

# 13

## A ROSE BY EVERY OTHER NAME

### *The Excellent Problem of Independent Writing Programs*

Wendy Bishop

Perhaps I shouldn't have started writing about independent writing programs immediately after returning home from a two-hour English department meeting on hiring needs, tenure criteria, and the election of the next year's evaluation committee. My department is staffed at these approximate faculty levels—60 percent literature faculty, 35 percent creative writing faculty, and 5 percent rhetoric/composition faculty—yet offers a Ph.D. and M.A. degree program in *each* concentration.<sup>1</sup> However, I did. I thought about and began writing about such programs using all the essays in this collection at some point, mapping one narrative and argument after the other against my own experiences, my readings in composition and institutional history, and my own academic situation. Quickly, these thoughtful essays became markers and check-points in a game of “What If . . . ?”

What if, as a female assistant professor writing program administrator (WPA), instead of choosing an exit option when the First-Year Writing Program (FYW) grew too large for me without adequate institutional support, I had let the program grow *slightly more out of control* and then gone to upper administration with a plan for forming an independent unit? (See Bishop and Crossley.)

What if, as an associate professor in rhetoric and composition, when the first female assistant professor WPA after me<sup>2</sup> was denied tenure (primarily due to lack of department faculty support), I had proposed an independent writing unit?

What if, as a full professor of rhetoric and composition, when the next female assistant professor WPA, who had just seen her predecessor experience the same, was also unfairly denied tenure (this time at the College of Arts and Sciences level), I had proposed an independent writing unit? (See Leverenz.)

What if I had prevailed in the discussions during my ninth through eleventh years at this institution in convincing the department chair that it was essential to support a tenure-line WPA position? If I had done so, might I have been prepared to use the economic strength of the FYW program under the direction of a tenured WPA to help leverage an independent writing unit, something that now seems triply difficult due to the WPA line's staff status?

What if I had done none of those and instead done . . . ?

#### WHAT IF?

My story is one of trying to remain connected, aligned, a valued part of an English department. But Chris Anson in this collection considers the degree to which housing writing outside the English department seems inevitable:

Clearly, the question of "why not in English" must always remain local, answered in the context of how receptive literary specialists may be to the principles of contemporary composition theory and instruction or how freely and equitably composition leaders feel they can work within a department populated by colleagues who do not share their expertise or particular values. (161)

At the time any of my own what-if scenarios might have been investigated, I either knew nothing about independent writing programs or only had talked with colleagues who were having initial difficulties beginning theirs (and exhibiting bravery and energy beyond what I've felt I've managed from day to day in my own work). Until 1999 I had not visited such a program. When I did, speaking at the University of Central Arkansas, I greatly admired what I found there—composition and creative writing faculty running a coordinated writing program, teaching together, discussing reading for writers; yet I also felt, well, a continuing discomfort, overall, with the idea of such efforts and what something similar might mean for my institution. As rain wears stone, I've been forced to start thinking differently. But I've been as slow in this change as have those in my English department in their attitudes towards composition studies.

As a former English major and creative writing degree student before I moved into composition, I continued romantically (and no doubt self-servingly) to fight for inclusion and acceptance and—let's face it—admirer within the traditional English department. This was the place

where I'd been bred, ignored, hurt, sometimes nurtured, infuriated. This is the place where literary texts still figured, in my limited experience, as the initial stepping-stone toward any further study in the field. In short, I was always (and in one chamber of my heart still am) unable to imagine divorce, no matter how hard the marriage so far had been.

Finally, I can imagine it—change, separation, divorce. However, I fear my own decade-long departmental stance (late-adopter-rebel-who-loved-her-cause-so-much-she-was-unable-to-envision-change) has now made such a decision impossible. I did not explore alternative routes because I'm model-oriented and had no models; because I was unwilling to take on the work of such negotiations and pay the academic prices of such change; and because I was unable to imagine where such actions would land me and the program with which I work. Hubris to imagine it was up to me, but who knows how the what-ifs would have played out. Or still will?

While I may have taken the right steps for my own story—something I'll never know—reading these essays lets me consider the rich complexity of the decisions I made. Just as I did—want to collaborate, change from within, get along—so too (and often to its own disservice) does this field we call rhetoric and composition. “Composition has always acted on its own beliefs in the power of collaboration and collective wisdom. Autonomy, therefore, may be desired only in proportion to the hostility or indifference shown by those who might otherwise be welcomed in” (Anson, this volume, 166). Programmatic initiatives, experiments, narratives, progressions like the ones described in *Field of Dreams* are wonderful “factions,” to use anthropologist Clifford Geertz's word for narrated fact-based writing. They offer readers the chance to reverberate, compare/contrast, test the cut of their own programs, calculate, gauge, plan, plot.

A collection like this—reporting on the state of contemporary stand-alone writing units—pools knowledges, adds to the wealth of testimony required to share transformative naturalistic research, each case adding to the next case, each raising cautions and questions, each celebrating possibility for systematic reflection that can lead to productive change. These cases illustrate the benefits of individual and collective decisions, but all the decisions came at a price. Just as we claim in our writing classrooms—that a writer can't write a better draft without learning about the failures of good attempts—so too we can't learn to design better programs without experiencing problems on the road to improvement. *Field of Dreams* offers narratives of tumultuous progress and of needed additional progress.

Reflecting on such progressions, my personal and program list of what-ifs readily begat offspring. Are independent writing programs the inevitable, the desirable future? For individual programs, for composition as a field? Should we continue to move toward the model? How could we? What is gained? What is lost? What is next?

SHOULD WE HAVE . . . ?

For the essayists in this collection, the answer appears to have been a solid yes. Yes, we should have started an independent writing department, center, program, or unit. Daniel Royer and Roger Gilles, argue that curricular and programmatic and disciplinary change should be pursued because a program design, as Royer and Gilles initially experienced it, that forces reluctant English literature faculty to teach first-year writing is problematic. At the same time, exempting non-composition-trained faculty from such courses allows this majority faction of the faculty to remain at a disciplinary distance from composition. Equally, when rhetoric and composition specialists alone run such a program, often as not they are not “spent” teaching first-year writing. By virtue of these units’ small sizes, newness, need to reform and administer, and/or need to produce convincing scholarship, a move from the traditional English department structure often requires that faculty who develop independent writing programs not assign themselves to teaching first-year writing. This pragmatic and no doubt necessary development continues to reproduce an English department hierarchy within composition studies. Literature scholar-administrators are to graduate, part-time, and adjunct writing teachers what writing program leaders must be to the instructors, adjuncts, and campus teaching assistants they hire into their programs—bosses rather than colleagues (though we might try to claim that there are Bosses and then there are Program Directors).

Royer and Gilles highlight another double bind. When departments of “writing” consider forming, it seems natural to suggest uniting all writings: composition, professional, and creative writing. “Clearly, most of the noncomposition faculty preferred not to teach composition, but neither were they eager to see writing faculty take the program and build a new department, especially with the creative writing majors in tow” (this volume, 31). Not only are departments of literature variously loathe to lose creative writing (though a few are eager to eliminate it), but those who teach writing for different purposes (technical, business, creative, journalistic) come from and have allegiances to different historic, academic,

and pedagogical traditions. They don't necessarily speak the same language or grow in the same garden. That is, if they are allowed to leave together at all and in good health.

As I've found in my own program, a "separate but unequal" rule generally applies. We are told the concentrations of literature, creative writing, and rhetoric and composition will all get money for speakers, receptions, and so on. We have the freedom to spend "our money" as we wish. But we are not encouraged to pool those programs or monies, and there are separate directors for the first two programs but not for rhetoric and composition because we attract many fewer students since my sole composition colleague and I have found it unethical to recruit until (if ever) our program stabilizes with a minimum of four faculty members or increases beyond that number.

Department policies that encourage writing specialists (creative writing, professional writing, journalism, composition) to remain separate and to compete predict that the minority field like composition is nearly always at a disadvantage, having no numbers to fight the numbers and having, equally, to compete for professional status from a one-down position. Compositionists are deemed "younger" than journalists and creative writers and, compared to literature faculty, are "in trade," as several essays here point out. For other concentrations to join us means they would be combining theory with "practice," and in that combination theory is always assumed to be tainted and harmed, inevitably diluted. Like popular writers compared to academic writers, compositionists *do* something. Popular literature entertains, and often authors of the same make money; both effects are considered suspect in literary and creative writing circles.

Compositionists use their intellect but often in service of action-oriented projects; they too often (unfortunately) do not entertain anyone or make money (except enough to fuel an entire literature curriculum). Worse, compositionists participate in a world populated by educators, anthropologists, computer specialists, folklorists, linguistics, undergraduates, support sites, university administrators, and so on. They strike off across party lines, across class lines; and they fail to communicate primarily (or solely) by the book. Because of this, the field of composition has been misrepresented as anti-intellectual, atheoretical (so much so that we in the field now accuse each other of being the same) and lacking in rigor, ever always already an upstart or nondiscipline, malcontent, and even downright scary. It is not a simple move then to unite all writing instruction, within or without the English department.

## HOW DID WE PROCEED . . . ?

Independent writing units—program, center, department—all have merit, but all have thorns. Over sixty programs exist, and more are, no doubt, being planned. Composition is in a new era, and it appears there *are* options:

- Let all faculty choose to (a) truly support integrated English/composition or (b) let the program leave. At Grand Valley State University the program left.
- Firm up and improve an already separate but as yet undefined structure, as at Metropolitan State University.
- Form a graduate and undergraduate professional-writing program with no service component, as at San Francisco State University.
- Like the University of Winnipeg, form a center, not a department, and negotiate the problems inherent in such a program structure.
- Stay separate within the English or communications department *with English faculty support* (I'm assuming that some of the many programs that might have changed in the last decade decided not to, due to a better department response after suggesting such a strategy).
- Separate; join other skills-oriented programs; have few faculty and many adjuncts, as at San Diego State University.
- Make a change, but later have it reversed. At the University of Minnesota, the independent program is returned to the English department while the director of the program is on leave.
- Form a new program, but give up the protection of tenure, as several programs have done and as is discussed in particular in light of the Georgia Southern University program.
- Form a new program by university decree and work around this limitation as at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and SUNY Stonybrook.
- Form a new program and make (expected) mistakes that may be thoroughly rectified only by applying failures at one site to inform the development of another site, like Arizona State University East.

And so on.

## WHAT WAS GAINED?

The first thing that comes to mind is improved program morale. Ultimately, first-year and possibly all undergraduate students who take courses in an independent writing unit may not notice a great deal of change when a program moves from department to independent unit. These sites—particularly at large universities—are often staffed by the

same individuals (graduate teaching assistants, adjuncts, term-faculty) who would previously have staffed a program lodged in the English department. Students may notice that they are no longer being taught writing by those who profess literature and who feel underprepared and uninterested in teaching writing. What seems to change is instructor morale due to greater autonomy, of sorts.

Within independent programs, instructors generally have more voice, if not the only voice, in choosing texts and shaping program and course rationales and evaluation. At Hampden-Sydney College, which created a program of rhetoric, including a writing center, the program designers believe that “all graduates . . . shall have demonstrated the ability to write and speak clearly, cogently, and grammatically”; and this is done through “(1) a required course sequence; (2) a program of testing; (3) a writing center for tutorial support; and (4) cross-curricular faculty participation” (Deis et al, this volume, 76). Developments like this may allow trained faculty to reconsider the issue of grammar instruction, and, in this area, university community support may prove easier to gain than was English department support.

The faculty of independent programs also, by name, assert their professionalism, becoming not the “writing concentration” *within* the English department but the “Writing Program” (Center, Department, and so on). Louise Rehling explains, “Of course, our focus and our independence also keep us small, yet we have managed to turn that quality into a virtue, with benefits ranging from staffing flexibility to creating a supportive, networked community for our students” (this volume, 62). Administrator/faculty also receives a greater degree of (or complete) budgetary autonomy, although some of these programs experienced bait and switch along the lines of “Yes, you have autonomy, but your program is so small and new and unknown you only have this much (i.e., not much) of a budget.”

While the drawback of the center, support site, undergraduate-only writing unit would seem to be the loss of tenure for incoming faculty (those developing such sites usually retain tenure in their originating department), for those who develop independent writing departments, the move seems to strengthen tenure cases, as happened at Metropolitan State University:

[T]he structure of independent writing departments works toward resolving some of the professional development and tenure issues that have plagued

composition specialists. In a separate department, faculty have a much greater opportunity to help establish criteria for tenure and promotion that differ from those of English departments. In a practice-oriented field of study, faculty are more likely to be recognized for practice, particularly for writing practice outside of the academy and for teaching practice. (Aronson and Hansen, this volume, 61)

To the degree that tenuring in composition in general continues to be a site of struggle (see Leverenz), it will be wise for us all to watch the variations in the process that do and might occur in stand-alone programs.

#### WHAT WAS LOST OR CONTINUES TO BE DIFFICULT?

I mentioned earlier that one chamber of my heart still longs to develop or participate in a united English department, stronger for embracing and supporting—not merely absorbing—different areas and knowledge, braiding together writing, reading, linguistics, and folklore (see, for instance, Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature* for a discussion of the ways English studies accepts but does not “digest” challenges to the core curricula). I found this longing for an improved rather than a new model is embedded in the narratives of even the most successful independent programs: “Our experience confirms that the independent department was best for us, in our situation at Grand Valley State University. *Other English departments might have rallied around the first-year course, choosing to recommit to it as a regular part of the job. With a genuine commitment, such an arrangement would likely succeed*” (Royer and Gilles, this volume, 37, emphasis added).

At times, movement from an English department site to an independent site does not “solve” problems, it resituates them. At Metropolitan State, faculty found teaching/administrative loads increased rather than decreased because “the chairs have the double burden of [being] writing program administrator . . . and department chair” (Aronson and Hansen, this volume, 53). And assumptions about the “prestige” of different genres of writing continued at Grand Valley State University, where uniting types of writings allowed for the formation of an independent department because such a combination formed an argument for separation from literature. Still, these faculty members had their own personal and historical vested interests, which, of course, they brought with them to the new unit. “One of the most difficult ‘marriages’ in our department is that between the most vocational and application-oriented of writing activities—technical communication—and the most

creative and impractical of writing activities—poetry, fiction, and other creative genres” (Aronson and Hansen, this volume, 57).

In all the narratives, I detected a not unexpected sense of “damned if you don’t, damned if you do.” Give up English, fine. Give up tenure, fine. But. . . . And these were exactly the scenarios I had spun out vis-à-vis my own program—the scenarios that made me proceed in my secessionary movement with little speed. For instance, at the University of Winnipeg the discussion over “department” or “center” recasts the practice/service issue. “It did not take us long after separation from the English department to discover just how vulnerable a new academic unit can be, especially when it lacks the prestige of a strong and *known* disciplinary tradition, as is the case with composition and rhetoric (especially in Canadian universities)” (Turner and Kearns, this volume, 93). Without a perceived disciplinary tradition (the reason, perhaps, compositionists so firmly link themselves with rhetoricians), tenuring here proved as difficult as or more difficult than it was within an unopposed English department.

And, of course, we in composition may tend to forget our own territoriality when working together to stake new territory. Though small in number, we too are prone to academic pettiness (usually big fights over small prizes; or, the smaller the prize, the bigger the fight?). Finally having achieved autonomy and larger faculty numbers (in some cases), there is more at stake, more to imagine we are winning or losing: “As the number of composition/rhetoric specialists grew in our department and discussions about our new mission evolved, this veneer [over ugly feelings] quickly evaporated, as shock waves of discord rippled through the department” (Agnew and Dallas, this volume, 39).

Equally likely, in the secession and separation wars, there are multiple casualties. Barry Maid describes his decision to move from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where he developed a university-mandated independent writing program over a struggle-filled decade and then left, eager for the renewal offered by the chance to develop a new program in Arizona, based on what he had learned in Arkansas. His is a story of hope renewed, but that is not always the outcome. The journey to a new program design often results in designer alienation, burnout, even dissatisfaction with both the old *and* the new program. At San Diego State, several of these eventualities occurred. “[The Department of Rhetoric and Writing’s] first seven years brought several new tenure-track hires. However, several tenured faculty also departed.

In fact, of the original five proponents of the proposal for establishing an independent department, only one remains as an active member of the department, and her appointment fluctuates from zero to .50 FTE, depending on the semester” (Hindman, this volume, 113).

Though not as often discussed in this collection as the issues above, developing an independent program strongly affects graduates and adjuncts who entered under one system and may be worried about exiting under another. These individuals may be excluded from the administrative discussions that impact their present situation and their future undertakings. At Stony Brook, for example, “Graduate students took the criticism of the writing program as our own. We wrote emails discussing our fears about losing our teaching-assistant appointments in composition should the writing program be removed from the English department” (Yood, this volume, 177).

These represent just a few of the many issues that future independent writing programs will want to try to account for in their plans.

#### WHAT SHOULD, COULD, OR WILL BE NEXT?

As mentioned earlier, I believe that it is inevitable, given the material conditions in English departments across the country, that the programmatic solution of forming an independent writing unit is going to be given regular, serious consideration. This will happen within a newly minted Research I institution, like my own, that is striving hard to measure “excellence” in a manner that will justify a larger, revenue-producing campus population. Such a change places a renewed focus on traditional research over necessary teaching and increases pressures within a literary culture that is at war within its own ranks and that is cohesive primarily in its disdain for writing and praxis of any sort. At other institutions, this will happen within a more convivial department that is lobbying for its first M.A. or Ph.D. program. This will happen at four-year colleges where there is a strong argument for combining “service” programs and support sites into one unit.

What I fear in each scenario is a diminishment of the quality of academic life for those in composition: “leaving that earlier position to accept a post here at SDSU has suited my enthusiasm to work in a more independent writing program. But it definitely did not improve my material labor conditions. On the contrary—it has greatly expanded my administrative tasks and my teaching load and greatly reduced my time for writing and reading” (Hindman, this volume, 114). For me, the big

continuing issues of communication and integration remain. I believe that even independent units need the support from English and communications departments, as well as from other departments across the university. Independent units need to be known to be accepted and accepted to be known.

Once again, as seen in the turbulent history of composition, this recognition continues to fail to occur, as at two strong programs studied by Peggy O'Neill and Ellen Schendel. For instance, program director Nancy Sommers at Harvard is not on a tenure line despite being a renowned scholar (such a line would assure a strong measure of tacit and explicit respect at such an institution, not to mention job security). At Syracuse University, a separation from the English department may mean a separation from one's roots or multidisciplinary interests and may create problems for those graduate students with degrees in composition who end up teaching not in stand-alone programs but in more traditional English department structures. O'Neill and Schendel report from personal interviews that

[Eileen] Schell herself completed her Ph.D. in English with a concentration in rhetoric and composition. She has come to value and enjoy talking with colleagues in literature and theory whose professional interests intersect with hers. As a faculty member in a writing program, she must work harder to maintain those professional ties with members of the English department. As the director of graduate studies, Schell is also concerned that CCR doctoral students may not be completely prepared to work in English departments. (this volume, 204)

Again, this experience does not predict the same will happen at other sites, but it does remind us of some of the losses a person, a program, a department, or a university might expect to incur when redefining structures.

#### WHAT REMAINS?

These essayists offer detailed program histories, highlight key choices, point to checklists for future program designers, and share profoundly depressing and profoundly transformative experiences. They also point to a great deal of good will, generosity, and hard work done by composition change agents.

Reading this collection, considering my own situation—which all the authors urge their readers to do—I can't help but wonder what college and university size predicts for future independent units. Since the State

of Florida dissolved the statewide board of regents—effective July 2001—and we enter an era of corporate management, I have to question how this move will affect each institution's first-year writing program. Had our program developed into an independent unit, I have many reasons to assume we would never have been given department status, since department progress is now measured against national rankings and organizations—measures unavailable to composition “departments.” What would the corporate university design mean to that imagined program? Would it have destroyed it, supported it, complicated it, and/or altered the program's faculty teaching load and production outcomes? Speculations of this sort lead me to wonder too about the beneficial results of working at a smaller institution? Might I have felt better prepared to be a change agent because I had faces I could link to all those involved and a limited number of faculty and administrators to contact and try to influence?

Early programs now provide documented histories, are growing in numbers, may be surveyed and turned into case studies and borrowed from; they can offer the needed touchstones to support those who are generating new models. They can do this to the degree that they report their successes *and* failures, while identifying crucial issues, such as faculty/staff working conditions and assignments to “service” functions. Such discussions will remind a potential planner like me to ask if I have, personally, resisted the “service” label for my own programs (as WPA, as rhetoric and composition faculty) primarily because I intended to seek tenure and security? Will “service” designations come to matter less, or will they continue to shape discussions for stage II programs—those that continue or those developed in a new era, based on past models?

Such discussions will remind a potential planner like me to ask how English studies discussions of the relationship of theory to practice translate into composition discussions and how those discussions translate into independent writing unit program discussions? Should they? I don't know. Do they? I suspect so. The service issues that I mentioned earlier include the issue of whether service (practice) and scholarship (theory) are different, even distinctly separate. My own experiences (and my argument for keeping WPAs on tenure lines within the English department) have made it clear to me that I can't undertake and never have undertaken a practice without systematically thinking about it (theorizing) ahead of time and that all my practice leads to theorizing and retheorizing. Scholarly training and discipline teach me how to do both more effectively and systematically. However, most institutions perpetuate the

notion that there is a deep unbridgeable division between research, service, and teaching (in a way that makes service sound neither theoretical or practical, merely a romantic giveaway to different “publics”). An assignment like mine of 45 percent research, 50 percent teaching, and 5 percent service is a structural delusion. In a daily sense, I do 100 percent of each; in a real sense, I am evaluated 80 percent on research, 19 percent on teaching, and 1 percent on service. How can my university display its status otherwise, because currently no national scales are in place that allow it to be “highly ranked in teaching.” And a corporate model mandates such a ranking before an administration feels justified in providing more money for teaching (in pursuit of higher rankings).

Clearly our systems—selves, disciplines, departments, administrations—are slow to evolve. And this is because processes provide few measurable traces of themselves, at least given current accepted measurement devices. I can learn new wisdoms and cultivate a new attitude toward independent writing programs; my department might learn to support me in proposing one; and a program could be put in place, all to be dismantled by corporatization, by a department falling on hard times, by the loss of a key faculty member—who knows, perhaps me—looking for imaginary greener pastures. Then, with Chris Anson, we’d have to observe:

What strikes me . . . is how easily all the things that have taken so much negotiation, planning, and hard work are dismantled. Perhaps that’s one of the differences between administrative effort and scholarly work; one has the impression that one’s administrative work is moving the world forward, at least locally and institutionally, but it can be undone in a matter of months. What’s left is the *experience* of administration, but the ‘product,’ unlike scholarship, is gone. (Anson, this volume, 168)

The product of curricular change is regularly lost in English departments. Those seeking change start to feel silly carrying stacks of memos around or holding them for years on email, as Chris Anson was smart enough to do. Curricular documents are valueless unless they are contextualized in a valuable way, and independent writing programs have the best chance of innovating in this area. Certainly only those involved tend to archive and historicize curricular developments (along with a few graduate student historians seeking dissertation subjects), and that is the usefulness of a collection like *Field of Dreams*.

Here is evidence of the “experience” of administration. Such evidence first brought me joy, then depression, now I’m at steady state,

sobered, yet somewhat recharged. I fired off a long letter to my department chair talking about how the climate in the English department regarding my program has too long been ignored and claiming I won't let it be so any longer. I've been encouraged to speak up—and plan to do so regularly and forcefully, hoping to shake off an encroaching sense of weariness. Such a reaction is evidence in the power of shared knowledge. The voice I'll speak in will be richer from the thinking and questioning engendered by what-ifs, and I hope will lead to more reasoned “what-abouts.” The problems don't go away, but can be better digested. Imaginary gardens with real roses in them. Some programs it seems already have cultivated them.

#### NOTES

1. At my institution, we have approximately 120 instructors, adjuncts, and teaching assistants—at least 100 of the latter—directed now by a full-time, nontenure-line, Ph.D. associate in English (twelve-month contract) and a second associate who coordinates the computer classrooms and department writing center and assists the WPA.
2. I was the second of two assistant professors, my male colleague, a tenured associate professor, who I expect will go up for promotion in the near future, having been hired two years before me to resuscitate a Ph.D. and M.A. program that was already on the books in the 1980s. After that, we hired two female assistant professors, who were qualified for but denied tenure in 1998 and 1999, respectively. During the 2000–2001 academic year, we were again down to two faculty members, as we had been in 1989 when I arrived. We have hired a third female assistant professor with four years toward tenure to begin fall 2001 and have lost our bid to hire a fourth assistant professor, a replacement, to begin fall 2002. For the near future, we are expected to offer a degree program with three rhetoric and composition faculty. In the last four years in the same department, a female literature faculty member was denied tenure, another female African American literature professor was not given a counteroffer and took a position at an historically Black university across town, and a third female literature professor was denied promotion to full professor. To my knowledge, no male candidates have been denied tenure or promotion or lacked for counteroffers in the same time period: hence my emphasis on gender in this narrative.