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WAGERING TENURE BY SIGNING ON WITH INDEPENDENT WRITING PROGRAMS

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Subject: Job Opportunity
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From: Bill Condon
To: Writing Program Administration List

Victor Villanueva (my Department Chair) asked me to post this notice:

Imagine being a specialist in composition studies and rhetoric where your chair and your dean are also comp and rhet folks, where there's a writing-programs administrator who handles WAC and assessment and writing center concerns so that the Director of Composition doesn't have to, where there's a separate administrator, also rhet and comp, who handles cutting-edge digital equipment, with programs that include 3D animation. Imagine being a junior professor but pretty close to tenure time and knowing that a third of the department's faculty are rhet and comp folks, that there are four full professors in rhet and compn within that third. And imagine that when you go up for tenure, you're at a research university where teaching really counts, where collaborative work is valued, as is work with technology. Then imagine dissertations on The Rhetoric of Removal: The Case of the Cherokee or The Political Economy of Language, Land, and the Body or The Rhetoric of Race Representation on the Web.

Well, none of this is a fantasy. It's Washington State University.

Villanueva's ad seduces. To a composition scholar, working collaboratively and focused on technology, such an ad suggests a fantasyland worth visiting, particularly given the familiar histories unspoken within this ad—the devaluation of composition labor within traditional literature departments (e.g., Anson in this collection). The ad works because Villanueva plays on fears and desires: the fear that one's labor will not be valued because of the differences between composition and literature

scholarship and the desire to land in the midst of composition faculty who celebrate and explore the possibilities for composition research and teaching. Who wouldn't want to examine the role identity plays in rhetoric (or one's own version of fantasy dissertations)? Who wouldn't want a faculty sympathetic to one's labor, a structure of upper administration and colleagues who both understand and support collaborative labor and, perhaps more importantly, understand what composition and rhetoric scholars study? And who wouldn't hope to land where administrative labor will be valued, supported, and clearly demarcated? Why not stack the deck in favor of composition? Tenure concerns are shaped by the ways one's labor will be valued and supported with resources, by the kind of labor one will be encouraged to explore, by the other faculty members' perceptions of one's work, and by the systemic support for endeavors, particularly when one is called on to participate in administrative roles that require sophisticated awareness, analysis, and interpretation of discipline-specific scholarship.

The question, for the purposes of this collection, is why one would choose Villanueva's land over a position within an independent writing department? The unspoken aspect of Villanueva's ad, that one is still within an English department, where numbers of full professors still can outvote the numbers of senior composition faculty, remains an issue for those of us who seek the panacea Villanueva describes. The positive aspects of independent writing departments could easily be the fodder for an ad that would compete with Villanueva's. Dan Royer and Roger Gilles could describe a department comprised of teachers who value first-year writing courses. Or technical and professional faculty might be seduced by Louise Rehling's narrative of being outside the gaze and influence of the traditional English department. Aronson and Hansen might emphasize the opportunities they have to shape other institutional affiliations as a result of their independent status. However, as Hindman suggests, along with Turner and Kearns, the institutional structure isn't necessarily set up to accommodate change, and one is often engaged in time-consuming public relations and document production not typically required within an established department. Or the political and economic factors of university education may shape administration decisions despite composition theory to the contrary and regardless of the impact on students, as Anson's text reveals. In addition, "family" systems are not necessarily erased simply because structural divisions have taken place, as Agnew and Dallas's essay indicates.

But these are programs that are, for the most part, in their infancy, and perhaps the wager is greatest in such a location.

Given the positive and negative realities, which is the better gig? An independent writing program in its infancy or a English department with an increasingly strong composition and rhetoric voice? The answer depends on many factors, not the least of which is each individual's ways of making sense of the relationship between literature and composition/rhetoric. The reality is that few panaceas exist for composition faculty. As O'Neill and Schendel demonstrate, the wager also must take into account the actual system in place for addressing first-year and vertical courses, and many institutions have addressed composition concerns with a service mentality that leaves scholars in the field in precarious employment positions. Nonetheless, if a colleague or a graduate student is weighing the option of wagering tenure in the departments discussed in this collection, what kind of counsel should we give? This is a complicated location for response. What these various programs demonstrate is that the process of establishing an independent writing program/department/center is largely dependent on the location and its institutional history, and might have much to do with the ways institutions address local contexts in building the structures for change. In terms of addressing the instruction of composition, Royer and Gilles tell a vastly different story than Agnew and Dallas. Maid's and Rehling's experiences also reveal how central systemic structures are to the battle for tenure and promotion. While these programs have many similarities, the political climate of each institution affects the degree to which one should wager tenure in a particular location. For all of us, the hiring process is, to some degree, a crapshoot, but in this text, I hope to suggest some of the factors one might consider in the tenure wager within an independent writing program.

SITUATING THE WAGER WITHIN TENURE LITERATURE

No wager is ever a "sure bet" because multiple challenges are at play in each institution. In general, advice to new tenure-track hires includes the suggestion that one expect a time of adjustment, that one be sensitive to the issues and values of senior faculty, and that one anticipate a time of socialization (Schoenfield and Magnum 37–38). In high-consensus fields such as chemistry and physics, fields in which participants share "theoretical orientations," similar research methods, and "importance of various research questions to the advancement of the discipline"

(Braxton and Berger 244), faculty may have less difficulty adjusting. In low-consensus fields adjustment may be more difficult. Because of the diversity in our field, we are a low-consensus environment in which composition scholars likely face competing and perhaps disparate messages about what "matters." Gebhardt, for example, points to the "diversity of scholarly approaches"(4), and that is but one area of contention for our discipline. The high-consensus/low-consensus split is made more difficult because composition and rhetoric faculty have been housed in literature departments, where disparate values are even more marked; as Anson argues in this volume, within traditional English departments, "historical tensions between the two areas continued to grow as composition became an increasingly independent and interdisciplinary field" (158).

When we enter specific institutions, we face the additional task of local socialization. Experts suggest that tensions occur when an entering colleague has more allegiances to "cosmopolitan" issues than to "local" issues: "Those faculty more committed to their discipline than to the institution are described as cosmopolitans, whereas faculty committed to the institution are described as locals" (Tierney and Rhoads 17). In the socialization process, the focus may include an expectation that the gaze shift from disciplinary issues to local institutional issues. Such an expectation can be particularly complicated if one is in the midst of attempting to establish an independent writing department, one that reflects discipline-specific expectations that directly conflict with institutional level traditions for the teaching of writing. In addition to socialization to the local environment, sources suggest that for many, the adjustments from graduate students to faculty, with accompanying increases in teaching load, scholarship, and service make for difficult shifts. As Robert J. Menges indicates, "junior faculty feel tremendous pressure from obligations that compete for their time and energy" (20).

While these general issues affect faculty across disciplines, compositionists also are usually warned about additional concerns. Expectations for publication can be difficult, access to resources and mentoring may not be available because of the relative newness of the discipline, the tepid enthusiasm some literature faculty have for composition can be a concern, specific gender-based issues (Enos) and attitudes towards technology are frequently delineated as potential areas of conflict (Lang, Walker, and Dorwick). While strategies for and warnings about gaining tenure and promotion are the subject of publications within our field,

those conversations are repeated in the larger discussions of tenure and promotion designed for faculty who suddenly find themselves on tenure and promotion committees within their college. Those kinds of sources argue that academic traditions of tenure and promotion have created universities that are profoundly conservative and slow to change (Schoenfield and Magnum). New disciplines face particular challenges (Diamond) and need to be particularly careful about articulating clearly and fairly the tenure guidelines (Richard I. Miller). The main point for composition studies or for new departments of writing is that tenure and promotion committees outside the new discipline should be familiarized with the complications peculiar to new disciplines.

While we may want to make sure that tenure and promotion committees are aware of our concerns (whether in an independent writing department or within a literature department as compositionists), we also must examine our assumptions and perspectives on what we think tenure signifies. Tenure seems designed to accomplish two agendas—academic freedom and economic considerations. Tenure protects and encourages alternative scholarship that helps us rethink dominant ways of seeing and creates the possibility that we, scholars and citizens in the world, might live more ethically aware/appropriate lives as a result of our research. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1940 Statement of Principles argued that "the common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition." While we certainly want people to question "accepted theories" and "widely held beliefs" (Malchup 23), the game of tenure is not an "anything goes" set of principles. In the AAUP 1970 interpretation of the 1940 Statement of Principles, cautions and limitations were articulated. Teachers could not, for example, expect academic freedom to protect them "when persistently intruding material" that had no relation to their subject was a part of their courses. However, AAUP differentiates between "persistently intruding material" and controversy: "The intent of this statement is not to discourage what is 'controversial.' Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster." Nonetheless, in the current climate, tenure will not necessarily create an armor against controversy; tenure, however, at the very minimum ensures us due process (Van Alstyne), and in this economy, that may be all we can expect.

Second, tenure is founded on economic motivations. In its statement, AAUP cites academic freedom, but they also indicate that tenure gives "a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to

men and women of ability." Tenure and promotion guidelines sway in response to the changing structures of university funding and sway as a result of market needs. Several authors have marked the changes in university structure and financing that have occurred due to shifts in government funding (Soley). Any discussion of tenure must assess both the institution's strategies for funding and the individual market value of various degrees. In tenure discussions, we may be reticent to articulate job security based on market forces, but the traditions indicate that economic factors play a role in the university tradition of tenure. The troubling and complicated issue for us within the university is how much economics plays a role. One has only to look at the ways salaries are driven by market conditions to know that bottom-line decisions are affected by economic considerations. For literature and composition faculty who know that compositionists currently are more marketable, the question of market force and appropriate responses to it in the tenure and promotion process are crucial. How do departments negotiate uneven standards for tenure and promotion that reflect market-driven demands, particularly if department traditions include an uneasiness regarding the articulation of capitalist ideologies driving university decisions and particularly if that which has traditionally been seen as "women's work" (i.e., compositionist's labor) suddenly has more market value?

Finally, tenure guidelines are within the purview of the individual institution to establish and to modify as its aims and missions inevitably shift. Each institution chooses people for tenure that it believes are a good fit at a particular time in history. As the institution of the university undergoes profound changes, the decisions about tenure made prior to shifts and changes in universities create tensions about what kinds of people are best suited for its new directions. The awarding of tenure, then, reflects shifts and trends that universities take and reflects sources for income with which to maintain and develop programs. Academic freedom, in the midst of private and public funding, becomes articulated by institutions that serve multiple constituencies. Perhaps like donations to campaigns, we can worry over academic freedom when our primary contributors hold ideologies contrary or even repugnant to our own. Certainly, the game of tenure becomes more tenuous in late capitalism, where traditions of long employer/employee experiences are no longer the norm, as the rise of post-tenure suggests.

Given the current struggles for tenure within the field of composition and given the current climate for tenure and promotion more generally

within the university, one might assume that counsel would be difficult, at best. Nonetheless, if we want to counsel someone new on the market or new to the concept of an independent writing program, given all of the issues and complications associated with tenure and promotion, what would be appropriate strategies for surviving and gaining tenure and promotion? Suppose, for example, that a graduate student receives several offers and is trying to imagine having a career in Villanueva's land or in an independent writing department/program/center. How might we counsel that colleague? For either job, what questions would we suggest the person ask? What concerns would we raise? Given the stories in the first section of this collection and the issues raised in the second section, some obvious questions emerge; and this text attempts to address some of the factors that can help an individual know the risks, so that a decision to sign on with an independent writing department fits with his or her comfort level for the inevitable gamble that we all face in taking positions, particularly when deciding on an independent writing program. In addition, because we are in a tight labor market, this text implicitly suggests concerns for departments, chairs, deans, provosts, and presidents who wish to support independent writing programs, namely the agenda of clearly articulating and valuing the labor that goes beyond the auspices of service and is not comparable to the experiences junior or senior faculty encounter in other departments within the college. What follows are three areas for candidates to assess when considering a position with an independent writing program, with my own experience at Georgia Southern University as one example.

GENERAL CLIMATE ISSUES

We wager at the institutional and state level in terms of the possible ways that politics will play, but we should also try to get a sense of the local politics. At the college level, we need to gather a sense of the dean and his or her ability to negotiate effectively for liberal arts interests. When focusing on the dean, we want to see what kinds of departments are most treasured and what kinds of strategies the dean employs to gather resources for departments and individuals interested in developing and maintaining talents. But we also want to know how effectively the dean meets the challenges of diversity within the faculty and student body and diversity in terms of the kinds of programs he or she encourages. Centering on the dean allows for certain issues to come into focus, from faculty and student retention to innovative program design and

rates of success with funding. For general climate issues, that gaze should not only focus in on the dean, but should also look to broader and more narrow factors. In terms of general climate issues, the following areas should be explored:

- institutional and college histories/structures and strategic plans
- department histories and consensus about its mission statement
- department positions on composition studies
- available resources and commitment to maintaining faculty development
- numbers of composition scholars available to share administrative responsibilities
- numbers of composition scholars and availability of desired courses
- department positions on identity politics

Each of these factors may not be available within the typical scan of a department, college, or university website, but asking specific questions about these issues can give the candidate a better sense of the risks involved.

Georgia Southern University and General Climate Questions

When I took the job at GSU in 1998, the president was acting, and it appeared that a different president would be hired. As someone who was not familiar with the Georgia University System, I looked for information about the way the structure worked and tried to guess what might occur with the change in leadership. It was a wager, but it seemed that the institution was changing, and likely in ways that were familiar and positive, so at the large levels, the climate seemed promising. At the level of general climate, I made certain wagers based on the trends of other universities in Georgia and based on the chancellor in charge of the Georgia University System, a man who recently argued eloquently for the need to fund education, to go against the national trend of dumbing down. Those wagers were profitable. We have a new president and a new provost, both of whom have significantly changed university structures and procedures. At the dean's level, I was most concerned about the likelihood of the department actually having a major, and all indications pointed to support of the department doing more than first-year writing courses. The hiring of tenure-track composition specialists also indicated that commitment. I was hired, along with another composition specialist, and the total number of composition and rhetoric specialists in the

department then was six. In my first year, three additional composition specialists were hired, bringing our total numbers to nine. The difficulty, and the wager, has come in the dean's decision to take another position at another university. We have taken two years to secure a dean, and in that time, we have experienced the profound effects of limbo. In the last year, many of the family systems in place have been disrupted as members of the upper administration have chosen to gain employment elsewhere or to step down from their positions of authority. While we understand and support the university's newly adopted strategic plan, we're not quite sure whether the new provost understands our department and supports the former dean and former provost's desire to see a major in our field. We hope; however, indications are not yet clear.

It's possible that within the next months, all of the major institutional shifts in higher administration will settle, and we can begin to really see the shape that this institution will take. It is an institution in profound change. Values are shifting, and top administrators under the former president are resigning or changing jobs within the university, making systemic change possible. When I first came here, for example, faculty with master's degrees could have tenure-track lines and could gain tenure but be ineligible for promotion. That policy has been eradicated. The university plans to hire only faculty with terminal degrees. The new president is taking the university from a regional to a comprehensive university, so issues of scholarship are shifting, values for teaching are changing, ways of funding are reflecting trends across the nation, and in some ways, Georgia Southern is becoming the kind of university that I find familiar. We all face the gamble that a university will change profoundly, and not necessarily in directions we admire. None of us know when the university president will decide to seek another position. Nonetheless, in our department, we still have significant climate questions that are unanswered to this date because of the radical changes in upper administration.

At this institution, the risks were pretty high for someone entering the independent writing department. The college histories and structures were undergoing change; the strategic plans were up for review. In the college and in the department, there were histories that would impact consensus (as Agnew and Dallas indicate in their essay), and the local department had conflicting positions on composition studies. However, the general climate indicated that there were resources for some kinds of faculty development, and there were enough composition faculty that a composition specialist would not need to participate in administrative

duties prior to tenure. In addition, the department has a passionate leader with a vision, one that I found palatable, so it seemed a wager worth making, despite the tenuous issues.

With general climate questions, I've come to think that it can be the site of the most and the least stability. In some ways, we can predict generally, from what trends we watch across the nation, the relative stability of institutions—and we can see patterns for how composition scholars will be treated. However, the change in presidents can have a rapid and profound impact on the institution. Because of the chancellor in Georgia and his leadership style, we see institutional patterns shifting. At the same time, the chancellor may not stay in Georgia, and a change in leadership at that level would radically impact the local terrain. One makes one's wagers—especially in regions where systems can easily be changed. The positive aspects of independent writing programs are clear: one may gain in salary, institutional design, rearticulation of one's field. The negative aspects are also clear: one may lose out on the predictability associated with unionized lands or established departments, which brings up the next area of concern: how one's labor will be rewarded.

LABOR ISSUES

Composition faculty always must be careful to negotiate labor concerns for tenure and promotion, particularly when a good portion of their efforts will include administrative work. In traditional literature departments, especially ones that have limited numbers of composition colleagues, one must be careful to establish the boundaries of one's labor so that tenure and promotion are possible. The same is true for independent writing programs in their infancy, though the labor may not be administrative, as much as it is "start-up" work in a new department. While we may enthusiastically counsel a colleague to consider a position in an independent writing department where the following issues are clearly articulated and will be valued at tenure and promotion, we should also consider the complications of re-entering the job market. If the local institution decides to grant value to documents and labor in nontraditional ways, that value may not transfer. Many of the issues for a department in its infancy should be negotiated, including considerations such as these.

- Expectations for creation (or radically shifting the focus) of a first-year writing program, which can be compromised by the following variables:

  - The population that teaches first-year writing and possible complications based on the local population of workers
  - Training of the first-year writing faculty
  - The voice first-year writing faculty have in program development
- The degree to which collaboratively produced program outcomes will be considered publications in terms of scholarship,
- Histories of the department's formation and potential labor to resolve existing tensions and conflicts.
  - Who made the decision, how were faculty placed in different departments, are people happy with their placement? How do the literature faculty perceive the split?
- Interdepartmental alliances/education (whether through writing-across-the-curriculum [WAC] or other initiatives, whether through sitting on external committees or consulting as a form of public relations).
  - Can documents produced in these interdisciplinary alliance-building activities be seen as publications?
- Document creation or reformulation for new major(s).
  - Can the documents be counted towards scholarship?
- Marketing and recruitment.
  - Can documents and success in attracting students count in the tenure and promotion criteria?

Each of these labor issues has an impact on the viability of a wager. The odds are not good for a candidate if most of these issues are not established. If, in fact, a candidate chooses to make the wager despite these odds, then that person should negotiate at the time of hire for clear articulation of how these particular elements will be valued. A savvy participant will ask to mark labor in familiar terms. Perhaps the different documents/negotiations can be placed under the auspices of administrative labels; perhaps some of the material production can be marked under publishing and scholarship, but a newly formed department must consider the labor and provide incentives to those who choose this wager.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND LABOR ISSUES

The more one can gather a sense of the history of the institution, the college, and the department, the better. If I had known some of the histories at Georgia Southern with regards to composition faculty, I think I would have been in a better position to understand my wager. The split at this particular university, as Dallas and Agnew have indicated, was not amicable. Faculty did not make the final decisions, and the department

did not share a mission when I arrived; nor did I realize many of the structural complications that would affect our ability to become a department with a major. In retrospect, I don't think I could have known how to ask questions that only later became apparent. For example, I was naive to the ways that structures outside the norm of the university would undermine the department. We had a structure in place that doesn't happen in universities often: a large number of faculty were joint appointees, serving in our department and in the learning support department. What I've learned, in looking back, is that the more the structure is dissimilar within the university, the more cautious I would be because the wager is significant.

Ironically, one of the reasons I really liked Georgia Southern initially was because teachers of writing had full-time jobs, and they were able to gain tenure with a master's degree. We were able to have these full-time opportunities, in part because of the joint-appointee option. I believe in job security, in treating people with dignity, which includes a living wage and benefits. However, I hadn't thought about the implications of a large number of tenured faculty whose training was predominantly in literature and whose allegiances were sometimes with the literature department, sometimes with the learning support program, and who didn't necessarily welcome the split of the two departments. Many of us, trained in composition and rhetoric and in writing program administration, have learned how to negotiate with other composition teachers using strategies that are based on the reality that these teachers are without substantial job security. While composition scholars may want to advocate for decent living conditions for colleagues who predominantly teach composition, I think many composition scholars have enjoyed the ease with which program change can occur because the dominant group teaching composition are graduate students and adjunct labor. If one is expected to help shape a program, the population who teaches the first-year program is crucial to assess because it impacts the program's development and, by extension, the amount of unmarked time one must contribute to the creation of documents. At our institution, program development includes many people who have tenure are not necessarily interested in shifting those positions, again as Agnew and Dallas indicate in their essay. These negotiations, and the time they take, have implications for program development and also for tenure and promotion.

In addition to considering the relation of the labor pool to the program's development, the other issue that we often consider is the

degree to which we will have administrative duties prior to tenure and promotion. One of the best reasons to consider Georgia Southern, for me, was that it allowed me time without administrative duties, where I could focus on my own research concerns. There are enough composition specialists here to share administrative tasks. While that concern loomed large in my initial consideration, in retrospect, having administrative tasks might have been wiser because that kind of marking will travel from institution to institution. Here much of the labor remains unmarked; for example, the work of negotiating for programmatic change that will aid in the formation of an excellent writing program cannot be tallied in ways important for tenure and promotion.

Labor questions are crucial, and as independent writing programs were not something that we discussed extensively in graduate school, I didn't think to ask particular questions that are now always in my consciousness as I prepare for tenure and promotion. If one is expected to contribute to the shaping of the first-year writing program not only in terms of lending expertise but also in terms of debating issues with faculty who may be resistant to changes that would more adequately reflect trends and issues in the field, I think there has to be some way to document that labor beyond the service category (because service remains a substantially less valued component of the evaluation process and ever more so as the university changes). In addition, complications emerge when junior colleagues with Ph.D.'s in composition and rhetoric are put in the role of advising faculty who see themselves as having seniority because they have gained tenure (with master's degrees in literature).

At Georgia Southern, I have come to believe that we cannot have a valuable major if we don't have the first-year program working in smart directions. At the same time, as we shape our major, I have started to realize the extremely time-consuming aspects of creating a degree that I had not imagined. As a new person, I should have asked the following questions: How much will I be expected to contribute to the shaping of a major, and what kinds of recompense would be given? How much public relations material needs to be created? How much work needs to be done between departments to establish alliances? Will the document created count for scholarship? How will research for the document be rewarded? Ironically, this work currently counts as service, but if one's expertise is needed to create the proposals, to develop the public relations documents, and to argue for alliances, shouldn't the reward be significant when it comes to counting for tenure and promotion? Doesn't

this labor benefit the university more concretely than many of my other tasks?

At Georgia Southern, we have worked extensively, as a department, in creating agreed-upon program outcomes. Much of the labor for the first-year program remains unmarked. The hours spent in discussion/conversation with colleagues, the debates, the attempts to create meaning when words signify differently based on disparate training—all that labor remains outside the gaze of the documents one brings to tenure and promotion. In the last eight months, we have created a program proposal for a major in professional and technical writing. That labor requires not only providing expertise but communicating with others not familiar with the field, in ways that create consensus about possible directions for the shaping of the major within the department and college. While a document is created, in the current scheme of tenure and promotion criteria, its "publication" will count only towards service. Finally, in the creation of that major, it became apparent that we needed to work on alliances both within our college and within the university. Those kinds of negotiations are extremely time-consuming and are crucial for the success of the program but won't be worth much when it comes to tenure and promotion. While each of these issues could just be abandoned, the problem for many independent writing programs, in the formative stages, is that hiring often happens at the junior colleague level, and the tasks would be more easily negotiated by senior faculty. However, the catch-22 is that if one decides to focus on tenure and promotion to the exclusion of the department needs, when tenure and promotion are achieved, there really wouldn't be a point in staying; however, if one attends to the first-year program, the public relations, and the major, one risks tenure and promotion on two fronts: first, the kind of scholarship required may suffer, and second, one risks the animosity of faculty who vote on tenure and promotion. I don't think I would argue against signing on with an independent writing program, but I do think that we need to prepare graduate students (and junior and senior faculty) in negotiation, in the art of gathering promises about how labor will be rewarded prior to signing on.

EVALUATION OF LABOR ISSUES

In independent writing programs, particularly in their infancy, many documents must be created, and many issues must be explored and discussed, including establishing the guidelines for tenure and promotion.

The process of determining criteria is incredibly political, as it shapes the direction a department takes; and if criteria are not in place, a person would be wise to ask not only about procedures for establishing criteria but also to find out who will have a vote in the criteria. The degree to which an independent writing department can create a new direction may depend on the population of voting members, who may or may not want to shape a program in directions that are promising simply because a department is independent of the traditional literature department. A colleague, considering the possibility of taking such a position, should evaluate the following issues:

- What are the existing criteria and potential alterations to criteria used to evaluate tenure and promotion?
- Who votes on tenure and promotion?
- What are their qualifications to assess credentials?
- What will the tenure and promotion committee understand about composition as a discipline?

A candidate should never assume that he or she knows the answers to these questions, and it's best to have not only existing criteria in mind, but signals from upper administration. In addition, terms should be defined, particularly what is meant by tenure and whether tenure is separate from promotion or whether promotion is implied in a discussion about tenure.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN AND EVALUATION OF LABOR

Some scholars who write about tenure and promotion point to the frustration that can occur for a junior colleague, trained by the research university but then placed in a teaching institution (Braxton and Berger; Tierney and Rhoads). I think my own training at a research institution precluded questions that I should have asked when interviewing at Georgia Southern. While I asked the question about what criteria will be used to evaluate tenure, I assumed that tenure and promotion were joined together. The assumption came from the traditions of my graduate education. Faculty who were tenured were also promoted. The two went together for all the professors I watched encountering the process. I didn't think to ask the question differently. When I asked what I needed to publish for tenure, the answer was a minimal requirement. For promotion, however, the publications required are more substantial.

The other question that I should have asked, and one that might have revealed an issue I would have considered more carefully, runs as

follows: "Who will vote on my tenure and promotion? What are their qualifications to assess my credentials? And what will the tenure and promotion committee understand about composition as a discipline?" It never occurred to me to ask who would vote on my tenure because I had the paradigm of junior and senior faculty in my head, and only senior faculty would vote on such matters. At Georgia Southern, all the faculty with tenure can vote on my tenure, regardless of whether the individuals with tenure can be promoted and regardless of the credentials of the participants. I could have figured out, from books in the field, that the tenure and promotion committee was likely not to know much about my field, but I should have asked.

I've learned, from being in this kind of department, that one needs to assess the department one enters in terms of its ability to mirror other departments. In our department, I've already mentioned the contingent of faculty who were, until this year, joint appointees. That paradigm doesn't often exist within the university system. Second, the majority of tenured faculty in our department cannot be promoted. These colleagues do not consider themselves junior faculty despite the fact that, across the university, they are seen as junior colleagues. They also vote on tenure and promotion issues. This paradigm likewise doesn't often exist within the university structure. The concept of junior and senior faculty may not be the issue that a person needs to consider when wagering tenure with an independent writing program, but one needs to be able to assess the departmental structure by comparing it to institution and university traditions and determining similarities and differences. The more one understands the differences one finds, the more accurate the sense of the odds.

Tenure is always a wager, and one hopes that a fit exists between the individual and the community, but composition traditions complicate the ability to wager tenure. Given the general climates, the kinds of labor, and the populations who evaluate tenure, I believe that colleagues should counsel a person to ask very specific questions of independent writing programs, questions that can at least give individuals a better sense of what kind of wager they are making. But I also think that we need to be advocating for composition faculty when they are in the position of creating new departments/programs. Upper administration needs to be cognizant of the labor involved in attempting a new department, and that labor should be rewarded in ways that can travel for the individual. Currently composition scholars can migrate

relatively freely, in this market, if their vitae mark their labor. In tight markets, keeping employees means considering methods of maintaining a position's appeal.

Even in markets that are not so tight, administrators want to keep quality employees, and in independent writing programs/departments, upper administration would be wise to create incentives that aid in employee retention. Easy strategies start by negotiating tenure and promotion concerns with the college tenure and promotion committee. Time-consuming work that contributes so much to the local institution should be adequately recompensed at tenure and promotion time; it may mean developing titles that accurately reflect administrative or scholarly duties (currently under the guise of service), thus marking that labor in ways that make it possible for other institutions and the local tenure and promotion committee to understand the work completed. In addition to educating local administrations, we need to discuss, as a field, ways of understanding the labor involved in creating independent writing programs. Then, if one wagers tenure in such an institution but later determines that a better fit exists at another institution, those within the larger field of composition studies can adequately appreciate work that does not easily become marked within the traditionally higher valued categories of scholarship and teaching.