshman composition, the Writing Center, the College-Wide Writing Program, and the WAC program. The WAC program's coordinators were initially drawn from an interested pool of faculty from a range of disciplines, an approach that helped to broaden faculty support for WAC. Over time, however, the number of faculty interested in filling these roles diminished, turnover in upper administration shifted college priorities, budget constraints put pressure on administrative reassigned time, and WPAs sought to professionalize these roles. The number of WAC program administrators shrank to three as the WID coordinator and WAC coordinator responsibilities merged, and then two as the General Education coordinator role was eliminated. This contraction of the program occurred in 2007-2008, well before the *Pathways*initiative had been conceived. Our efforts to shape this contraction in ways that strengthened writing at the college are taken up below in "Professionalizing WPA Roles" and "Administrative Reform and a Unified English Department and Writing Program."

Theoretical Background

The general conception of York College's writing program may be informed by Bruner's idea of the spiral curriculum, but the pedagogies employed within the courses and the general structure of the vertical writing sequence are grounded in composition and writing-across-the-curriculum theory and practice. Like many writing programs, York's program draws heavily from Peter Elbow's (1997) distinction between low-stakes writing and high-stakes writing. In an explicit extension of Elbow's dichotomy, faculty at York located a space between low- and high-stakes writing that came to be known locally as middle-stakes writing. Middle-stakes writing, in York's context, is semi-formal writing typically completed as homework. Reading response questions, some reading logs, and out-of-class writing assignments that are not expected to be revised all fall under the category of middle-stakes writing.

The writing curriculum, especially the writing intensive component, is also informed by the evolution of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement. In particular, York's lower-level writing intensive requirement draws from the WAC movement's early emphasis on writing-to-learn, a focus conceptually grounded in both Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning" and Toby Fulwiler's articulations of the value of journals for both writing and learning. York's upper-level writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) requirement is informed by the field's recognition that the early emphasis on WAC seemed to rely heavily on a one-size-fits-all approach that did not sufficiently account for the importance of learning to write within particular disciplines. The upper-level writing intensive course at York was a component of the program's effort to speak to the newer, WID component of WAC that Susan McLeod describes as "rhetorically based" ("Writing" 342) and that Jones and Comprone explore at length in "Where Do We Go Next in Writing Across the Curriculum?"York's writing program recognizes that if undergraduates are to develop as writers within their major fields of study, it is important that they develop an awareness of the ways that members of the discipline organize information, develop and support claims, and present material in writing.

Together, the spiral curriculum idea, the division of writing activities into low, middle, and high stakes, and the distinction between the early writing-to-learn focus of WAC and learning-to-write within disciplinary contexts focus of WID have provided WPAs at York with a set of locally meaningful concepts and practices that make it possible to retain some agency as the programs adapt to internal and external challenges. They have formed the basis for dozens of productive faculty development workshops for both composition and WAC faculty over more than a decade. These

terms make it possible for composition faculty teaching freshman or junior-level writing to see their place in the larger writing curriculum and faculty outside English (or the Writing Program) to understand why their work with writing in disciplinary courses is integral to the college's curriculum. Rather than treat these categories as distinct or possibly even mutually exclusive approaches to including writing in courses, faculty development at York has emphasized the ways that low-, middle-, and high-stakes writing can work together as part of the writing process in either the lower-level or the upper-level of the curriculum, in a writing-to-learn or a learning-to-write approach to a writing intensive course. At York, we have often found it helpful to use a table or grid (Table 2) to represent the various ways one might categorize different writing activities, to locate and acknowledge the value of writing assignments faculty are already using, and to explore how an assignment sequence might work across a number of the cells in the table. These keywords and concepts are also reinforced through regular faculty development workshops, through the college's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, through the writing-intensive course review process, and through resources available on the York WAC website (http://www.york.cuny.edu/wac [http://www.york.cuny.edu/wac]).

Table 2: WAC/WID and a Variety of Writing Activities

	Low Stakes	Middle Stakes	High Stakes
Learning to Write (in a Discipline)	*Scaffolded in-class genre writing assignment*	*Document drafting* *Homework on Methods or Discussion section*	*Lit. Review* *Case Note*
Writing to Learn	*Quickwrite* *Freewrite*	*Typed Reading Response Homework*	*Analytic Paper* *Compare-Contrast*

Far from producing a rigid or ossified notion of writing and WAC pedagogy, these simplified terms have helped WPAs advocate a flexible approach to the meaning of WAC on campus. York's effort to eschew rigid boundaries and notions of what "counts" as WAC has helped make it relatively easy for faculty to find their own ways into teaching with writing, while also providing the community a language with which to talk about the work of WAC. It has also enabled the program to remain current as some in the field have encouraged a greater sensitivity to the interplay of WAC and WID. For example, Michael Carter, Miriam Ferzli, and Eric N. Wiebe, in a study that explores ways that learning occurs in WID-based lab classes, claim that "the common distinction between WAC and WID—writing to learn versus learning to write—understates the role of learning in WID" (294). Work along these lines invites faculty to consider connections between the *cognitive*components in WAC and the *rhetorical*components in WID. Writing at York has so far remained flexible enough to avoid becoming locked into one concept of WAC—or of WID. Our course certification model, in which evaluation relies on the explanation by the instructor of the pedagogies to be used and quite intense collaboration and discussion between each instructor and the course review committee, has

ensured that writing occurs in the ways that make the most sense in a particular curricular context, rather than conforming to an externally-imposed model of what WAC or WID should be. This flexibility has contributed to the conditions of relative agency that WPAs experience at York: Our initiatives and program-building can move forward because the concepts on which they are built are adaptable.

Writing Intensives—Course Integrity and Sequencing Challenges

In response to the 1999 CUNY mandate for WAC, by 2001 the college formally approved the WI elements of the WAC program described above and represented in Table 1. The spiral curriculum, with its writing courses spaced at the freshman and junior levels, was already in place. In 2001, all students needed to complete three Writing Intensive (WI) courses, two in the core and one in the upper level of the major. A phase-in period created a two-year window (2001-2003) for the faculty to identify, develop, and offer the WI courses students would need in order to complete the new graduation requirement. Soon after that window closed, however, the WAC program confronted several important challenges associated with the WI requirement. The number of graduating seniors needing WI waivers ballooned by 2004, raising questions about the number of WI offerings and advising on campus. As pressure mounted to grow the number of WI courses to accommodate the program's full implementation, the program drifted away from the WI course approval process passed by the College Senate, ultimately raising questions about the integrity of the WI courses being offered. Put simply, pressure to scale up WI courses to meet student demand and the workload involved in reviewing dozens of course proposals each term conspired to keep the WAC program from vetting proposed WI courses to ensure that they fit the guidelines established by the Senate. And as the WAC program administrators addressed these two challenges, a third challenge became clear. The majority of students were not following the spiral curriculum and completing their lower-level WIs before the senior year. WAC administrators needed to grow the number of WI courses offered, take steps to ensure the integrity of those courses, and forge connections with advising to highlight the spiral writing curriculum.

By 2007, when the WAC program began tracking the majors most in need of waivers, the WID coordinator was authorizing more than 100 waivers each year at a college that graduates about 800 students annually. Waivers were such a burden that two of York College's WID coordinators, the persons with responsibility for the WI requirement, stepped down from the position in part because they grew tired of signing waiver requests. As WPAs with WAC experience know, the challenge of WI waivers often emerges from a shortage of WI offerings, weaknesses in academic advising, or both.

One response to the problem of quantity is to scale back. If students are not completing three WI courses, perhaps academic departments are not prepared to offer enough WI courses, or the institution itself may not be prepared to reduce course caps on enough courses to create conditions suitable for mounting WI offerings. For example, at George Mason University, an institution with a longstanding and nationally recognized WAC program, the inability to offer enough small classes to allow students to complete a Senate mandate of four WI courses eventually led the Senate to reduce the requirement to "at least one course at the 300-level or above in the major" (qtd. in "A History of WAC at Mason"). While reducing the WI requirement remains a real possibility at York, particularly as General Education is revised and the WI course framework itself is amended (discussed below), in 2007-09, the period during which the WAC program took up these challenges, it was seen as a last resort.

Instead, in spring 2007 the WAC coordinator proposed a recommitment to WAC. Drawing on both existing institutional arrangements and the local terms of discourse regarding the writing curriculum,

the proposal reduced the number of WAC administrative roles, put compositionists and WPAs with an intellectual commitment to WAC in those roles, formed an interdisciplinary WI advisory committee to review WI course proposals and ensure a broad review by colleagues, and called on Academic Affairs to take a stand against waiving the WI graduation requirements. By pressing for WPAs in WAC roles, the program was positioning itself to bring a broader perspective to the administrative challenges of WI. The formation of an interdisciplinary WI advisory committee spoke to the need for broad-based faculty involvement in WAC administration, something that had initially placed a range of faculty in WPA roles. The existence of locally understood curricular and pedagogical terms—the spiral curriculum, writing-to-learn, low-, middle- and high-stakes writing etc. —meant that such a group had a language with which to discuss course proposals. For its part, Academic Affairs committed to reducing course caps for courses that passed through the WI review process, particularly General Education courses, to supporting the WAC program's efforts to develop viable WI offerings for those majors responsible for the bulk of the waiver requests, and to impressing upon department chairs and advisors the importance of the WI graduation requirement.

The turnaround in WI course integrity was swift and notable. In 2005, the WID coordinator, an art historian, exceptional WI instructor, and respected member of the faculty, had stepped down after just three semesters in the position. The principal—and unspoken—reason for her withdrawal from WAC was frustration with her inability to establish a legitimate WI course review process. Her successor, another faculty member with no background or training in WPA work, stepped down after just two semesters. By spring 2008, every WI course offered on campus had been proposed by the faculty member teaching the course and reviewed by an interdisciplinary committee of respected, experienced WI faculty. The advisory committee evaluated proposals using guidelines initially established by the Senate, detailed in the *WAC Guide for Teaching Writing Intensive Courses*and identified in brief on the WI course proposal form, both of which are available on the website (http://www.york.cuny.edu/wac/for-faculty/ [http://www.york.cuny.edu/wac/for-faculty/]). Each faculty member proposing a WI course received written feedback on his or her proposal. Proposals and syllabi deemed not to meet the Senate guidelines for a WI offering were returned with written suggestions for revision and offers of support or assistance. And the college offered more WI course sections in the process. We believe that without faculty trained in Writing Program Administration leading both the transformation of the WI process and the evaluation of the course proposals by the interdisciplinary faculty committee, these positive changes could not have succeeded. The relative agency of the WPA in this context comes from investment in the intellectual work of writing-program building, which strengthens his or her position as a change agent at a small college like York, where individuals can be more influential than they perhaps would be at a larger institution. To make changes, some background in WPA and WAC has proven crucial to being able to anticipate problems and to take steps to prevent them. The extra-departmental positioning of the WAC Program, too, has meant that an unstable Office of Academic Affairs needed to be guided as to what steps to take to address issues as they arose. Furthermore, the lack of a department-level administrator to take responsibility for the successes and failures of the program proved to be problematic for the WPAs and the programs that they administered.

The WAC Program also highlighted the challenge of WI completion. A 2007 assessment showed less than 20% of students completed two of their WI courses by the junior year. Drawing on institutional connections between a WAC program, a counseling center, and an academic advising office that all reported to the same office, the WAC coordinator met with the heads of academic advising and counseling each term to ensure that WI courses were on their advising agenda. Advisors and counselors became particularly invested in the WI issue when shown data on the number of WI waivers issued each term, and on the timing of WI completion. Advisors, departments, and individual

faculty received lists of the WI courses for the upcoming term to highlight the range of options for students. As faculty proposed more WI courses in the General Education core, and as more people became aware of the need for students to complete WI courses, timely WI completion of lower-level WIs began to turn a corner by 2009. Where only 14% of the freshmen who started in 2006 completed one WI course by the end of their first year, a full 30% of the freshmen who started in 2008 completed a WI by the end of their first year. A similar, though less dramatic, pattern of growth in completion rates was also evident for sophomores and juniors.

These WI issues are not specific to York College, and they could have been anticipated by WPAs engaged with the literature on WAC and Writing Programs. Ed White, in *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, describes the unraveling of a well-intentioned WAC initiative that found itself on precisely the slippery slope that York confronted. For White, "The'W' program is filled with traps for the unwary and usually leads to an unimagined fiasco" (161). Indeed, one need not read critics of WI requirements to anticipate York's situation. Martha Townsend, a WAC consultant and advocate of WI approaches to WAC, has written about these same challenges. But WAC administrators responsible for the WI component of the program from 2001-2006 were largely unaware of this larger context because they had no background in composition or WAC. They saw themselves more as faculty serving on a committee than as WAC program administrators. Without the larger context of the fields of composition and of WAC administration to guide them or to offer a connection between service and scholarship that would enable them to enact their relative agency, the labor of WAC program building was just hard work. As any faculty member knows, there are many places where faculty can engage in meaningful service, and most of them do not involve program administration. This situation points to another of York's challenges: the professionalization of WPA roles. We take up that challenge below.

Professionalizing WPA Roles

Like many colleges and universities, York College has struggled to define and evaluate service in ways that might offer faculty incentives to fully engage with the work of Writing Program administration or that might make it possible to disentangle service such as committee membership from the work of program administration. Absent clear guidelines for recognizing and valuing different kinds of service, or for recognizing the importance of expertise in administering different kinds of programs, faculty drawn into service or administration might be expected to prioritize scholarship and teaching, particularly when time spent on service impinges on those other areas of academic life. Over the last decade, this struggle has manifested itself as rapid turnover in writing administrators, particularly within the WAC program, as we discussed earlier. We consider York College's challenges in implementing the WI elements of its spiral writing curriculum as partly a function of the absence of a stable group of professional WPAs who could place the local terms of discourse and institutional challenges within the broader fields of composition and WAC.

After 2001, when the full spiral writing curriculum emerged, York College needed to grow the number of faculty involved in writing administration. The college needed individuals to oversee freshman writing within the English department, a person to administer the independent College-Wide Writing Program that offered the junior-level writing course, and four persons within WAC: an overall WAC coordinator, a WID coordinator to lead WI faculty and course development, a Writing Fellows coordinator to lead the fellows' faculty support on campus, and a writing in General Education coordinator. At the time, there was arguably only one faculty member with a background and intellectual interest in Writing Program administration. Seeking broad engagement in the administration of a new writing curriculum, the college brought together an interdisciplinary group of

four faculty and charged each with responsibility for administering one element of the WAC program. This model worked as an excellent starting point for the program but proved unsustainable as the program grew.

Over the last decade, no fewer than fifteen excellent, engaged faculty from Art History, English, Foreign Languages, Occupational Therapy, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology served in Writing Program or WAC administrative roles. These positions carry significant responsibilities for curriculum and faculty development, budgeting, scheduling and registration, assessment, counseling and advising, and articulation with relevant other offices and programs—precisely the range of activities outlined in the Portland Resolution identifying guidelines for the work of Writing Program Administration (495-7). While almost all the positions carried at least one course release per semester, most of the faculty in them saw little connection between their work in the program and their intellectual or scholarly commitments. These were typically seen as service assignments that carried reassigned time. The consequence for the program of this perspective, and this disconnection from training in Writing Program administration, was that these faculty were unable to envision any way to exert their own agency within the sometimes compromised space in which they worked. A lack of grounding in the field seems to have meant that they could not imagine how effective change might happen within the context in which they found themselves.

Since at least 2001, however, members of the English department, led initially by a department chair with considerable experience as a WPA, have understood the need for professional Writing Program administrators. Slowly, as members of the faculty without an intellectual commitment to WPA work have stepped aside, we have replaced them with faculty whose academic backgrounds (graduate coursework and/or work experience) and scholarly interests include WPA work. The College-Wide Writing Program has been led by a WPA since 2003. The WAC Program, while always led by a WPA in English, almost always had several members whose scholarly interests were in their disciplines (Art History, Philosophy, Occupational Therapy, etc.). As described in the previous section, in 2007 the WAC Coordinator proposed reducing the number of WAC administrators. This change had the effect of putting WPAs in charge of administering the core elements of the WAC program.

And beginning in 2007, we argued strongly, and persuasively, for lines to hire faculty with a background or interest in WPA work. Since 2001, York College has hired six composition faculty with graduate training, experience, or an interest in writing program administration. Some of these hires involved retirement replacements that were successfully positioned as composition hires needed to support the new WAC program, freshman composition, and the Writing Program. Others, however, emerged from a larger set of institutional pressures within CUNY. The college, under considerable pressure to improve pass rates in gateway courses (composition and mathematics) and to reduce the percentage of gateway courses taught by part-time faculty, needed to add full-time lines in English. In a bargain with the administration, the department added a mix of non-tenure track instructors to teach composition and tenure track faculty in composition.

Our advocacy for the professionalization of Writing Program administrative roles is informed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators' (CWPA) statement "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration" and grew out of our experiences as writing instruction at York navigated a number of challenges over the last decade. The CWPA statement borrows directly from Ernest Boyer's conception of the scholarship of service in articulating its view of writing administration as intellectual work: "To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability –traditionally associated with research activities" (qtd. in"Evaluating" 505). It is the connection between professional or intellectual interests and service that helps the WPA make a

Writing Program more than an office that oversees a set of required courses. When elements of the program are not functioning, one's ties to the profession help to inform possible ways of making adjustments. While the college itself has not yet consistently embraced a category of administration in tenure and promotion considerations, and so still struggles to recognize the scholarship of administration or to include administration as a fourth "leg" of the tenure and promotion "stool," the professionalization of WPA roles has strengthened writing at York College and the agency of the WPA. With a critical mass of composition faculty with experience in WPA, the programs involved in the project of writing development are in a stronger position to imagine the structures best suited to the context of York College, or to argue for their implementation using the hybrid discourse discussed earlier, which combines the language of the field of Writing Program Administration and that of the institution itself. Over the 2007-2011 period, for example, the offices responsible for the various elements of the writing program grew close enough for the college to take seriously a proposal to create a unified Writing Program, a matter we take up below.

General Education Requirements and Reform

The General Education curriculum at York College has been a continual force in shaping writing at the college. The end of remediation in 1999 gave rise to two required writing intensive courses in General Education. One adjustment that would have made considerable sense at the end of remediation, the addition of a second semester of freshman composition, had long been out of reach because of the college's credit-heavy core. Periodic discussions of a second course, both within English and college-wide, inevitably broke down when it came time to decide just who would lose a course in the core to make room for another composition offering. With English already offering a required composition course and a required literature course, colleagues in other departments could reasonably ask why the literature offering could not become a writing course. And faculty teaching the introduction to literature course would respond that making it a composition course would change students' relationship to the course material. Moreover, some sections of the literature course were being offered as WI. Absent a broader shake-up in the college's general education curriculum that would reduce the size of the core, a second freshman composition offering was out of reach.

That broader shake-up began in the second half of 2009, when York College embarked upon comprehensive General Education reform. While one of the goals of the reform process was to reduce the number of credits in the core curriculum, writing's presence in this proposed curriculum would actually be expanded to include the second composition course for which the English Department had been campaigning for several years. In addition, the junior-level research writing course (Writing 300) and the three-course writing-intensive (WI) requirement (including the senior WI in the major) would remain in place, albeit in a considerably different configuration. The new model featured a set of 5 interdisciplinary, inter-departmental "Keystone" courses, to be taken by students in the sophomore year, which included two courses designated writing-intensive, apparently affirming the college's commitment to using writing to support learning in lower division courses. Unlike the two lower-level WI courses which they were to replace, the Keystone courses were to be administered from outside individual academic departments. They were to be taught exclusively by full-time faculty who were prepared to negotiate the interdisciplinary survey nature of the courses, which had themes such as "The Arts of Expression" and "Human Behavior," rather than more traditional disciplinary topics of the existing lower-level WI offerings.

The writing component of the proposed General Education curriculum was as follows:

Table 3: York's Proposed New Spiral Curriculum (2009-2011)

	First Semester	Second Semester
Freshman Year	Composition I	Composition II
Sophomore Year	WI Keystone I	WI Keystone II
Junior Year	Writing 300	
Senior Year	WI Capstone Course in the major	

The proposed curriculum thus maintained, and in some ways reinforced, the spiral writing curriculum, with a potentially greater commitment from the Registrar and individual departments to having students complete the spiral in order. This move promised to address one of the persistent challenges of the WI requirement: the timing of course completion. The proposed General Education writing curriculum was an affirmation of the spiral curriculum that acknowledged WPAs'longstanding assertions that a two-course freshman writing sequence was needed at the college.

We see this proposed new writing curriculum as evidence of the central place that writing had come to inhabit on campus, as well as an example of the relative agency that WPAs hold at York. While the English Department and Writing Program had been unable to make changes to the composition curriculum—and, specifically, had been unable to introduce a second freshman composition course—during times of stasis in the General Education curriculum, WPAs were a presence in the conversations and committee work out of which York's native General Education reform proposal was born, and so could participate in shaping Gen Ed to adhere to and strengthen the long-standing idea of the spiral writing curriculum. Indeed, what was remarkable about the new writing curriculum was how much it resembled the old writing curriculum, and how much writing was included as part of the core: of the maximum Gen Ed credits available (35-42, depending on the major), 18 were writing-focused. However, the proposed curriculum still raised a number of questions about the status and implementation of WAC at York College. The very inclusion of two lower-division WI courses in the core curriculum reflected, we believe, a college-wide commitment to writing, and, further, it provided something of a testament to the effectiveness of the spiral writing curriculum in the eyes of the college's faculty. However, locating "writing" in extra-disciplinary courses, as seen in the top 3 rows of Table 3, seemed to reinforce the impression that writing is something to be dealt with outside disciplinary courses: The core curriculum contained just one course—the capstone seminar—that fit traditional definitions of WAC or WID, in that it would be conducted fully within the departmental/disciplinary structure to which the college and the university are committed. Further, under the proposed curriculum, the hard-won set of lower-division WI offerings that are currently offered by almost all departments and programs in the college would be redundant, at least from the perspective of graduation requirements, replaced by the five extra-departmental Keystone courses, of which two were to be permanently designated writing-intensive.

The relationship between the extra-disciplinary Keystone courses and the academic departments'embrace of the writing-to-learn and learning-to-write pedagogies at the WAC program's core is one site for WPAs to bring the mindset of relative agency. The process of developing the Keystone courses showed how effective the exposure of the faculty to the rhetoric of WAC and WID had been in the context of creating the courses that fulfilled the mandated WI graduation requirement. The shift from the intra-departmental WI courses to the extra-departmental Keystones forced WPAs to reimagine how the discourse of the writing curriculum that had grown over the years would have to change within the new institutional structures, and how we could make—and frame –changes that would be accepted by the college community. Would faculty accustomed to teaching with writing for so many years simply abandon the pedagogies because their courses are no longer "needed"to fulfill a WI requirement? Would the administration withdraw support for the course caps on WI offerings within discipline-based course if the Keystones met the graduation requirement? Another site involves the class size, credits, and workload implications of a two-course composition sequence. For example, as the new writing curriculum took shape over 2010-2011, the English Department chair advanced a series of arguments in favor of extending the existing four-hour composition course arrangement to the two-course sequence, and the department developed a curriculum for two four-hour courses.

The local General Education reform was, however, trumped by the City University's "Pathways to Degree Completion" (*Pathways*) mandate. *Pathways*is intended to make transfer of General Education credits easier for those students who are moving to or between CUNY colleges, particularly from community college to senior college. *Pathways* institutes a 30-credit common general education curriculum across CUNY's 19 campuses, with an additional 12 credits of required General Education courses permitted at the senior (4-year) colleges. Consistency and equivalency between courses will be measured by adherence to learning objectives decided at the university level by a Task Force made up of members drawn from faculty and administration on each campus. The Task Force's final recommendations for the curriculum were accepted by the University's Chancellor on December 12, 2011, for full implementation across the CUNY system in Fall 2013 (Goldstein, "A Message from the Chancellor").

While certain aspects of York's proposed General Education curriculum survived *Pathways*, local General Education reform has largely been overshadowed by the initiative. The most notable overshadowing, for the purposes of this Program Profile, is the loss of the interdisciplinary Keystone courses, which were in some ways the greatest innovation in the proposed core curriculum at York. Indeed, *Pathways*has posed interesting questions for writing at York, as it has no university-level interface with the CUNY WAC mandate of 1999. Writing Intensive graduation requirements remain the province of the colleges; they are overlaid on whatever changes to the General Education curriculum the colleges make to satisfy the mandated Common Core curriculum and the individual courses' learning objectives. While the Keystone courses could have been preserved, in the face of the enormous workload involved in designing and implementing the*Pathways*core curriculum, the college chose to adapt existing courses wherever possible.

The final version of the *Pathways* Common Core includes 6 credits for composition courses, which all colleges are implementing as two 3-credit first-year writing classes. However, the equivalence of contact hours and credits (i.e. 3 hours = 3 credits) that the university had been adamant about preserving, not just for composition, but for all courses (including science courses), quickly came under fire. A significant number of General Education courses across CUNY, particularly in the sciences and in composition, function under a 4-hour, 3-credit model that provides students with four contact hours for learning without disrupting the typical 3-credit model for courses. The committee appointed to vet the composition course offerings across the university supported the proposition that

more than three hours were necessary to teach composition effectively; similarly, the university's English Discipline Council, a group consisting of chairs from the English departments across CUNY, passed a resolution that the composition courses should not follow the 3-hour/3-credit model, but rather should include more contact hours with students. Notably, both committees included several WPAs among their members. In a somewhat rare case within CUNY, the local position was strengthened by the English Discipline Council's resolution and by support from faculty throughout the university who were serving on various *Pathways*committees. At York, the 4-hour/3-credit model initially articulated during the General Education reform negotiations that preceded*Pathways*has been accepted by the Office of Academic Affairs. In the case of maintaining this model for the two composition courses, WPAs at York exerted relative agency by drawing on the long-standing institutional discourse around the need for more writing instruction that already existed within the college, and the reinforcement of this discourse by powerful committees outside York. We do not underestimate the influence of the WPAs on the CUNY-wide committees in their support of the 4-hour/3-credit model, and in particular the strength that the arguments being made by York's WPAs gained from the consistency between our position on this matter and the position of the centrally-appointed Composition Subcommittee of the CUNY Common Course Review Committee.

As with any educational reform initiative, this successful exertion of relative agency within the CUNY-imposed 3-credit composition course model may not survive the next round of pressures. *Pathways*is a juggernaut, particularly in its effort to inject uniformity (in course design, in credit hours, and in learning outcomes). However, York's WPAs, bolstered by the sheer scale of opposition across the University to this aspect of the *Pathways* model for course contact hours, have been able to secure this agreement on contact hours. While it may yet fall victim to the financial pressures that York is experiencing, the 4-hour/3-credit model has so far been preserved. Indeed, it is the model that may prevail across CUNY, due to continued pressure from English Departments across the University. In this case, the "relative agency" of each of the WPAs on each campus seems to have combined to force a change in the central administration's stance on this matter.{1} [#note1] While *Pathways*has been an inexorable force shaping the curriculum at York over the last year, the spiral writing curriculum has fared well under the initiative. We attribute its relative stability to the long-standing consensus among many faculty members about the importance of writing throughout the disciplines and the need for more writing instruction throughout the curriculum—and the perception that the structure that York's WPAs had worked for many years to build was serving the entire college community well.

Writing and *Pathways*

As well as having a significant impact on the design of York's composition course(s), *Pathways*has raised other significant questions for writing at York. As we saw following the end of remediation at CUNY in 1999, the integrity of the local program becomes less relevant when faced with pressure to change from the university level. Of course, these pressures will be exerted differently on various parts of the proposed General Education curriculum. The two-semester composition sequence is common across most CUNY senior colleges, and developing the second course and maintaining the junior-level writing course has been at the center of the English Department's response to *Pathways*.

The development of York's new second composition course has been an exercise in balancing the vision of this course, first described before the *Pathways* initiative began, with the learning objectives required by *Pathways*, as well as with the consideration of what the English Department will lose as *Pathways* is implemented. The course, then, is another illustration of WPA's exertion of relative agency within the institutional constraints of*Pathways*and an English department threatened with the

loss of its core literature offering. It is currently conceived of as a composition course that uses literary and other creative works as its primary texts. It has been designed to fulfill the "Introduction to Literature" course objectives defined by *Pathways*, so that it can serve as a "major entry" course for the English major (Logue 1), as well as a composition course that satisfies the *Pathways*"Required Core." Having a course do double duty in this way is characteristic of the local implementation of *Pathways*. Perhaps not surprisingly, there is some excitement in the English Department about the potential offered by this hybrid course, as English Department faculty are mostly literature-trained, though those trained in Composition are more apprehensive. Developing and implementing this course in a way that satisfies all constituencies will be an exercise in discovering the boundaries of individual freedom within the spiral curriculum and within an awareness of the college-wide community that the course is supposed to serve. WPAs will, once again, be drawing on the discourse of writing at York as well as the scholarship of Writing Program Administration to achieve this balance. To give a concrete example, the WPAs have identified the required research paper component of both composition courses as an area where we can direct the local conversation about how to teach research at the freshman level to resources that draw from the national conversation about this topic (e.g. Howard and Jamieson's *The Citation Project*).

The *Pathways*-imposed requirement for a research paper in both the first and second semester composition courses has, in fact, been a point of contention at York, especially in light of recent research conducted by Rebecca Moore Howard and Sandra Jamieson which suggests that research papers in the first year are rarely successful because of first year students' inexperience with using outside sources effectively (Berrett; see also *The Citation Project*). However, the requirement is not negotiable, and so the local conversation has been about how to satisfy the requirement while responding to the research in the field. Again, agency for York's WPAs has resided in the interpretation of the mandate, rather than in setting curriculum entirely in response to local conditions. Meshing local knowledge of the abilities of York's student population with research in the field about first-year writing and with the CUNY requirements has proven to be a positive process among York's WPAs and faculty who teach writing: The enthusiasm for the General Education reform that began in 2009 has been parlayed into energy for the nuts-and-bolts of course development, even within the strictures of *Pathways*. The *Pathways* structure has provided enough scope within our course redesign to incorporate some real innovation.

The 12 additional credits available in the curriculum to the senior colleges, the "College Option," provide additional opportunities to shape the General Education curriculum in response to local needs. At York, students will be required to take either the junior-level research writing course or a writing-intensive course at the 200-level or above in order to satisfy their General Education requirements. The inclusion of these courses in the College Option can be seen as a victory for writing at York, though the "either/or"construction of this requirement raises questions for the future of the junior-level Writing 300 course. While the 3-WI course graduation requirement is preserved, meaning that most students will fulfill this part of the College Option as they fulfill the requirements of their majors by taking the major's capstone WI seminar, the survival of Writing 300 will depend on departments explicitly requiring the latter course as part of their major, or as a prerequisite to their major courses. Whether departments will do this work of curricular change in the midst of all the other changes required by *Pathways*remains to be seen. It is certainly one place where WPAs can work to preserve the spiral writing curriculum as departments adjust their curricula to *Pathways*.

Interestingly, too, this disjunction which York has included in its articulation of the College Option is also the only place in York's interpretation of the *Pathways*mandate where the local implementation of the 1999 CUNY WAC mandate is specifically addressed. As noted above, the university-

defined*Pathways*curriculum does not address CUNY's long-established WAC mandate directly, with two exceptions: courses that satisfy the "Flexible Common Core" must prepare students to "produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions";additionally, Math and Science courses in the "Required Common Core" must fulfill learning objectives that refer to "effective"writing in the relevant disciplines (CUNY Pathways Task Force,"Common Core Structure Final Recommendations.") These are areas where we will, once again, use the discourse that has surrounded the spiral curriculum in the past to help reinforce the role that the principles of WAC have had in developing general education courses at York.

This indirect approach to WAC is not surprising: WAC, as Barbara Walvoord writes, is "a uniquely local phenomenon" (69) across the country, with its programs and initiatives developed exclusively in response to local conditions, and is therefore often invisible from the vantage point of upper administration. While CUNY WAC is a university-wide mandate, there has been no university-wide articulation of how it should be implemented. For York, the omission of an explicit writing-intensive requirement in *Pathways*may have important consequences for the lower-division, two-course writing -intensive requirement. We see in the requirement of one WI course at the 200-level or above a recommitment by the college community to writing-intensive courses as an important component of the common core.

Rather than wait for the dust to settle on *Pathways*and its implications for WI courses and the core, WPAs at York are moving forward to strengthen other elements of the program. Coincident with the *Pathways*discussions is a significant effort to shift WI articulation from a course-based model to a faculty-based model. This alternative approach would borrow heavily from a successful faculty-based online/hybrid course certification program in which faculty with training and experience teaching in online and hybrid learning environments mentor faculty new to the practice. As applied to WI faculty certification, the approach would include robust faculty development, faculty mentoring, and support from the CUNY Writing Fellows. We hope that the shift from the course certification to the faculty certification model will make WAC pedagogy more visible on campus, and provide incentives for all faculty to participate in a conversation about using writing throughout the curriculum.

WPAs at York have exerted relative agency throughout the *Pathways* process. The college remains committed to writing and relies on the expertise of its WPAs and those invested in the teaching of writing to help shape the contours of *Pathway*sat York. The eventual look of the spiral writing curriculum remains somewhat unclear as *Pathways*gets implemented, as is to be expected in such a significant change across the City University. Still, WAC remains an important part of general education on campus, a testament to York's perception of the importance of writing. This perception, we suggest, is directly related to the alliance-building that WPAs have done on campus during the last decade.

Administrative Reform and a Unified English Department and Writing Program

In Fall 2011, the College-Wide Writing Program, which administered the junior-level research writing course, and the Writing Across the Curriculum Program moved into the English Department, having been free-standing programs since their inception. This move was, in part, a response to the English Department's hiring of four full-time faculty trained in Writing Program Administration over a four-year period. Together, these four faculty and the two faculty members doing the bulk of the WPA work formed a "critical mass" that created the possibility of a writing program built around a structure in which individuals intellectually committed to Writing Program administration could occupy and

move between positions. Indeed, the very presence of these faculty has helped to shape the evolution of York's structures for writing, particularly as the college undertook General Education reform and as *Pathways* emerged.

By moving WAC and the Writing Program into English, however, we have done exactly what Susan McLeod, in her 2008 keynote at the WAC Conference, warns against: she argues that moving WAC into *any* department, rather than keeping it independent, or as part of a Writing Center or a Teaching and Learning Center, means that WAC will suffer from a critical lack of attention, because "departments will always be concerned first with their majors, not with their responsibilities campus-wide" ("Future" para. 4). Nonetheless, at York, WAC and the Writing Program have been run by faculty members in the English Department for most of their existence as independent programs. In moving WAC and the Writing Program into English, we prioritized supporting the faculty who run these programs, in terms of their research and scholarship, their reassigned time to do this work, and their need to have it recognized in the tenure and promotion process. The support available for the WPAs within the English Department seems to be strengthening their relative agency and their potential for being change agents. While the recognition of the importance of WPA work is growing gradually, the support of the English Department Chair for writing-centered initiatives has made them more likely to succeed, and that support has made Writing Program administration more visible because the college community is being asked to "count" it in a context that is well-understood – namely, in the reappointment, tenure and promotion portfolios of the English Department faculty members who do the WPA work. Again, as Walvoord points out for WAC programs, and Richard Miller for work in higher education more generally, campus initiatives are always responses to local conditions. Our restructuring makes the most of the campus climate with respect to the status of programs and the lives of the faculty who take on the responsibility of administering them.

The integration of the Writing and WAC Programs into English at York was accompanied by, as Rebecca Moore Howard has described such things,"an institutional public relations campaign" (43). Our goal in presenting the move to the college was to show the campus community that the move made sense in terms of campus culture, where programs are located in departments, and where full-time faculty receive reassigned time to oversee these programs. One of our challenges was to not make it appear as though the English Department was engaged in a power grab. As we publicized the integration, we worked to mitigate the appearance that our restructuring formalized a system of reassigned time for the various WPA positions on campus "belonging"to the English Department, rather than belonging to programs that happened to be coordinated by faculty members in the English Department, specifically by seeking a WAC Coordinator from outside English. However, with the curricular change on campus occasioned by*Pathways*, having a faculty member trained in WAC pedagogy and practice became a greater priority for the college than ensuring an appearance of equality in the distribution of reassigned time. While the administration has encouraged us to return to the cross-disciplinary model that WAC at York used to follow, the massive workload involved in implementing the writing portions of the *Pathways* curriculum has ensured that all WPA positions are currently filled by faculty in the English Department. Even the concern over having untenured faculty in these positions has receded, though, as we discuss below, it is still an issue at the college. In this case, the relative agency of WPAs at York has been expressed by placing those with a professional investment in writing program work in positions that have the most contact with the curricular changes demanded by the CUNY initiative. *Pathways*has, in this respect, worked in favor of our philosophy of Writing Program Administration.

One further particular complicating factor influences the administrative changes that this growth makes possible: All of the newly-hired faculty now doing WPA work are untenured. While it is

exciting to have a critical mass of people with an intellectual commitment to Writing Program administration, these new faculty are vulnerable if they try to initiate change without first campaigning among senior faculty at the college, starting with the chair of the English Department. On the other hand, the explicit location of the Writing Program within the English Department means that these untenured faculty can be represented by, and have the protection of, the English Department chair. Still, the high number of untenured faculty in WPA positions is of concern to the college's administration, and remains an unresolved point of tension. The trade-off, in the York College context, is that having untenured, professionalized faculty in WPA roles will produce more success for the college as a whole than would having tenured faculty with little WAC and WPA experience. If the gamble pays off, the faculty in these roles will receive tenure at least in part on the strength of their work administering writing.

Conclusion

In concluding, we recall the epigraph, where Richard Miller describes those undertaking educational reform having "an opportunity to express their agency, albeit in the highly restricted realm of relative freedom" (8). Developing and redeveloping the programs at York College described in this Program Profile has very much been an exercise of working in a compromised space of the type that Miller describes, where the demands of various constituencies, from the individual to the institutional, must be attended to carefully, but where WPAs can express some "relative agency." We see this in the policy decisions and changes that were made deliberately over the 13 years that we describe, where the campus WPAs have made decisions that make the most of, or otherwise respond to, local conditions. Local agency remains, on the other hand, limited, as when the campus is confronted with CUNY mandates– including the mandates that form the beginning and end point of the period that we examine here. In 1999, with the stroke of a pen, CUNY's Board of Trustees eliminated an effective developmental writing sequence, substituting in its place a WAC requirement. And in 2011, CUNY radically upended a locally relevant, nuanced General Education sequence in order to more closely align curricula between CUNY's two- and four-year institutions. Still, these mandates, as we attempt to show, can lead to strong campus programs which satisfy various—though perhaps never all—local constituencies. The challenge is, of course, to maintain the integrity of our programs while negotiating the shifting landscape at York and at CUNY and while recognizing that what might work best locally sometimes challenges the prevailing wisdom of the pedagogical and administrative movements with reference to which we have built and continue to build our programs. Our effort to advocate for a unified Writing Program housed within the English Department and our rhetorical use of the concept of the spiral writing curriculum to build and support a viable WAC program stand out as the clearest examples of the importance of the local in program development. In all cases of program building and change, we articulated a vision first, then adapted the implementation of the vision in response to the availability of resources while working with the individuals who hold key positions. We hope that this profile of Writing at York College suggests useful ways to negotiate the shifts inherent in building a program at a small college within a larger university system, with all the individual- and institutional-level politics at play in that arena.

Notes

1. In September 2012, the question of credit hour and contact hour equivalency under *Pathways* gained significant media attention after the English faculty at one of the CUNY community colleges voted to reject the 3-hour/3-credit mandate in favor of preserving 4 contact hours with their students. The college's administration initially responded to the vote by threatening to cancel all composition courses and fire all part-time faculty at the college; this stance was

rapidly retracted after a massive show of support for the college's English Department from the rest of the university faculty. (Return to text. [#note1_ref])

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