

Writing, Programs, and Administration at Arizona State University

The First Hundred Years

by

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## ABSTRACT

Composition historians have increasingly recognized that local histories help test long-held theories about the development of composition in higher education. As Gretchen Flesher Moon argues, local histories complicate our notions of students, teachers, institutions, and influences and add depth and nuance to the dominant narrative of composition history. Following the call for local histories in rhetoric and composition, this study is a local history of composition at Arizona State University (ASU) from 1885-1985. This study focuses on the institutional influences that shaped writing instruction as the school changed from a normal school to teachers' college, state college, and research university during its first century in existence. Building from archival research and oral histories, this dissertation argues that four national movements in higher education—the normal school movement, the standardization and accreditation movement, the “university-status movement,” and the research and tenure movement—played a formative role in the development of writing instruction at Arizona State University. This dissertation, therefore, examines the effects of these movements as they filtered into the writing curriculum at ASU. I argue that faculty and administrators' responses to these movements directly influenced the place of writing instruction in the curriculum, which consequently shaped who took writing courses and who taught them, as well as how, what, and when writing was taught.

This dissertation further argues that considering ASU's history in relation to the movements noted above has implications for composition historians

attempting to understand broader developments in composition history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Notwithstanding ASU's unique circumstances, these movements had profound effects at institutions across the country, shaping missions, student populations, and institutional expectations. Although ASU's local history is filled with idiosyncrasies and peculiarities that highlight the school's distinctiveness, ASU is representative of hundreds of institutions across the country that were influenced by national education movements which are often invisible in the dominant narrative of composition history. As such, this history upholds the goal of local histories by complicating our notions of students, teachers, institutions, and influences and adding depth and nuance to our understanding of how composition developed in institutions of American higher education.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the family, friends, and mentors who have supported me throughout the process of its inception and completion. But I dedicate it especially to Charie, who has endured the process with me more intimately than anyone else; Sophia, who continuously reminded me with her presence (and her inability to be impressed by my work or timelines) that I need to set priorities; and Sydney, who reminded me that time is of the essence.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The history of an institution of higher learning such as Arizona State University must be more than just a mere chronicle of events. It must be a sensitive and adequate presentation of the dreams, objectives, frustrations, defeats and victories of the people who in their time molded the institution as they moved through their day to day activities.

Alfred Thomas, Jr., *Arizona State University: A Documentary History of the First Seventy-Five Years, 1885-1960*, 1960

Insofar as composition studies has a “nature,” it is available to us only in multiteity, in a multitude of stories, of different approaches.

Andrea A. Lunsford, “The Nature of Composition Studies,” 1991

This dissertation is a historical case study of writing instruction at Arizona State University (ASU) during its first hundred years in existence (1885-1985).<sup>1</sup> More specifically, this dissertation considers changes in the place of writing instruction in the institution’s curriculum in relation to four major movements in American higher education during the period under consideration: the normal school movement, the standardization and accreditation movement, the “university-status movement,” and the research and tenure movement, all of which I define and discuss in more detail in the following chapters. ASU’s writing

program has grown to become one of the largest in America, reflecting the contributions of thousands of faculty and administrators and the presence of millions of students over its more than 120 years of existence. Writing has at some times been a central concern of faculty and administrators at ASU. At other times, it seems to have moved to the periphery of discussions about institutional mission, curriculum, standards, student needs, and institutional quality. This study looks at writing instruction at a single institution over an extended period of time and attempts to place the conversations taking place in a broad historical context. By putting these conversations in a broad historical context, this study argues that the place of writing instruction in ASU's curriculum has, at various times and for various reasons, been shaped as much by national movements in higher education—and administrators responses to those movements—as other factors, such as rhetorical theory and English department politics.

This history of writing, programs, and administration at ASU calls three common beliefs in composition histories into question: (1) that composition teaching was in the hands of the least qualified faculty members (see, for example, Connors, "Rhetoric in the Modern University"; Kitzhaber; Susan Miller); (2) that administrators in American higher education were openly hostile to writing instruction beginning as early as the 1880s (see Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric*; Douglas; George; Slevin; Stewart, "Harvard"); (3) that rhetorical theory and writing instruction were degraded in higher education in relation to the previous two beliefs (see, for example, Berlin, *Writing Instruction*; Crowley, *Composition and Methodical*; Goggin).

According to most composition histories, throngs of underprepared students flooded higher education in the late 1800s (see Spear; Varnum, “From Crisis to Crisis”). In response, faculty and administrators instituted first-year composition courses in an attempt to remediate students in the fundamentals of the English language by inculcating correct usage and grammar in students before they would be allowed into higher study. Administrators had hoped remedial writing instruction would be a temporary need, but by the end of the nineteenth century, it was apparent that the need for composition instruction was not going away (see Adams, Godkin, and Nutter; Adams, Godkin, and Quincy). According to James A. Berlin, by the turn of the twentieth century, “composition courses became firmly established in the new American college” (*Writing* 85). Composition and rhetoric were subsequently simplified, atomized, and standardized by writing teachers and theorists (Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* 11-12), and the institutionalization of the deficit model of writing instruction proved devastating to rhetoric, composition, writing pedagogy, students, and teachers alike (Crowley, *Composition* 118-131, 250-265; Goggin, 13-27; Susan Miller). According to this narrative, the system of writing instruction that currently exists in colleges and universities across the country stems from the ignominious origins of the field, the discipline, and first-year composition course.

The history of writing instruction at ASU suggests a different pattern of development. The institution began as a frontier normal school, and writing was taught by the most senior faculty members until well into the twentieth century. In addition, the writing curriculum was administered by people who valued writing

instruction as an intellectual practice and as a practical necessity. Faculty members at ASU were invested in rhetorical theory and writing instruction from the establishment of the school forward, however, the simplification, atomization, and standardization of rhetorical theory that many composition historians believe degraded writing instruction for much of the twentieth century manifested differently at ASU than at schools which have been the subject of much composition history. When ASU was a normal school, writing instruction was not relegated to one or two first-year courses; it was not considered remedial; and it was not detested by faculty and administrators. Rather, writing instruction was fundamental to the normal school mission and was therefore distributed throughout the course of study. The history of writing instruction at ASU suggests, then, that standard histories of composition predicated on the narrative recounted above do not take into account the very different conditions under which writing instruction took place at ASU and schools like it. That is, while ASU's history does not directly contradict other composition histories, it does raise questions about the universality of the deficit model of writing and rhetoric in American higher education and about the development of composition during the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Nevertheless, over the one hundred years that are the focus of this dissertation, writing instruction at ASU did gradually come to resemble the system of first-year composition described by composition historians, and composition currently exists at ASU in similar measure to that at most other colleges and universities. In this dissertation, I attempt to understand why and

how writing instruction—and the values and assumptions informing it—changed at ASU during the twentieth century. I look at the institutional conditions that contributed to the early model of writing instruction at the normal school—which I contend was significantly different from the model at colleges and universities—and then I turn my attention to some of the discernible pressures that caused writing instruction to change in later years. I argue throughout this dissertation that influences which shaped writing instruction at ASU were often consequences of administrative responses to other concerns, in particular the four movements noted above, which are evident in ASU’s archives. Furthermore, I argue that the influences I describe as affecting writing instruction at ASU actually had important affects at post-secondary institutions across the country and markedly shaped many writing programs and classes that currently exist. As a result, this history of writing, programs, and administration at ASU invites rhetoric and composition historians to ask different questions, in addition to those that have previously been suggested by composition histories, about how writing instruction developed over a century in American higher education, about what needs writing instruction met in post-secondary institutions besides “remediating underprepared students,” and about what roles writing instruction played at individual institutions in relation to broad developments in higher education. By inviting these different questions, this history may help rhetoric and composition scholars discover different ways to consider the pedagogical, theoretical, institutional, and administrative concerns that exist in contemporary writing classrooms and programs.

## **Why ASU?**

Originally, ASU was the focus of this study because of the distinctive qualities of the present-day institution and its writing program, as well as its long history as an institutional home for influential rhetoric and composition scholars. Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, is currently jockeying for the distinction of the largest university in the United States, enrolling more than 68,000 students (9,344 of which were first year students) on four campuses in Fall 2009—an increase of about 25% in just seven years (Auffrett). Since 2002, President Michael Crow has pioneered the concept of “A New American University,” the mission of which is to bolster the university’s overall quality while at the same time becoming a high-access university (“Vision”). The institution’s national reputation has steadily improved in recent years, and ASU officials have informally predicted that enrollment will expand to between eighty and one-hundred thousand students before 2020.

ASU’s writing program reflects the distinction of the institution in which it is hosted.<sup>2</sup> ASU’s writing program enrolls approximately 18,000 students in writing classes each school year, making it the largest college writing program in the nation. Each semester at ASU, nearly 200 teachers teach more than 500 sections of writing courses, including first-year composition, advanced composition, professional writing, and rhetorical studies, among others (Rose and Skeen). ASU Tempe’s writing program has seen hundreds of thousands of students come through writing classes in recent years, and it continues to grow.

In addition to the substantial numbers of students who have enrolled in writing courses, ASU's English department has had a number of faculty members who were actively engaged in the field of rhetoric and composition. Jerome W. Archer became chair of ASU's English department just a few years after serving as chair of the 1955 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Archer also directed an NCTE/CCCC co-sponsored conference at ASU in 1965 on the teaching of English in two-year colleges (see Archer and Ferrell), and he contributed to a joint statement by the CCCC Executive Committee entitled "The Status of Freshman Composition" in *College Composition and Communication* in February 1968 (Conference). Other English department chairs, including Louis M. Meyers, Wilfred A. Ferrell, and Nicholas A. Salerno published composition textbooks (Myers published *Guide to American English*, and Ferrell and Salerno co-edited *Strategies in Prose*, a collection of readings for use in FYC which saw at least five editions). And other former and current faculty members have published widely in disciplinary venues, including publishing influential rhetoric and composition textbooks representing a wide variety of theoretical and disciplinary approaches (e.g., Archer and Schwartz; Bullock and Goggin; Crowley and Hawhee; Crowley and Stancliff; Ramage, Bean, and Johnson; Roen, Glau, and Maid).

The writing program has also been host to many influential figures in rhetoric and composition. In 1971, Frank D'Angelo was asked to direct the program, having been hired the year before (D'Angelo, "In Search," 61-62). D'Angelo served as director of composition for eight years, then chaired CCCC in



1979, and was particularly prominent in establishing classical rhetoric as a theoretical foundation for composition (see, for example, *Process* and *Composition*). Since D'Angelo's tenure as director of composition, Dorothy Guinn (a former student of W. Ross Winterrowd's and participant at the first Wyoming Conference in 1976 [D'Angelo, "Professing," 272]), David Schwalm, Duane Roen, John Ramage, Maureen Daly Goggin, Keith Miller, Greg Glau, Paul Kei Matsuda, and Shirley Rose have served as directors of composition, and nearly all of them are still active at ASU and in the field of rhetoric and composition.<sup>3</sup> ASU writing program directors have helped to pioneer programs like the Stretch program, which stretches English 101 over two semesters to give basic writers additional time to practice and develop their writing (see Glau), and which has become a national model for basic writing. Although, as I pointed out earlier, ASU's writing program is similar in many ways to writing programs all over the world, the noteworthy size and distinctive quality of ASU's writing program and faculty distinguish it among the thousands of other programs. It was this singularity that originally drove the inquiry for this dissertation.

### **A Representative Institution**

In spite of its current distinction, however, ASU was not always a stalwart of higher education, and it is the institution's lack of distinction—or rather, its similarity to other institutions—that contributes to its value as a case study. In 1885, right at the time when Adams Sherman Hill was finally granted permission to move his sophomore English course at Harvard to the first year, Charles

Hayden Trumbull founded the Territorial Normal School at Tempe—the only institution of higher education within 400 miles (Hopkins and Thomas 78). While Adams Sherman Hill was answering the cry for more English in the East, the Territorial Normal School was attempting to meet a pressing need for teachers in Arizona’s fledgling elementary education system with the hope that more education would bring more development to the Old West. ASU’s first class opened in February of 1886 with just thirty-three students, and almost immediately, ASU faced a series of challenges that threatened to shutter the school permanently (Hopkins and Thomas 97-114; Hronek 81, 98). In 1925, after forty years as a normal school, ASU joined the movement among normal schools across the country and became a four-year teachers’ college, discontinuing its high-school level curriculum and gaining authorization from the Arizona Board of Education to grant Bachelor of Education degrees.

ASU remained a teachers’ college until 1945, when it became a state college and was authorized by the Arizona Board of Regents to begin granting BA and BS degrees in response to the needs of returning GIs (“The New ASU Story”). By the mid-1950s, the Hollis Commission, formed by the U.S. Department of Education at the behest of Arizonans, determined that ASU served all the functions of a university and should therefore become one. The institution was divided into four colleges for the 1955-1956 school year, and by 1959 the name was officially changed from Arizona State College to Arizona State University. ASU has served many roles to many and varied populations of students and has represented virtually all points on the spectrum of size, status,

populations served, and type of institution at one time or another in its history. For Ernest J. Hopkins and Alfred Thomas, Jr., the authors of *The Arizona State University Story*, the evolution of ASU from normal school to university is a story of western grit, triumph over adversity, and Manifest Destiny.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not ASU's eventual emergence as a world-class research university represents the march of progress, the institution's history actually mirrors the histories of many institutions undergoing similar changes at similar times for similar reasons in places all across the country. As H.C. Minnich shows, no fewer than 165 state normal schools were established in America between 1839 and 1923 (32-33). Institutions in places as far-flung as Ypsilanti, Michigan, Denton, Texas, San Francisco, California, and Albany, New York developed from normal schools to teachers' colleges, state colleges, and eventually, universities roughly contemporaneously with one another.<sup>5</sup> Hundreds of other schools developed similarly, as well, although most have obviously not gone on to become as large or as prominent as ASU. Nevertheless, the pressures of political and cultural shifts which shaped the institution in Tempe, including accreditation and tenure, put similar pressures on administrators at schools throughout America. In other words, while ASU's history is filled with idiosyncrasies and peculiarities that highlight the school's distinctiveness, ASU is also representative of hundreds—maybe thousands—of institutions across the country that have been influenced by significant cultural and historical movements, including those I discuss in this dissertation. Like ASU, the conditions at many of these schools are also overlooked in standard histories of composition.

Higher education, generally, has been radically reconceived during ASU's existence, including changes in the scope and mission of higher education that included the hierarchalization of American education which made colleges and universities the culminating step in a progressive education after centuries in which this was not the case; the implementation of mechanisms designed to standardize the objectives and responsibilities of different levels and types of schools; an explosion in enrollments and the extension of access to previously underrepresented groups of students, which became indicators of institutional quality and affected education funding; the expansion of university research as an institutional goal, which was also tied to funding and perceptions of institutional quality; and the introduction of tenure, general education, academic majors, accreditation procedures, and any number of other amendments to the objectives of classical colleges that have made modern universities the sprawling enterprises they have become.

It is no surprise that faculty and administrators at ASU were both sensitive to many of these (and other) changes and active participants in movements that influenced the structure and role of higher education at the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. The four movements I have chosen to study through ASU's lens have not generally received much attention from rhetoric and composition historians because, for the most part, they are not directly related to writing instruction. Unlike some influences, such as the spike in post-WWII enrollments which Edward Corbett argues prompted the creation of writing program administrators ("A History"), the normal school movement,

standardization and accreditation, institutional ambition, and tenure and research have often had indirect effects on writing programs and instruction. Nevertheless, I argue that these movements affected Arizona State University—and, by extension, hundreds of other American institutions of higher education—so profoundly that writing instruction, particularly its place in the curriculum, was inevitably and irrevocably affected. To give just one brief example, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, in the 1920s, administrators and faculty at ASU (which was then called “Tempe Normal School”) were compelled to redesign the school from a normal school, a sort of vocational school designed to provide teacher training, into a teachers’ college, which included a four-year, liberal arts, collegiate-style curriculum. The change from normal school to teachers’ college was undertaken to meet the demands of a regional accrediting body because without regional accreditation, the school would ultimately have been prevented from training teachers altogether. The new curriculum at the teachers’ college changed the main focus of students’ study, the amount of writing instruction students took in relation to the overall course of study, and eventually caused first-year composition to be introduced as a requirement for all students.

In the case of accreditation, and in other instances that I discuss throughout this dissertation, a broad movement in higher education caused administrators and faculty members at ASU to alter the constitution of the school. I argue that these alterations had profound effects on writing instruction at the institution that challenge what many composition historians have written about

the development of writing education in American post-secondary institutions. The change from normal school to teachers' college, for instance, resulted in a new academic structure, new requirements for faculty and students, and, most importantly for this study, a wholly different kind of writing instruction than had existed in prior years. Whereas a normal school curriculum distributed instruction throughout the course of study, the demands of a teachers' college curriculum ushered in first-year composition designed on the model of composition at colleges and universities across the country. Accreditation proves to be just one of many forces that shaped higher education, which subsequently shaped the institutional structure of ASU, the place of writing in ASU's curriculum, and ultimately the ways that students were taught to write at different times in ASU's history.

Working from the assumption that ASU's various incarnations as normal school, teachers' college, regional college, and research university have reflected institutional missions and values in interesting and important ways, I explore how writing as a subject, field, and discipline was shaped by the local conditions at this particular institution of higher education. Specifically, I am interested in understanding the intellectual and administrative structures that sustained writing instruction at Arizona State University over time and shaped how it was manifested. Additionally, I consider how the structures that shaped and sustained writing at Arizona State University might be understood in relation to conditions and developments at other institutions, in the discipline of rhetoric and composition, and in American culture beyond the academy. I ask the following

questions: In what ways did local, regional, and national developments in higher education impact writing instruction at different times in Arizona State University's history? In what ways did the development of Arizona State University from normal school to teachers' college to regional college to nationally-ranked research university impact theories and practices of writing instruction and program administration at the school? And how has the place of writing, programs, and administration at Arizona State University shaped and been shaped by the field of rhetoric and composition? In the following chapters, I attempt some answers.

In "Chapter 2: Methods and Madness," I discuss in more depth the theoretical and methodological decisions that inform my study of writing, programs, and administration at Arizona State University. I extend the arguments of many contemporary rhetoric and composition historians that local histories offer rhetoric and composition scholars important viewpoints that open opportunities to amend well-known composition histories. In addition, I discuss my use of an administrative lens, as well as my decision to use archival materials and oral histories.

In "Chapter 3: The Normal," I discuss the founding of the institution as a normal school in 1885. I consider the role of writing instruction at the school in light of the normal school mission—to train teachers for primary and secondary schools in Arizona. I argue that the normal school mission ensured that writing instruction was distributed throughout the curriculum, as opposed to being relegated to a first-year course designed to remediate students for college-level

work. I also extrapolate from Tempe Normal's example to make the case that normal schools deserve more attention from composition historians because of the important ways they differed from colleges and universities.

In "Chapter 4: Standardization, Accreditation, and All That Jazz," I argue that the growing influence of regional accreditation agencies in the hierarchalization and standardization of American education played a fundamental role in inducing Tempe Normal School to transform into Tempe State Teachers' College. This transformation brought about the expansion of the 2-year normal school curriculum into a 4-year liberal arts degree, and ultimately prompted teachers' college administrators to adopt first-year composition in place of the distributed writing curriculum described in Chapter 3. I explore the role of accreditation in decisions by Tempe Normal's administrators to abandon the normal school mission in the early decades of the twentieth century. I contend that the transformation of the normal school into a teachers' college, and the subsequent adoption of first-year composition by Tempe State Teachers' College, was necessary to ensure the school's continued relevance in relation to high schools and colleges in Arizona and elsewhere.

In "Chapter 5: Orienting the Institution for Success," I argue that in the wake of normal schools' transformation into colleges, administrators at Tempe State Teachers' College followed a national trend in which institutions of higher education were systematically upgraded to meet the needs of a growing number of students with ever-diversifying needs. Teachers' college administrators' aspirations to have the school become as highly regarded as existing colleges and



universities necessitated that they continuously demonstrate the development and quality of the school. One way that the institution's quality was demonstrated was that the system of writing instruction in the curriculum, particularly for students deemed "remedial," was refined in a variety of ways. As the needs of administrators changed, writing instruction became hierarchical (that is, students were separated into different classes based on aptitude test scores), developmental writing instruction was introduced and disallowed a number of different times, and writing and reading centers were instituted to serve the needs of students who needed additional help or instruction with their writing. As the school became a state college, and then prepared to become a university, I demonstrate that there is a close correlation between campaigns to upgrade the school and the place of writing instruction in the curriculum.

In "Chapter 6: Tracking Tenure," I consider the expanding role of research in tenure expectations for writing program administration as the institution became a university and sought the distinction of being a "major research university." I contend that in the mid-twentieth century, writing program administration constituted an important service to the institution, and as such, contributed to a strong tenure file for many of the university's early WPAs. However, as research expectations grew for faculty seeking tenure, the value of program administration decreased to the point that service in the form of writing program administration became an impediment to tenure. Using the example of one WPA who was denied tenure in the early 1980s as a result of a limited publication record, I argue the status of writing program administration at ASU

gradually diminished in proportion to the increased value of research. I then argue that, as a result of that case, writing program administration at ASU was fundamentally changed by university administrators who wanted to avoid future tenure complications and sought to do so by hiring WPAs with tenure.

In Chapter 7, I conclude this dissertation by considering some of the implications of this study for rhetoric and composition historians and scholars.

## Chapter 1 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> ASU was founded in 1885 as the Territorial Normal School at Tempe, and during its first 75 years in existence, had no fewer than eight different names. To minimize confusion, I refer to the school in subsequent chapters by one of four names (Tempe Normal School, Tempe State Teachers' College, Arizona State College, or Arizona State University, respectively) that reflects its institutional character at the time under consideration. When referring to the institution's collective history, as I do throughout this introduction, I refer to the institution as Arizona State University or ASU because it is the name that will be most familiar to my readers and is therefore the most useful for representing the institution across periods in which it was more than one type of institution.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, "ASU's writing program" refers to the program housed on ASU's main campus, the Tempe campus. There are currently four ASU campuses in the greater Phoenix area, and each campus is independently responsible for writing instruction, including writing centers, programs, and degrees that differ from those offered on the other campuses with almost no interaction among campuses or writing programs. Tempe's writing program is by far the largest. Additionally, Tempe had the only ASU campus until the West campus opened in 1985, right at the time when my study ends. Therefore, my study is limited to the Tempe writing program because it is the largest and the oldest.

<sup>3</sup> Other important rhetoric and composition scholars, including the 2007 CCCC Chair, Akua Duku Anokye, also work or have worked at ASU, however, they have not been affiliated with Tempe's writing program in any direct way. Anokye, for example, directed the writing program on ASU's West campus for some years.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins and Thomas, writing in 1960, offer an interesting glimpse into their historical situatedness with descriptions such as the following: "Arizona, an Indian-ridden desert frontier, was the last of America's successive frontiers to be settled and conquered by the Westward Movement" (viii).

<sup>5</sup> The schools currently in these cities are Eastern Michigan University, the University of North Texas, SUNY Albany, and San Francisco State University, respectively. All began as normal schools, and each was either the first or second normal school founded in their states. The schools each changed into teachers' colleges, state colleges, and eventually universities, and with some small variance, the changes occurred at nearly the same time.

## CHAPTER 2

### LOCAL HISTORIES: METHODS AND MADNESS

Local histories of composition test our theories about the influence of popular textbooks, innovative teachers, dominant pedagogies, and landmark curricular reforms.

Gretchen Flesher Moon, “Locating Composition History,” 2007

#### **Local histories**

*Writing, Programs, and Administration at Arizona State University: The First Hundred Years* is a local, administrative history of writing instruction at Arizona State University (ASU) from 1886-1986. This history presents a rich investigation of conditions that shaped how writing instruction developed at one institution in relation to major, if often overlooked, movements in American higher education during the period in question. I rely heavily on archival and oral historiographical methods, which I discuss later in this chapter, in an attempt to understand and describe some of the important ways in which writing instruction at ASU has been similar to and different from composition instruction at other schools in other places across the country. Specifically, I adopt a local history lens and an administrative focus to look at the relationship of institutional conditions at ASU, as shaped and affected by developments in higher education more generally, and what I am calling “the place of writing instruction”—where writing

instruction existed in the curriculum and what administrative/institutional structures shaped writing instruction at the institution.

In *Rhetoric at the Margins*, David Gold draws on John Brereton's *The Origins of Composition Studies* to argue that composition historians have much work to do in recovering and understanding the history of composition in American colleges and universities. Gold writes, "we still know too little about the classroom experiences of students and educators at Southern, religious, women's, working-class, and historically black colleges" (*Rhetoric* ix). He continues, "The stories of such schools need to be told and not simply to represent the experiences of once-neglected communities or to satisfy a sense of historical injustice but to offer a more nuanced and representative picture of the past" (ix). Gold goes on to profile three institutions—a historically black college, a women's college, and a rural Normal school—to demonstrate the need for updating the historical record, and in the process he demonstrates the ways in which local histories have the potential to seriously contradict received wisdom about the development of composition, in particular the notion that less-prestigious institutions replicated rhetorical pedagogy from elite colleges when making important decisions about the needs of a rhetorical education for their students (see also Donahue and Moon; Gold, "Where Brains").

Similarly, in her recent dissertation, *Revisiting the 'Current-Traditional Era: Innovations in Writing Instruction at the University of New Hampshire, 1940-1949*, Katherine Tirabassi constructs a local history of the writing curriculum at the University of New Hampshire in the 1940s. She argues that

writing pedagogies in upper-division writing courses at UNH were quite progressive by current standards in contradiction to the prevalent notion that writing pedagogies during this time were uniformly static and conservative. According to Tirabassi, writing instructors in advanced composition courses at UNH used groundbreaking pedagogies developed by their creative writing colleagues, such as writer's workshops and roundtables, to teach writing. She argues that broader histories of composition, most of which focus almost exclusively on first-year composition, are not well-suited to recognizing and discussing writing pedagogies that existed in individual schools or in different places in the curriculum. Therefore, following Robert Connors ("Dreams"), Tirabassi makes the case that histories of composition need to be undertaken at multiple, local sites. Like Gold, she sees the possibility for more complexity in the historical record resulting from local histories.

Local histories, like the ones Gold and Tirabassi call for, are gaining traction in composition and rhetoric publications. Composition historians recognize that diverse factors, including geography, size, institutional mission, student body, funding, and local politics have historically affected how writing was taught at a given school (see for example, Donahue and Moon; Henze, Selzer, and Sharer; L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo; Lerner; Lucas, *Radicals*; Ritter; Shepley). Researching writing instruction at different schools often results in seeing notable differences in how writing was taught, and it is only by looking closely at the circumstances of local sites that the differences from one institution to another are brought into relief. Running through virtually all local histories is a

common assumption—one that informs this study—that a complex, nuanced history which includes and values multiple sites of composition history is a positive goal. Composition historians have come to embrace local histories as a means of extending the gaze of composition history to include and value the circumstances and contributions of multiple sites because, as Gold and Tirabassi point out, the more nuanced the history of composition is, the more valuable it becomes to modern composition scholars hoping to better understand the historical circumstances which have conditioned how composition historians, writing teachers, writing program administrators, and composition students function within the academy. To put it another way, national developments in composition history, when focused through the lens of a single institution, can take on an entirely new character.

Because I am interested in institutional structures and administrative conditions, rather than focusing my analysis on classroom experiences or writing pedagogies, as Gold and Tirabassi do, I adopt an administrative focus. In *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration*, L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo argue that histories of composition “can be divided roughly into two groups: 1) inquiries into the ideological/pedagogical theories and practices of composition; and 2) more localized inquiries into the classroom practices of individual teachers” (xviii).<sup>1</sup> They believe, however, that these two modes of inquiry do not reflect the administrative context required for writing courses to run, and that by looking at the administrative context, historians are able to consider different questions than those considered for either of the two groups

above. An administrative lens “locates the writing program within the larger institutional context that so often explains their formation” (xix). Because of the focus on larger institutional contexts, an administrative lens is well-suited to looking at the local history of a given institution, adding contextual breadth to geographic depth. It enables researchers to consider important contextual influences, such as local and national politics or intercollegiate antagonisms, which are often overlooked in other types of histories.

While potentially enlightening, adopting an administrative lens to research and write a local history is fraught with complications because of the abundant strands of inquiry even within a particular locale. Susan McLeod notes that “the history of writing program administration during the period from the beginning of first-year composition up to WWII is necessarily a history of individuals assigned to that task in individual programs” (45). There is also the local context noted by L’Eplattenier and Mastrangelo, and often aspects of “ideological/pedagogical theories and practices” and “localized inquiries into the classroom practices of individual teachers” make an appearance in administrative histories. Post-WWII, programs often have more expansive networks of programmatic documentation that invite investigation if one is looking through an administrative lens (e.g., budgets, policy statements, bylaws, newsletters, etc.). At the same time, as Gretchen Flesher Moon reminds us, local histories and the institutions they describe are connected to ever broader spheres of influence, including textbook markets, dominant pedagogies, and curricular reforms (12). The challenge of an administrative history, then, is to attempt to do justice to individuals, groups, local



conditions, institutions, theoretical developments, national and international movements, and a host of other factors.

At the same time, the challenges of a local, administrative history are also a distinct advantage. The opportunity to focus on many aspects of the history—rather than just pedagogy, or just theory, or just administration—invites rich description that can complicate our notions of students, institutions, the discipline, and more by showing connections that might otherwise go unremarked. For example, the challenges of seeking accreditation were a major concern at many institutions in the early twentieth century. Different institutions faced different challenges, including the need for instructors to have the proper academic credentials, the need for programs to offer the right kinds of courses, and the push for national and regional accrediting bodies instead of local and intercollegiate ones. Accreditation requirements and their effects on local circumstances, as two examples, are worthy of local, national, administrative, ideological, and pedagogical attention, but any single focus is likely to overlook the resonances that affect the many constituents involved, including teachers, students, and institutions. An administrative lens enables shifts of focus in ways that pedagogically or theoretically focused lenses often do not. Hence, an administrative lens entails studying writing, programs, and administration in broader terms than prior histories have sometimes done.

In the context of composition histories, an administrative focus offers a further advantage by enabling researchers to consider the institutional structures that shaped the conditions of writing instruction. In “Overwork/Underpay: Labor

and Status of Composition Teachers since 1880,” Robert Connors argues that composition teachers have been seriously overworked and seriously undervalued in American institutions of higher education since the end of the nineteenth century. Connors he makes the case that by 1900, composition teachers faced an “incredible rise in the amount of individual academic work” they were expected to do (108). “This overwork,” he continues, “along with the increasing bureaucratization of the universities, allowed the formation of permanent low-status jobs in composition which were *not* filled by upwardly mobile scholars.” Connors’s description of composition teaching invites historians to consider the causes of increased work, the mechanics of increasing bureaucratization, and the institutional and administrative decisions that determined how composition would be taught and by whom in light of these and other developments in higher education more broadly.

Even assuming that the earliest practitioners, such as Adams Sherman Hill and Barrett Wendell, were able to institutionalize writing instruction in the form of first-year composition, that course and others that followed (e.g., basic writing, advanced composition, etc.) could not have continued to feature so prominently in American higher education without serious administrative sponsorship. To put it another way, whatever conditions enabled composition to become and remain one of the few requirements in colleges and universities for over 125 years, there is simply no way the course could have persisted without administrative mandates for the course in the form of funding, staffing, designing, and requiring the course. A vast administrative infrastructure has long been essential to sustain the

place of writing instruction at all types of institutions. For historians of composition, then, an administrative lens is indispensable for asking and answering the kinds of questions that can help clarify some of the contradictions of composition: how and why did administrations/administrators authorize institutional structures for composition even as they apparently regarded it as unimportant.<sup>2</sup>

### **A Question of Sources: The Archives**

A major concern of historians looking at local histories has been the need for local materials. Traditionally, composition historians have looked predominantly at composition textbooks and journals because, as Connors notes, other types of source material, “such as pedagogical materials and student papers are quite rare” (“Writing” 58). Connors is right to note the relative scarcity of other materials, but textbooks and journals are often unfeasible as sources for local histories because they are designed to be broadly applicable without regard to the unique circumstances of a given institution. As such, historians conducting research for local histories have foregrounded the need for research methods that value non-traditional materials, especially those that can be located through archival research.

For example, in Donahue and Moon’s *Local Histories*, contributors explicitly contest the idea that composition in America trickled down from elite colleges to other postsecondary institutions by drawing on local archives that show composition instruction was in full use in “non-elite” schools prior to the

establishment of the required course at Harvard. Though mostly concerned with nineteenth century sites of composition history, the authors and editors see the kind research undertaken by the authors in this collection as invaluable for researchers and historians looking at other local sites. Similarly, in L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo's *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration*, the contributors develop the argument that writing program administrators, often working without the authority of the duly-named position, have been around as long as writing courses have been in institutions of higher learning and have been intensely affected by their local conditions. For each program described, the local conditions determined the role of the writing program administration, which ends up being a major argument of the collection. Therefore, in each chapter, contributors draw on local archives, local publications, and other locally-focused ephemera to assay the conditions and roles in a given period at a single institution.

A major goal of *Local Histories* and *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration* is to argue for archival research as valuable and important. L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo take archival research as granted for historical work (xv). Like Brereton (*Origins*) and Connors ("Writing"), the contributors to this book see history as existing in the voices of times past which exist in historical documents, and they draw on these sources to establish the individuals and programs they study as guideposts in the development of rhetoric and composition. As well, Donahue and Moon argue that the documents in "dusty archives" are vital to "illuminate and inflect current historical narratives in new and intriguing ways" (xiii). In addition to being important arguments for local

histories that challenge traditional means of understanding the national development of writing instruction, both of these collections are important arguments for archival research. As well, Tirabassi and Gold make the case that multiple, local histories of composition must arise from multiple methodologies, including archival ones.

At many institutions, local archives have been collected and maintained that date back to the founding of the institution, as is the case at ASU. In these instances, archival materials can be invaluable for understanding the unique local conditions of an institution, especially when considered through an administrative lens. At ASU, for example, the institutional archive includes meeting minutes from Arizona Board of Education and Board of Regents' meetings since 1886. In some instances, these minutes provide descriptions of issues and decisions that had profound effects on ASU, such as funding decisions, curriculum decisions, and hiring and firing policies. In an administrative history of ASU, these archival documents help shed light on what decisions were made and why they were made. Furthermore, understanding circumstances that conditioned these decisions is often invaluable for understanding the results of such decisions. Without local materials like those collected in institutional archives, local histories are often harder, and sometimes impossible, to construct.

Of course, archival research is not without its challenges. For one, as Connors notes above, the types of materials collected in institutional archives are often unrelated to composition instruction, and what does exist is often incomplete, unverifiable, and even curated to support a particular narrative of the

institution. Furthermore, as several contributors to *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition* point out, the relevant materials that do exist can often be (1) hidden as a result of organizational schemes (see Warnick), (2) a minor element in an overabundance of available data (see Gaillet), or (3) in places researchers sometimes simply do not think to look, such as personal correspondence (see Ramsey). The challenges of doing archival research vary from archive to archive, and from project to project, and they are exacerbated by the lack of methodological training of most composition historians. Nevertheless, as noted in the introduction to *Working in the Archives*, archival research is a process of trial and error grounded in particular research questions and aided by generous colleagues, mentors, and archivists (Ramsey, et al., “Introduction” 1-3).

The research for this dissertation was conducted under just such conditions, beginning with questions about how writing was taught in the twentieth century at ASU. As it happened, there were almost none of the materials Connors lamented the lack of; I did not locate any pedagogical materials, such as syllabi or lesson plans, for example. I did locate one student paper, written in 1938 by an exchange student from the Philippines in response to the prompt, “What America Means to Me.”<sup>3</sup> The paper was just over one page long, handwritten, submitted in Blanche Pilcher’s “English 101,102 class,” and was otherwise unremarkable. The lack of pedagogical materials in the archives severely limited my options for researching how writing was taught at ASU, but as I was searching for materials I did locate course catalogs, meeting minutes,

departmental reports to the school's president, and other materials. The materials I did locate were largely absent of the information I went to the archives for, but there was a wealth of information about the relationship of writing instruction and the institutional/administrative structure of the school. For example, as I discuss in Chapter 4, first-year composition was introduced into the institution's curriculum to help secure accreditation in the 1920s. It took several hours of refining my questions based on the materials (and people) available to me, and several more hours revisiting documents I looked at early in the process and dismissed as irrelevant, before I made the connection between first-year composition and accreditation. Mine was a process of, in David Gold's words, "having a strong sense of what [I] *should* find—and allowing [myself] to be equally surprised whether [my] expectations [were] confirmed or confounded" (Gold, "Interview" 43). As I sifted through the available materials, my questions were refined, which sent me back into the archives, and through more stages of refinement. The arguments that ultimately appear in this work emerged after many repetitions of the reading/refining cycle (interspersed with healthy doses of discussion and writing, as well).

In addition to the practical challenges of archival research, theoretical challenges also exist with regard to reliability of archival materials, the veracity or meaning of historical events, or the ability of historical materials to conserve and/or convey any genuinely useable sense of what "actually happened" in another time and place (see Vitanza).<sup>4</sup> As historiographical theorist Victor Vitanza pointedly asked as part of a 1988 Conference on College Composition

and Communication panel on historiography, “Is there any evidence for evidence?” (“Octalog” 43). The theoretical debates about the value of archival research are ongoing, and I believe they need to continue to be a source of serious discussion, but it is not within the scope of this paper to take up the argument. Rather, I conducted my research and writing from the position elucidated by Barbara Biesecker in “Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention” that archives are not scenes of proof; instead they are important places for rhetorical invention—for discovering Aristotle’s “available means” in a given situation. As a result, in Biesecker’s view, “the deconstruction of ‘fact’ or of referential plentitude does not reduce the contents of the archive to ‘mere’ literature or fiction (this is the most common and silliest of mistakes) but delivers that content over to us as the elements of rhetoric” (130). In other words, archival materials “cannot *authenticate* absolutely but can (be made to) *authorize* nonetheless” (130 emphasis in original). My research and writing are grounded in Biesecker’s view of the archives and of history writing—the materials I located in the archives helped me to discover what can be said about writing instruction at ASU, and although I recognize and embrace the notion that this history is partial, contestable, and imperfect (and therefore, unauthenticated), I use the evidence I gathered to authorize an argument about changes in writing instruction at ASU.

### **A Question of Sources: Oral History**

In addition to archival research, composition historians are looking for other methods to locate and value materials that can help to complicate received



wisdom about the history of writing instruction, including oral history. *Rhetoric at the Margins*, *Local Histories*, and *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration* each adds important documentary and methodological arguments to composition history, but they each address time periods that can only be accessed through archival research. However, as Connors argues, oral histories and recollections are important sources of historical knowledge, as well (“Writing” 60-61).

Gerald Nelms makes a compelling argument for oral histories in “The Case for Oral Evidence in Composition Historiography.” According to Nelms, historians have been reconsidering the value of oral histories after they were dismissed as insufficient in the 1800s with the rise of scientific positivism. Nelms argues that oral histories are as valuable and reliable as documentary histories because of the inherent unreliability of all history. That is, “all research exists in conversation with other research and is therefore socially constituted” (379), which Nelms sees as a benefit for oral historiography because it protects historians from drawing narrow conclusions based on incomplete documentary records. Nelms, too, sees the value for historians of setting oral and documentary evidence in conversation, added as well to the biases and perspectives of the historians who view the evidence and write the narratives. Likewise, in *Radicals, Rhetoric, and the War*, Brad E. Lucas makes the case that oral histories “serve as raw materials for inquiry, allowing both prominent and marginalized voices to enter public discourse as well as inform scholarly investigation” (9). For Lucas, oral histories are rich rhetorical acts that allow for inquiry to be shared by the

interviewer and interviewee, even as they assume audiences beyond the interview situation.

Oral histories have, of course, been employed in composition history for some time. For example, Duane H. Roen, Stuart C. Brown, and Theresa Enos collected stories from some of rhetoric and composition's most recognizable "scholar/teacher/storytellers" in *Living Rhetoric and Composition*. These oral histories detailed how the interviewees came to be involved in the teaching of writing and the field of rhetoric and composition and were collected to prevent the rich experiential memories of rhetoric and composition's pioneers from being lost to future scholars. Roen, Brown, and Enos believe, "These stories also help to situate scholars, their work, and importantly, the development of the profession" (xv), an argument for oral histories (even written ones) as vital to understanding a field of study. Roen also edited *Views from the Center*, a collection of CCCC chairs addresses amended with reflective responses from nearly all the speech-makers or their close colleagues or friends "to shed light on their thinking at the time of the address—or on how their thinking has changed over the years" (vi). Both of these collections support the unstated supposition that oral histories, though perhaps flawed by time and subsequent encounters, have resonances that enrich other sources.

The same thesis, that oral histories provide rich context for the work of composition historians, guides Mary Rosner, Beth Boehm, and Debra Journet's *History, Reflection and Narrative*, in which rhetoric and composition luminaries are set in discussions with each other about their understandings of the

developments of the field over a twenty year period. A series of group interviews punctuates more traditional, scholarly essays from participants at the 1996 Watson Conference at the University of Louisville. But, as Stephen North has argued implicitly in *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, oral history can often be dismissed in intellectual circles as mere “lore,” a label which often undercuts the important and serious nature of oral history for academic endeavors (see Nelms for a critique of North’s historiographical methods). Lester Faigley’s response, in “Veterans’ Stories on the Porch,” collected in Rosner, et al., is that “How we understand history depends on the method of writing history” (26). He argues that oral histories need to be buffeted with the more “official” historiographical methods employed in documentary histories (27), but he does conclude that “we need both the big and little narratives to understand our history” (36). For Faigley, then, oral histories are useful in conjunction with other types of history making—a view which seems particularly useful in light of the long presence of oral history in rhetoric and composition, the hard work done by traditional historians of composition, and the more recent turn toward archival research by newer composition historians.

As part of the research for this project, I conducted eleven interviews with seven ASU faculty members who were once closely involved with the writing program as administrators, department chairs, and teachers.<sup>5</sup> In each case, the interviewees helped me to refine the questions I asked and the suppositions I was making, and they helped me to consider different questions from different points of view. Not all the interviews have been extensively cited in the main argument,

but all are listed in the bibliography because, as Lucas argues, all of them served as important raw material for my inquiry at the same time as they directed my process for making sense of what I was learning and how it might be presented and authorized.

### **A Note on My Time Frame**

In any historical study, the demarcation of a period of study is always somewhat arbitrary. A history of writing, programs, and administration at ASU, for example, could well start in 1986—right at the time I’ve decided to leave off with this history—with the hiring of David Schwalm as the Director of Composition. Schwalm’s hire marked the first time the Director of Composition was properly “administrative” and “professionalized,” a point which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. I, therefore, mark 1986 as the beginning of a new period for ASU’s writing program. In the years since, and I believe largely as a result of Schwalm’s efforts, ASU has been the site of many professional and disciplinary developments in rhetoric and composition, including pedagogical, administrative, and intellectual innovations. ASU’s writing program is not without its faults, but it has nevertheless become a productive environment for thinking about writing and teaching writing to university students. Before Schwalm was hired, the writing program was in chaos (Sweeney). In the ensuing years, the writing program has achieved stature as the largest writing program in the country, and it has matured in many ways that reflect the intellectual commitments of hundreds of teachers, administrators, and scholars in the past few decades. When I first

began to conceive of this project, I believed, and still believe, that the writing program at ASU subsequent to Schwalm's appointment merits sustained scholarly attention.

Originally, the subject of this dissertation was to be a history of the writing program beginning with Schwalm and carrying forward to the present day, but it should be apparent that my time frame changed considerably. I began my research by interviewing Schwalm in the summer of 2008 about his role and experience as director of the program beginning in 1986, and in reply to a question about who directed the program before him, Schwalm responded, "There's some ambiguity there" (Schwalm). As it happened, the position had been filled by a series of interim directors for a few years before he was hired due to events that I discuss in Chapter 6 having to do with tenure, legal action, and administration of the writing program. In short, Schwalm's interview, including this comment, compelled me to look at the history immediately preceding his arrival to try to make some sense of the ambiguity he inherited. Schwalm's interview was the first of several interviews I conducted trying to understand the conditions in which writing instruction existed at ASU, each of which pushed me further into ASU's history to make sense of one development (or more often, contradiction) or another.

The problem was, as I conducted interviews and compared what I learned to what I already knew about the writing program at ASU, there seemed to be a growing number of questions and a shrinking number of answers. For example, why was the writing program in chaos when Schwalm arrived? Why was Schwalm hired as an administrator when the Director of Composition had

previously been a faculty position? How did the presence of two faculty members who were former chairs of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (Jerome Archer in 1955, eight years before he left Marquette University to become chair of ASU's English department, and Frank D'Angelo in 1979) affect the writing program that Schwalm inherited in the mid-1980s? The questions raised in my interviews pushed me further and further into ASU's history, and it became increasingly clear that answers to questions about 1986 often stemmed from events that occurred decades earlier. My interviews and my archival research informed each other, with the result that I eventually decided that writing the history of writing instruction at ASU from Schwalm forward would require ignoring one hundred years of rich and interesting history that necessarily informed the program Schwalm inherited.

In the end, I determined that I could write a better history about the century leading up to Schwalm's hire than I could about the two and a half decades following it, partly because of the resources available to me and partly because I would have had to find a way to condense those first hundred years of essential context into a much smaller space than they merited to make the later history as valuable as I believe it could be. I include this note here as an acknowledgement that this history is limited with respect to the time period covered, and it is also limited in the sense that gaps exist in the research, in the scope of my subject, and in the narrative treatment of ASU's history. Nevertheless, however arbitrary the time period may seem, limiting the project to one hundred years still allows me to make the argument I want to make about

writing instruction, programs, and administration at ASU. I have attempted to address the gaps as completely as possible, but, as in any history, they still exist in the following study.

In the following chapters, I turn my attention to writing instruction at Arizona State University in its various guises as normal school, teachers' college, state college, and research university. In Chapter 3, I assess the role of the institution's normal school mission on writing instruction. I argue that the normal school mission determined that writing instruction was a fundamental part of the entire curriculum, spread throughout the course of study. Furthermore, writing instruction in the normal school curriculum was reflective and recursive because it was tied to the goal of preparing students to teach in elementary and high schools rather than preparing students to move into major-specific study. I make the case that instruction at Tempe Normal School provides useful clues to understanding ways that writing instruction at normal schools differed from writing instruction at colleges and universities.

## Chapter 2 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> I accept L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo's categories, but I would add that the first category is often focused on the profession in various stages of development as opposed to pedagogy. For a good example, see Bartholomae's "Composition, 1900-2000." As Bartholomae notes, by 1900, "composition as a university subject was already a century old" (1950). He opts to start his history in 1900, as opposed to when the course started, to mark the period when universities were changing, composition teaching was changing, and English as a profession was changing. Stephen North's first chapter in *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* also marks professional and/or disciplinary dates as signposts in the development of composition (9-18). Thomas Miller's *The Formation of College English* usefully demonstrates that composition teaching in higher education has existed for centuries longer than many composition histories structured on professional developments suggest.

<sup>2</sup> In 1916, the MLA commissioned a report on Freshman English. One of the committee's conclusions was that composition teaching was a professional dead-end because the "ultimate administrators do not, in effect, regard this course as important" (qtd. in Crowley, *Composition* 124). My question is, why then continue to require and fund it?

<sup>3</sup> The process of finding this paper reinforces the idea that materials can be hidden. I located this essay in the personal papers of a Spanish professor, Irma Wilson. I came to her papers as a result of searching the terms "higher education" and "administration" in ASU's special materials online finding aid, and I decided to look through her papers because the Modern Languages department was affiliated with the English department in the early twentieth century. As it happens, Wilson was in contact with the student who wrote the paper because of her involvement in international relations work at ASU (then Tempe State Teachers' College). Wilson stayed in contact with the student over several years, and for whatever reason, was in possession of the student's essay from English 101,102.

<sup>4</sup> See Derrida for a discussion of the undecidability of archives and archival materials. Derrida's work touched off (or extended, depending on who you ask) an intense discussion of historical—particularly archival—theories and methodologies in several disciplines, including history, archival science, and to a lesser degree, rhetoric and composition. There is not room here to discuss the contours of that debate, but it certainly merits attention from historians who are interested in archives and archival materials. See, for example, Brothman; Cook; Schwartz and Cook; Steedman.



<sup>5</sup> The seven interviewees are: Frank D'Angelo, Marvin Fisher, Delmar Kehl, Helen Nebeker, Nicholas A. Salerno, David Schwalm, and Mary Clare Sweeney.

CHAPTER 3  
THE NORMAL

The normal school under this name or some equivalent title has been established in all lands where there exists a system of state-supported schools. It is a vital part of the public school system because well-trained teachers are a prime requisite for efficient schools.

David Felmley, "The Collegiate Rank of the Normal School,"  
1923

In *Rhetoric at the Margins*, David Gold argues that a troubling aspect of composition histories is that they have been filtered through "an assumption that innovation begins at elite institutions" (ix). He continues, "The stories of [diverse] schools need to be told and not simply to represent the experiences of once-neglected communities or to satisfy a sense of historical injustice but to offer a more nuanced and representative picture of the past. Though at the margins of historical consciousness, [non-elite] schools are far from marginal" (ix). In recent years, composition historians have increasingly turned their attention to local sites to develop research that supports Gold's argument—composition history is more complex than canonical histories have suggested, and much work needs to be done to write a more nuanced narrative about the development of writing, rhetoric, and composition across the country (see Donahue and Moon; Fitzgerald; Ritter; Varnum, *Fencing* and "History"). In writing local histories, some

composition historians, including Gold, have begun to consider the considerable role normal schools played in post-secondary writing education (see Fitzgerald; Lindblom, Banks and Quay; Rothermel).<sup>1</sup>

Normal schools are now a relic of American education history, but they were once prominent, if not exactly preeminent, institutions for training teachers.<sup>2</sup> Often founded in rural settings and often open to students without regard to race, class, or gender, normal schools educated tens of thousands of students each year during the height of their popularity (Burke 216; Harris, “Commissioner’s” xiv-xix). Although normal schools ultimately produced only a fraction of the teachers needed in primary and secondary schools (Lucas, *American* 144; Cohen 140-141), it is not an exaggeration to say that normal schools played an integral role in the spread of universal education in America; and without them, large numbers of students—especially poor students, female students, and non-white students—would not have been exposed to formal literacy education or writing instruction. However, by the time of the Great Depression, normal schools were faced with insurmountable obstacles to their continued existence resulting from the hierarchicalization of American education and the spread of regional accreditation, both of which I discuss in depth in Chapter 4. Within a very short period of time normal schools lost all measure of professional respect, and by the beginning of World War II, normal schools had all but disappeared, often replaced by teachers’ colleges or state colleges.

One consequence of normal schools’ rapid disappearance (and odious reputation)<sup>3</sup> is that, in spite of their far-reaching impact on American education

for nearly a century, normal schools are often either overlooked or poorly represented by education historians, particularly for considering how masses of normal school students were taught to write. For example, in *Pedagogy: A Disturbing History*, Mariolina Salvatori rehearses a common belief that normal schools were denigrated throughout American culture virtually from their beginnings. Drawing on several sources, Salvatori writes, “Educating teachers in the fundamental knowledge and practices of their profession was, simply, not generally thought to be important” (61). She goes on to argue that the widespread ambivalence toward normal schools exemplified Americans’ basic disregard for teaching and pedagogy. In suggesting the need for more attention to pedagogical history, Salvatori relies on an overly-simplified conception of normal schools as universally maligned. Evidence supporting Salvatori’s view that normal schools were disrespected certainly exists, but it is complicated by other sources. As Ernest Hopkins and Alfred Thomas, Jr. acknowledge in their 1960 history of Arizona State University, “Universities, in that period [1880s], quite generally meant culture for a few, whereas Normal Schools [...] were on the main beam of the movement toward universal education and *were in high regard*” (44 emphasis mine). Similarly, in her history of normal schools, Christine A. Ogren demonstrates that normal schools were often enthusiastically welcomed into communities in the nineteenth century, and in some cases, cities and towns even actively lobbied state governments for the right to open normal schools (26, 59). Normal schools, like all American education institutions, were complexly embedded in the broader culture, and in order to appreciate their role in education

generally, and writing instruction specifically, normal schools need to be considered more carefully than they have often been. In short, normal schools have not received the amount of attention they merit for adding nuance to composition's narrative, nor has the attention they have received always done an effective job of highlighting the complexity of normal schools' relationship to other education institutions that make them significant for reconsidering composition's history. This chapter is intended to begin addressing that gap.

In this chapter, I look at one specific institution, Tempe Normal School, from its founding in 1886 to its transformation into a teachers' college in 1926. In particular, I survey (1) the cultural conditions in which the school was established and existed for approximately forty years, (2) the intellectual developments in rhetorical theory that informed writing instruction at colleges and universities as well as at Tempe Normal, and (3) the effects of the normal school mission on writing instruction at Tempe Normal. I argue that, in spite of apparent similarities in the way writing was taught at Tempe Normal and the way it was taught at colleges and universities, Tempe Normal's constitution as a normal school fundamentally shaped how writing was conceived, administered, and taught at the school in ways that were very different from other institutions of higher education. Using materials including course catalogs and correspondence, I demonstrate that Tempe Normal's faculty and administrators were familiar with theoretical and pedagogical developments in rhetoric and composition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even adopting theoretical models and pedagogical materials that were used in archetypical first-year composition

classrooms. Based on this evidence, writing instruction at Tempe Normal could credibly be read as developing in concert with the Harvard model of composition history. Nevertheless, I argue that writing instruction at Tempe Normal was very different from other types of post-secondary institutions in two important ways: the normal schools' focus on methods instead of content precluded a conception of writing instruction as remedial, and writing instruction was therefore distributed throughout the curriculum instead of being remanded to the first-year composition course. I contend that Tempe Normal's constitution as a normal school was more important for determining how writing instruction appeared in the curriculum than faculty and administrators' disciplinary knowledge of rhetoric and/or composition. The normal school mission—teaching teachers to teach—fundamentally shaped how writing instruction appeared in the curriculum, and therefore how students were taught to write.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the problematic equation of normal schools to other types of post-secondary institutions. In particular, I argue that normal schools have been misclassified by higher education historians as second-rate colleges. The conflation of normal schools and colleges is not only inaccurate, but it disregards the characteristics of normal schools that are important for considering how writing instruction at schools such as Tempe Normal differed from writing instruction at other types of institution, such as the implementation of a distributed, rather than hierarchical, curriculum. Examining the ways that normal schools are distinct from colleges and universities, as well as from secondary schools, is necessary for providing an alternate lens through

which to consider the relationship of writing instruction at Tempe Normal and at other types of schools. In the second section of this chapter, I assess some of the important intellectual similarities at Tempe Normal and colleges and universities with regard to rhetorical theory and writing education. I show that Tempe Normal School's faculty and administrators were up-to-date with developments in rhetorical theory, including the development of current-traditionalism, from the founding of the school in 1886 until well into the 1920s. Course descriptions, textbooks used, and pedagogical methods, among other things, track closely with theoretical developments noted by other composition historians. In the third section, I then explore the role of Tempe Normal's institutional mission in shaping how writing instruction appeared in curriculum. In particular, I contend that the normal school mission distinguished writing instruction at the normal from writing instruction at colleges and universities, even though many of the same theoretical and pedagogical assumptions about how students learned to write informed the way writing was taught.

In addition to demonstrating ways that normal schools contributed to the history of composition, this chapter also provides an implicit rationale for why, throughout this dissertation, I avoid making value judgments about writing education at the institution I am studying as compared with writing education at other places. Writing education at Tempe Normal was based on many of the same theories that compositionists, whether historians or not, have determined are less than ideal. Whether the differences in writing education at Tempe Normal remedied those shortcomings is unclear. It is not the goal of this chapter to

determine that writing education at Tempe Normal was better or worse than writing education at hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation. Rather, in order to begin providing some of the nuance that Gold calls for, it is my goal to argue that the implementation of rhetorical theory and writing instruction at Tempe Normal was completely different in some ways than at Harvard, or even at the University of Arizona, just one hundred miles south of Tempe. Looking at how the normal school mission shaped writing instruction differently at one institution draws attention to differences in how hundreds of thousands of students that have otherwise been ignored may have been taught to write.

#### **“It Wasn’t Much of a College”<sup>4</sup>**

To adequately consider the impact of Tempe Normal’s constitution as a normal school on the place of writing education in the curriculum, it is important to first briefly unpack the relationship of normal schools to colleges and universities, which has often been oversimplified by historians.<sup>5</sup> The tendency of higher education historians, including composition historians, has been to consider normal schools in the context of higher education—how a normal school education compares to a liberal arts education, for instance—because many normal schools “metamorphosed into state universities with their own ghettoized schools of education” in the first decades of the twentieth century (Fitzgerald 228). Based on the fate of normal schools, many historians have justifiably, if inaccurately, deduced that normal schools were merely second-class institutions with collegiate ambitions. Normal schools that failed or disappeared are imagined



to have done so because of irreparably poor quality, and the ones that successfully metamorphosed into colleges have been seen as rising above their initial limitations as normal schools to achieve collegiate status and quality (e.g., Cohen 112; Fitzgerald 226-227; Lucas, *American* 144; Ogren 2-3).<sup>6</sup>

The tendency to describe normal schools such as Tempe Normal in the context of higher education is understandable considering that normal schools did resemble colleges and universities in some ways. Perhaps most obviously, teacher education existed in normal schools and in other post-secondary institutions. The existence of teacher education in both types of institutions suggests overlap in purpose, although I argue below that is not the case. Another reason normal schools are often conflated with colleges is that many of the intellectual traditions informing collegiate education also informed normal school work, including the rhetorical tradition and developments in rhetorical theory, which I also discuss below. The narrative arc that casts normal schools and colleges as fundamentally alike oversimplifies the relationship of normal schools to other institutions of post-secondary education. Echoing Hopkins and Thomas, Kathryn Fitzgerald notes that “[n]ormal schools were established in a completely different social and educational environment from the elite schools on which [composition] historians have primarily focused so far” (225-226). I would extend Fitzgerald’s analysis by noting that normal schools were established in completely different social and educational environments than virtually all colleges and universities, elite or otherwise. Normal schools were expected to meet specific objectives for training teachers which did not necessarily correspond to the objectives of colleges and

universities around the country. Whereas colleges were expected to offer students a liberal education (see Cohen 145-147) and universities were primarily designed to facilitate content-specific research (see Lucas, *American* 194-195), normal schools were conceived of and established to impart teaching methods, irrespective of content knowledge, to students who wanted to teach in public elementary and high schools (Ogren 32-33).

The differences in institutional mission were not unintentional. For many years, teacher training in America was incidental to other education—that is, students earning an education in law, medicine, and the ministry were deemed sufficiently trained to serve as teachers while they prepared for their true callings. However, by the 1830s, alongside the common school movement which promoted the goal of public education for all children, education reformers determined that teacher training needed to be more explicit. Teacher's institutes, lasting anywhere from one day to six weeks, began to appear in many places to provide some professional guidance for teachers (Ogren 20-22). Women's seminaries, including Troy, Hartford, and Mount Holyoke, were established specifically to provide teacher education to women, in addition to preparing them for motherhood (17).<sup>7</sup> "Teachers' classes" and normal departments also began appearing at many colleges and academies, such as Randolph-Macon College in 1839, Genesco Academy in 1849, and Brown University in 1850. In spite of the expansion of teacher training in the 1800s, leaders of the universal education movement, notably Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, believed that the surest way to meet the growing need for qualified teachers was to establish a system of state normal

schools—schools with the sole purpose of training teachers—that would specifically prepare, and thereby professionalize, teachers.

A fundamental assumption of normal school proponents, including Mann and Barnard, was that normal students would receive an education that differed significantly from that given at colleges and universities. Normal school students did not generally receive liberal arts training, they were not groomed to conduct research, and there was little expectation that they would go on to powerful careers as politicians or captains of industry (though some did). In “Nineteenth-century Normal Schools in the United States,” education historian Jurgen Herbst explains that normal schools were devised to “review the basic subjects taught in the elementary schools as proper objects of the teacher’s pedagogical expertise and to instill in the future teacher a few basic precepts of professional knowledge” (220). According to Herbst, many of the students who entered normal schools had little or no education, and therefore needed the review of basic subjects, but normal school advocates also wanted to emphasize the professional character of normal school training. Therefore, they believed that a focus on the professional aspects of training teachers would accommodate the academic work students needed and the professionalism they desired.

The split purpose of normal schools, to prepare students academically and to train teachers professionally, remained throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. At Tempe Normal, for example, according to the school’s first archivist, Alfred Thomas, Jr., “For several years after its beginning [in 1886], the work of the Normal was carried on largely at the high school level with a small

portion of the program being devoted to teacher training work” (2:315). Students could begin coursework at Tempe Normal in their eighth grade year, taking what were called “Sub-normal” courses for one year prior to enrolling in the normal curriculum.<sup>8</sup> Students then enrolled in secondary-level courses followed by the normal curriculum, the completion of which qualified them to teach in Arizona’s schools. The continuing focus on professional methods yielded mixed results for normal schools. On one hand, the focus on teaching methods enabled normal schools to remain distinct from colleges and universities for nearly a century, offering a different type of education predicated on different fundamental assumptions with different expected outcomes. On the other hand, the notion that normal school students were not expected to learn content knowledge beyond what might be taught in high schools meant normal schools were inexorably linked to elementary and high schools. This link, as I argue in Chapter 4, would ultimately prove damning for normal schools. Nevertheless, normal school proponents gradually pushed for higher standards for matriculants so that the proper focus of normal school training could be focused solely on professional training. Although Tempe Normal continued to offer secondary education in some form until 1924, there was a marked push beginning as early as 1890 to increase the qualifications of students and the standards of education, and thereby, the status of the normal.

Even as normal schools’ responsibility for providing elementary and high-school subjects gradually changed, what remained important for normal schools was the focus on professional training for teachers. In 1895, more than fifty years

after the first normal was founded, the National Education Association (NEA) formed a committee to report on the work of normal schools to the organization.

According to the committee's report,

The work of the normal school is unique. It means more than teaching subjects; it means more than the developing of the character; it means the teaching of subjects that they in turn may be taught; it means the development of character that it in turn may be transfigured into character; it means such a preparation for life that it in turn may prepare others to enter fully, readily, and righteously into their environment. Thus to prepare an individual to lead and direct a little child is a grave responsibility. ("Report of the Committee on Normal Schools" 838)

The unique work of the normal school was providing the methodological, meta-discursive knowledge that distinguished normal work from the liberal arts education given at colleges and the research specialization available at universities. Although the NEA committee members occasionally made reference to the importance of a broad, liberal education, they also made clear throughout their report that they attach great importance to the professional mission of normal schools: "In the high school the end in view is the subject and its value to the student; in the normal school it is the value of the subject in an educational process and the best mode of presentation to produce the highest value" (840).

The committee's comparison of normal schools to high schools, as opposed to colleges, is important. While normal schools were meant to be post-secondary in nature, as superintendent of Denver schools, Aaron Gove, wrote in

his contribution to the 1903 *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, “The education covered in the average normal school corresponds well to that of the secondary school, with the increased task of professional work” (Gove 357). Normal schools were expected to provide educational opportunities that exceeded the high school level, but because pupils were being trained to teach in the lower schools, they were not expected to earn an education that went beyond a high school education except in terms of teaching methods. In other words, although normal schools were technically post-secondary institutions, and although they did compete with colleges and universities for students and funds, normal schools attempted to provide students with an education that differed markedly from the kind of education available at other types of institutions.

I provide this brief history of normal schools not just to provide context for considering writing instruction at Tempe Normal, but also because it complicates the historical view of normal schools in relation to colleges and universities. In direct comparison to colleges and universities, it is hard to see normal schools as anything but sub-collegiate, and therefore, second-class. Over the course of the century in which they existed, normal schools were simultaneously secondary and post-secondary institutions; they competed with colleges and universities for students and funds even as they enrolled students deemed unsuited to colleges and universities; they prepared some students to teach and other students to attend the same colleges and universities they competed with for funding. At Tempe Normal, students as young as sixteen could enroll provided they could demonstrate they had already completed the equivalent

of a 7th grade education. The curriculum included 8th grade, high school, and post-secondary training, and students could earn a teaching degree in as little as twenty-two weeks (Farmer 3). Tempe Normal's teachers, as with teachers at other normal schools, even occasionally had comparable training and/or classroom experience to their students.<sup>9</sup> However, the conditions which make normal schools appear deficient in historical hindsight were precisely the conditions which distinguished them sufficiently from elementary and high schools on one hand and colleges and universities on the other to make them viable institutions in a formative century of American education. In other words, the casual equation of normal schools to second-class colleges—or to colleges at all, for that matter—ignores the characteristics of normal schools that made them distinct, and therefore worth studying in more depth.

Nevertheless, even as there are important differences to consider, normal schools also had important resonances with colleges and universities. In the following section, I look at some of the important intellectual similarities that informed writing instruction and rhetorical education at Tempe Normal in relation to writing instruction and rhetorical education at colleges and universities as established by composition historians. By establishing these intellectual similarities, I am better able in the final section of the chapter to describe the role of the normal school mission in distinguishing writing instruction at Tempe Normal from writing instruction at other places.

## Similarities

In direct comparisons of normal schools with liberal arts colleges and research universities such as those noted above, historians have implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) suggested that the curriculum at normal schools was somehow parallel to the curriculum at colleges and universities. For example, even after noting the complex differences between normal schools and colleges, composition scholar Kathryn Fitzgerald contrasts the Pestalozzian intellectual traditions at normal schools to the beginnings of current-traditional methods in college composition classrooms. Fitzgerald makes the case that composition at normal schools harbored “rich intellectual, methodological, and political implications for composition’s tradition,” which she analyzes in comparison to the theoretical and pedagogical models informing first-year composition at colleges and universities (225). She concludes that normal school values better reflect contemporary pedagogical values in the field of rhetoric and composition and therefore deserve more attention from historians. Fitzgerald’s suggestion that normal schools provide a richer pedagogical tradition for compositionists to draw from fails to acknowledge the different goals and values that informed the different types of schools, and therefore fails to consider how those differences shaped writing pedagogy and curriculum. Gold conducts a similar, if more nuanced, comparison in *Rhetoric at the Margins*, demonstrating that William Mayo’s pedagogical practices in composition classes at East Texas Normal College complicate the equation of formalistic, prescriptive language education to anti-democratic authoritarianism. While Fitzgerald and Gold both acknowledge



normal schools as distinct from colleges and universities, their comparisons are nevertheless predicated on the assumption that composition at normal schools and composition at colleges was the same sort of course. The identifiable differences in how writing or rhetoric was taught at the different types of schools, then, are in the intellectual traditions informing the instruction—current-tradition versus Pestalozzian or formalist versus civic-minded.

A similar sort of comparison at Tempe Normal seems to indicate that, unlike the institutions discussed by Fitzgerald and Gold, the intellectual traditions informing writing instruction at Tempe Normal were virtually identical to those informing stereotypical first-year composition classrooms at places such as Harvard. It is apparent from course catalogs and other materials that faculty and administrators at Tempe Normal (often one and the same) were up-to-date with and acculturated to developments in rhetorical theory throughout the school's forty years as a normal school. In Tempe Normal's 1890-1891 catalogue, for example, rhetoric is described as the study of "purity, propriety, and precision," a theoretical model that Jean Ferguson Carr, Steven L. Carr, and Lucille M. Schultz note in *Archives of Instruction* was well-established in rhetoric textbooks in the late 1800s (69).

Materials from Tempe Normal School exhibit many such vestiges of the predominant education theories in vogue in American education around the turn of the twentieth century. For one, it is evident in catalogue descriptions that the philosophy of mental discipline—which Laurence Veysey calls the "traditional philosophy" of learning in higher education throughout most of the 1800s (21)—

guided Tempe Normal's English courses. According to Sharon Crowley, the theory of mental discipline was grounded in the belief that training and drilling would strengthen the mind, much as muscles were strengthened by regular physical activities (*Composition* 48).<sup>10</sup> Tempe Normal's 1896-1897 "Circular and Catalogue" describes the aim of instruction in the English department as, among other things, exercising the imagination; giving "proper drills designed to give [expression] greater power, scope, and accuracy"; and "train[ing] the muscles into ready submission to mind" (14).

Equally prominent in Tempe Normal's course descriptions was evidence of developments in rhetorical theory, in particular the elements identified with current-traditional rhetoric: theme writing, the modes of discourse, static abstractions, and an increasing concern with formal correctness.<sup>11</sup> Descriptions of the rhetoric courses and the composition courses at Tempe Normal between 1886 and 1910 rehearse the common narrative that writing pedagogy moved from models based on theories of oral rhetoric to more formal theories of rhetoric that included an obsession with mechanical correctness and eventually a "mere hunt for errors" (Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* 148). In 1896, for example, after ten years in which rhetorical exercises were conducted orally—rhetoric was described as "the art of writing and speaking" in early catalogues (Long)—students were informed that they would now be asked to complete themes—short writing assignments designed to facilitate appropriate mental training. According to the 1896-97 "Circular and Catalogue," students' writing abilities would be developed using the modes of discourse, "advancing by easy steps from simple description

to exposition and to the construction of argument” (18). By 1904, themes and modes were institutionalized as part of a new “theme writing” course added to the junior year curriculum (“Tempe Normal School, Annual Catalogue, 1904-1905” 22).

In addition to the introduction of themes and modes, other catalogues are rife with the language of the unity-coherence-emphasis model of writing instruction. Albert Kitzhaber asserts that the unity-coherence-emphasis model (called unity-mass-coherence by some historians) was part of a program of late nineteenth century rhetorical theorists to make rhetoric more practical and intelligible for use in composition classrooms and comprised the movement of rhetorical theory and pedagogy from abstruse theoretical descriptions and taxonomies into an emphasis on mechanism and correctness (141-152). Mechanism and correctness appear more and more regularly in Tempe Normal’s course descriptions over the years. In 1901 catalogue, for example, the general aim of instruction in English was “to secure accuracy and facility in the expression of thought” (“Annual Catalogue, 1901” 19), and the aim of composition instruction was to “present the principles and rules by which the different forms of discourse are constructed from sentences” (22). The message is clearly communicated that if students could just learn and follow the proper principles and rules, they would become better writers. A decade later, in 1910, the goal of rhetoric and composition training was to provide practice in “sentence structure,” “logical thinking,” “spelling and punctuation,” “clear and correct expression,” and “literary style, exposition and argument” (“Annual Catalogue,

1909-1910” 20). “The purpose of composition work,” according to the catalogue, “is to develop in the student [sic] the power to express his thoughts not only clearly, correctly, and forcefully, but originally and spontaneously” (“Annual Catalogue, 1909-1910” 20). It is further noted that “[t]he whole theme and the paragraph are developed; but correctness of grammatical form and sentence structure are striven for especially, while due attention is paid to rhetorical [sic] clearness, force and diction” (“Annual Catalogue, 1909-1910” 21). The course descriptions do not suggest that writing instruction at Tempe Normal is wholly divorced from social interaction, as Kitzhaber argues is the key feature of unity-mass-coherence, but the descriptions nevertheless showcase the language of current-traditionalism. If the adoption of themes, modes, and mechanical correctness are any indication, Tempe Normal’s English faculty closely tracked rhetorical theory and theoretical developments in what existed as the field of rhetoric and composition.

The changes in catalogue descriptions of rhetoric and composition are not the only indication that Tempe Normal faculty were engaged in the rhetoric and composition theory. In 1911, the head of Tempe Normal’s English department, James Lee Felton, notes distastefully in his article “Difficulties in English Composition” that contemporary textbooks were beginning to direct students to write themes “varying all the way from sociological and economic discourses to such startling narratives as ‘A Trip to Mars,’ and the ‘Autobiography of a Cat’” (139). The writing and reading of themes, Felton notes, usurped previous methods of teaching (which he does not describe, but which we might assume involved

lectures describing the principles and rules of English) and added heavily to the teacher's labor while simultaneously undermining the teacher's options for conducting a class. Writing and correcting themes, according to Felton, was a waste of time. Instead, "improvement [in student writing] will come only as a result of mastering the elementary laws of grammar and composition, and applying them constantly in practice" (143). Whether one agrees with his argument or not, it is clear that Felton was aware of, and participating in, professional discussions about the theory and pedagogy of writing instruction that have informed composition historians' views of the beginnings of the current-traditional era.

The textbooks used in Tempe Normal's courses also make the case that rhetoric and composition progressed along the same lines at Tempe Normal as at other post-secondary institutions. At various times, faculty members in Tempe Normal's English department adopted textbooks by Adams Sherman Hill, Virginia Waddy, Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Denney, Gertrude Buck, George Quackenbos, John Genung, and others, many of which get treatment in Carr, Carr, and Shultz's *Archives of Instruction* as predecessors to present-day composition textbooks. In concert with composition and rhetoric texts, virtually all rhetoric and composition courses at Tempe Normal were taught using what Crowley designates the "classical approach" (*Composition* 89), using literary texts "to lead the student to appreciate worthy diction and style" and "to recognize [...] the essential elements of good composition, and to apply this knowledge to improve his own writing and speech" ("Annual Catalogue, 1907-1908" 207). So in each

class, students might be expected to have a composition and/or rhetoric textbook accompanied by a handful of literary texts, ranging from classical texts to nineteenth century poetry and novels. If, as Robert Connors argues in *Composition-Rhetoric*, textbooks were central in the development of composition “because of the dialogic relation between text-books and teacher training,” (69-70) then the laundry list of textbook adoptions at Tempe Normal indicates that writing instructors were well-aware of the rhetorical theory informing writing classrooms at colleges and universities across the nation.

Finally, in terms of teaching, Tempe Normal pedagogy looks suspiciously like that at colleges and universities. In the only direct description of teaching methods that I was able to locate in reference to Tempe Normal’s early years, a student in the inaugural class, James McClintock, describes a system of lecture and recitation that closely resembles the system described by Connors as the hallmark of rhetorical education at colleges and universities prior to 1875 (*Composition-Rhetoric* 44-49). According to McClintock, “Professor Farmer [the first teacher and principal at Tempe Normal] paid personal and especial attention to the recitations in English and Latin. [...] He was a speaker of notable ability, and his recitation in any branch of English study was a joy, for he insisted that thorough understanding of every paragraph should accompany its reading” (Thomas 1:91). McClintock continues, “Principal Farmer believed in rhetoricals. Particularly did he approve of debates. I will remember how I fought for the Chinese exclusion act and for capital punishment, even after the clergy of Tempe had entered the lists on the other side” (92).

While McClintock's description of Farmer's teaching is limited, it nevertheless appears consonant with contemporaneous methods in post-secondary education. The system of recitation, in which teachers lectured on a given subject and students read about and recited the lessons they were supposed to be learning, was common practice in many colleges and universities, even as it was being slowly supplanted (see Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* 44-68; Fitzgerald; Lucas, *Teacher* 16; Ogren, 35-36; Schultz). In fact, if recitation was used by Tempe Normal's first teachers, it is arguable that pedagogy at Tempe Normal resembled pedagogy at colleges and universities more so than at other normal schools and in the lower schools, which, according to Fitzgerald, was based on education theories that stressed experiential and engaged learning. By the time Felton was writing in 1911, his experience of English teaching reflects a new paradigm. Recitations were gone and teaching had devolved into an endless cycle of assigning, correcting, returning, and discussing themes, none of which required teachers to know anything more than what was in the textbook (139-140).

Without needing to look much further than course catalogs, there are many parallels that can be drawn between language education at Tempe Normal and that described at colleges and universities by composition historians through the mid-1920s. Rhetoric and composition were simplified, instrumentalized, and inflected with current-traditional sensibilities. The theories, texts, and teaching styles seem to be thoroughly products of their times, progressing according to what has long been known by composition historians about rhetoric and composition at colleges and universities at and around the turn of the twentieth

century. Add to course descriptions the founding of literary societies in 1896,<sup>12</sup> the establishment of a school newspaper and literary journals around the turn of the century, and intercollegiate debates with the University of Arizona starting in the early 1900s, and Tempe Normal's history naturally aligns with composition histories describing the state of writing instruction at colleges and universities across the country at the time (e.g., Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric*).

### **Differences**

In the previous section, I described how engaged Tempe Normal's teachers and administrators were with cutting-edge rhetorical theory and composition pedagogy. Developments in rhetorical theory guided how courses were described, determined which textbooks were purchased, and certainly affected how writing was taught in classrooms. Students recited, drilled, themed, and abstracted; and teachers assigned A.S. Hill and Barrett Wendell's textbooks, presumably expecting students to acquire the rules of rhetoric and writing as described therein. However, the normal school constitution also played an important role in how Tempe Normal's teachers and administrators implemented writing instruction—a role which is not readily apparent amid the similarities I have already noted. Specifically, writing instruction appeared differently in the normal school curriculum than in the curriculum at many colleges and universities. At Tempe Normal, writing instruction merited multiple courses throughout each year of the curriculum instead of the single (or even dual) first-year composition class. As a result, students learned and practiced their writing



throughout their course of study in conjunction with reviewing the common school curriculum and developing teaching methods.

At Tempe Normal, and no doubt at normal schools to which Tempe Normal compared, there was no first-year composition course, and would not be for forty years after it was founded. Rather, students took courses in, or related to, writing instruction in almost every semester of their coursework. Writing instruction was a part of rhetoric, composition, grammar, and literature classes; and it was considered a fundamental element of normal school education rather than a deficiency to be overcome with a semester of remedial instruction. The distribution of writing courses, I argue, was a direct result of Tempe Normal's constitution as a normal school and had important effects on how students were exposed to writing instruction and how they learned to write. In considering how writing education manifested at normal schools, it is important to keep in mind that the mission and the methods did not mirror those of other types of institutions. Because Tempe Normal was dedicated to training normal students as teachers for the lower schools, and because of the "growing conviction that [...] the heart and centre of the education of an American child is to be the English language and literature," (Foster 119) the normal curriculum was permeated with language instruction that would enable teachers to teach basic literacy to young students. In this section, I look at circumstances that were distinctive to Tempe Normal as a normal school, including the political climate in which it was founded and the role of writing instruction in the curriculum, that affected how writing would come to be taught at Tempe Normal.

The political conditions into which Tempe Normal was established had a profound impact on how writing was conceived of at the normal. As I noted earlier, Tempe Normal was part of a broad legislative agenda in Arizona in 1885, and the legislation that brought Tempe Normal into being had two direct effects on how writing instruction would eventually appear in Tempe Normal's curriculum: first, in how the normal school administration was constituted and second, in how the curriculum was defined by the legislature. The first effect of the legislature on writing education was in maintaining the strict separation of normal school and university administrations. The legislature established a five member Board of Education of the Territorial Normal School which was responsible for the administration of the normal school and all of the lower schools in the territory. Included on the first Board of Education were founder of Tempe and Tempe Normal, Charles Trumbull Hayden, and Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona, Robert Lindley Long. Both Hayden, who was elected president of the board, and Long were normal school graduates and former school teachers. The Board of Education elected Hiram Bradford Farmer, Principal of Public Schools in Prescott, Arizona, as the first principal at Tempe Normal; and Farmer was then responsible for designing and instituting the normal school curriculum.

In part because of animosity between proponents of the normal in Tempe and proponents of the university in Tucson, the Board of Education was a wholly separate entity from the Arizona Board of Regents which governed the University of Arizona.<sup>13</sup> The separation of administrative structures for normal school and

university was not particular to Arizona. Actually, it would likely have been considered peculiar for the two institutions to come under the same administration since their missions were so different (and their supporters so antagonistic to each other). However, some editorialists and legislators proposed a merging of Board of Education and the Board of Regents to reduce the economic responsibilities of the state legislature for two administrative bodies. This proposal was rejected, and in maintaining (and funding) the customary administrative split, the legislature ensured that the normal school structure and the university structure remained distinct, each mirroring the structures of comparable institutions instead of blending into one another. In essence, the establishment of the independent Board of Education unencumbered by the university's goals and objectives but tied to the goals of Arizona's primary and secondary schools, and the appointment of former school teachers and normal graduates to serve as its members, ensured that the curriculum at Tempe Normal was designed and implemented by men with interest and experience in the lower schools, and little, or no, allegiance to the state university.<sup>14</sup>

The political effects of this split should be self-evident, but the effects on writing instruction are situated in the different missions of the two types of schools. At the University of Arizona, the school's mission was primarily geared toward research, specifically in agriculture and mining (Mitchell 26).<sup>15</sup> As at other colleges and universities, the education at University of Arizona was designed to facilitate acquisition and mastery of the body of information in students' majors. Agriculture students were trained to be experts in agriculture research, mining

students were trained to be experts in mining research, and so on. Courses deemed unrelated to acquiring content knowledge, including writing instruction, were considered preparatory and were taught prior to the majority of content courses. As at other universities and colleges, then, writing instruction at University of Arizona was relegated to a single semester of first-year composition, and students advanced into more specialized study by their second year (Mitchell 27-28).

Normal schools, however, were grounded in the notion “first, that a teacher command knowledge of sound techniques for teaching, and, second, the he or she have acquired a high degree of proficiency in their use” (Lucas, *Teacher* 29; see also Ogren, 125-126). In other words, as I established earlier, normal school training was predicated on students learning methods rather than becoming content specialists.<sup>16</sup> Normal students, therefore, did not advance past writing instruction; instead normal school instructors incorporated various aspects of writing instruction throughout the course of study to help their students grasp methods for teaching elementary and high school classes. At Tempe Normal, for example, writing instruction was not considered preparatory to specialized work. It was considered fundamental to elementary and high school education, and therefore was fundamental to teacher education. As a result, students were taught to teach writing throughout their time at the normal. The different ideas about what a proper education should consist of—content or methods—was one that raged among education theorists and practitioners throughout the century in which normal schools existed, and according to Christopher Lucas, eventually contributed to the disappearance of normal schools (*American* 144; see also

Herbst, *And Sadly* 172). Nonetheless, it also meant that beginning from the establishment of Tempe Normal and University of Arizona, writing was conceived of differently at the normal than it was at the state university.

The second effect of the legislature on writing instruction at Tempe Normal was in providing curriculum guidelines which determined that literacy education, including writing instruction, would have a central place in the normal school. According to Tempe Normal's charter, the school was established for "instruction of persons [...] in the art of teaching and in all the various branches that pertain to good common school education; also, to give instruction in the mechanical arts and in husbandry and agricultural chemistry, the fundamental law of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens" ("An Act"). By designating the primary scope of Tempe Normal's work as encompassing "the art of teaching" and "all the various branches that pertain to good common school education," the legislature ensured that the normal school students would focus on teaching methods, as noted above, and what were called the "common branches" of knowledge.<sup>17</sup> The "art of teaching" was broadly understood to mean that normal students would be trained in general teaching methods—"those principles of our nature on which education depends; the laws which control the faculties of the youthful mind in the pursuit and attainment of truth; and the moral sentiments on the part of the teacher and pupil which must be brought into harmonious action" (Edward Everett, qtd. in Ogren 32). There was no question that there were "peculiar methods, applicable to each branch of knowledge, which should be unfolded in the instructions of a Normal School"

(32-33). Still, teacher training was expected to start from general methods that could be used to teach any subject to any student in any classroom (e.g., organization, study, recitation, etc.) and move to distinguishing subject specific methods that would make teaching geography or math or biology more effective.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to teaching methods, the normal curriculum comprised a review of the common branches of knowledge. The common branches constituted the curriculum in the vast majority of public schools in America, and although the curriculum at a given school was inflected by the local conditions and the proclivities of the instructor, the common branches generally revolved around reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography.<sup>19</sup> For normal students, it was considered imperative that students who planned to teach in the lower schools be given the same core of subjects they would be expected to pass on to their students (Ogren 86). For Tempe Normal's inaugural class, the first term of the first year consisted entirely of the four most common branches: reading, writing, geography, arithmetic (Farmer 2). Unlike their collegiate counterparts, who took general education courses designed to prepare them for their majors (see Mitchell 27-28), normal students were not expected to become experts in any subject area other than those which they might find interesting enough to pursue on their own. Rather, the study of common branches in the normal curriculum was a review of lower schools' curriculum coupled with normal instructors' methodological insights about how best to teach them to younger students.<sup>20</sup> It was generally expected that normalites would acquire at least the same level of knowledge they

were expected to convey to students, but that their real advantage as teachers would be the methodological expertise they acquired at the normal school (Gove 357).

The result of the legislature's curricular guidelines was that language instruction generally, and writing instruction in particular, was distributed throughout the normal school curriculum to reinforce the lessons normal students would be expected to teach in the state's elementary and secondary classrooms. Whereas writing instruction at the University of Arizona was limited to first-year composition that apparently mirrored writing instruction at other colleges and universities, at Tempe Normal, "Essays, Select Readings, and Declamations" were required throughout normal training (Farmer 2). Furthermore, because of Tempe Normal's mission as a normal school, in particular the guiding conception that students should principally be taught methods instead of subject-area content, writing instruction did not have the stigma of being preparatory to content knowledge, and therefore students learned and practiced writing at every stage of their education with an eye to how it could best be taught in elementary and high schools.

The conception of education that guided the development of the normal school curriculum based on "the art of teaching" and "the common branches" ensured that the place of writing in education at Tempe Normal differed greatly from the place of writing at other types of post-secondary institutions. From the beginning, writing education at Tempe Normal included courses in reading, writing, grammar, word analysis, literature, and rhetoric (Farmer; see also,

Long).<sup>21</sup> In 1888-1889, students who enrolled in all three years of study would take: “Grammar—Analysis and Parsing” and “Spelling, Oral and Written” in their first semester; “English Composition” and “Word Analysis—especially in the Greek and Latin Elements of English” in their second semester; “Rhetorical Work—Orations, Essays and Declarations,” “Rhetoric,” and “English Literature” in the third semester; “Rhetorical Work—Orations and Discussions” in the fourth semester; and “Professional Work” in which students taught classes in grammar, reading, spelling, and penmanship in their final semester (“Prospectus, 1888-1889”). With the possible exception of the fifth semester of study in which students were primarily enrolled in methods courses, writing instruction was an element of each semester’s class work. As noted previously, the materials and theories that informed writing instruction at colleges and universities also seem to have informed writing instruction at Tempe Normal. Nevertheless, because normal students were given repeated and consistent instruction and practice in writing throughout the curriculum and under the guidance of multiple teachers (including the English teacher and the Literature teacher—two distinct positions beginning in the early 1890s), who were acknowledged as “experts” in the field of teaching, the situation in which students took one composition course from “rhetorically ungrounded graduate literature students who were dependent by default on those inadequate textbooks” (Fitzgerald 225) simply did not exist at Tempe Normal.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, because normal students spent time reviewing the lower school subjects and discussing the best ways to teach them, the work in each



course incorporated a level of reflection into writing education that would likely have been considered impractical in a first-year composition course. One way in which reflection was incorporated into the normal school curriculum was that each course at Tempe Normal included academic subjects and methodological subjects, which, by at least 1896, were outlined in the course catalogues. In grammar and composition, for example, “Topics for study in academic work” included: “The sentence—considered as the expression of thought, as composed of elements, the symbols of ideas and relations; [...] modifications of parts of speech; [...] application of principles and rules of etymology and syntax by analyzing and parsing sentences connected in discourse, in prose and poetry, from many interesting sections” (“Circular, 1896” 16). Contrast those topics with “Topics with discussion in methods,” which included: “Language lessons—objects of time devoted to, kinds, material from nature, material from literature; lesson giving—plans for, preparation for; [...] value and limitation of parsing, of oral analysis, of diagrams” (17). While there is certainly content that looks suspicious to a twenty-first century composition teacher, it is clear that normal students were not simply given drills and rote memorization exercises by which to learn about writing. The course of study describes lessons in invention, arrangement, style, and delivery in addition to grammar, punctuation, and syntax in preparation for presenting thorough lessons in Arizona’s schoolhouses. Furthermore, normal students were asked to consider the theoretical justification of their choices, including “values and limitations” of different methods. The distinction between academic study and methods indicates that normalites had

opportunities to consider writing instruction in ways that, according to composition historians, were simply not available to college and university students enrolled in first-year composition courses. Writing instruction at the normal was current-traditional and instrumentalized at the same time it was reflective, recursive, and reiterated.

### **Conclusion**

Between 1886 when Tempe Normal was founded and 1926 when it abandoned its normal school status, the curriculum at Tempe Normal radically changed several times. In 1886, students could earn a normal certificate in as little as twenty-two weeks; less than fifteen years later, the normal course was three years long. In 1899, students needed to prove they had at least a 9th grade education to enroll in the normal courses, though they could still enroll in “sub-normal” courses covering the 8th and 9th grade; in 1905, sub-normal courses were abolished and students needed to have completed 8th grade to enroll; less than a decade later, in 1917, students could take as many as six years of courses at Tempe Normal, covering all of high school and two post-secondary years; and by 1924, only students with evidence of a complete high school education could enroll at Tempe Normal in any capacity. Along with the courses of study, English courses underwent changes as well, moving around in the curriculum, swapping places, consolidating, and even disappearing. Nevertheless, throughout the period in which Tempe Normal was a normal school, students were required to enroll in English courses throughout their course of study, virtually all of which included

attention to writing instruction to accompany the professional focus that constituted the normal mission and structured the curriculum.

In this chapter, I described some of the key similarities and differences that distinguished normal schools from other post-secondary institutions and shaped how writing appeared in the curriculum at Tempe Normal. I examined Tempe Normal's theoretical, pedagogical, and curricular traditions to demonstrate that, in spite of obvious similarities in how writing instruction appeared at Tempe Normal and other schools, the normal school mission engendered significant differences in writing education at the normal. By the 1920s, however, the values that informed the normal school mission were under scrutiny. The contradictory circumstances in which writing instruction at Arizona State University encompassed current-traditionalism and progressive education was emblematic of contradictions in normal schools' circumstances more generally. Normal schools were neither fully secondary nor post-secondary institutions; they were simultaneously well-regarded and disregarded; they were pioneering institutions in American education (both in the sense that they were often in frontier areas and in the sense that they introduced lessons and curricula that was later adopted by other types of institutions) and yet were still often behind in terms of funding, prestige, and quality. As America's education leaders, at the urging of business leaders and politicians, pressed for increased standardization in the school system, normal schools' contradictions became an inescapable liability in the first half of the twentieth century.

By the mid-1920s, Tempe Normal transformed into Tempe State Teachers' College, replete with liberal arts curriculum and required first-year composition courses. Tempe Normal's transformation into a teachers' college was one of many such transformations that took place in the first decades of the twentieth century, and it is to the forces that brought about Tempe Normal's transformation that I turn my attention to in the next chapter. In particular, I focus on the role of accreditation in standardizing the system of American education in such a way that Tempe Normal's administrators were ultimately forced to choose between becoming a teachers' college or becoming irrelevant. I argue that the pressures of accreditation which thwarted the normal school movement fundamentally changed the place of writing in the teachers' college curriculum by effectively installing first-year composition as a requirement for schools seeking accreditation from the North Central Association, the largest accrediting agency in the country at the time.

### Chapter 3 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, the word “normal” refers to exclusively teacher education. Based on a translation of the French term for teacher training institutes, “*écoles normales*,” American education reformers adopted “normal schools” to suggest that teacher training should be standardized (normalized) instead of haphazard and unsystematic, which was often the case to that point. In this chapter, my use of the word ‘normal’ should be read as relating to the normal school tradition and not as a qualitative judgment about the relative normality or abnormality of the subject(s) under consideration (i.e., “Normal department” refers to a department concerned with teacher education).

<sup>2</sup> During the normal school era (approximately 1839-1939), “teacher training” was often spoken of in place of “teacher education.” According to the President of the State Normal University in Normal, Illinois, David Felmley, “We use the term teacher training because we recognize that teaching is an art in which skill is to be acquired rather than a science of which knowledge is to be gained” (47). In light of my later discussion of the objectives of normal schools, I continue to use “teacher training” throughout the chapter in keeping with the idiom of the time. In later chapters, or where appropriate, I refer instead of teacher education.

<sup>3</sup> Education historian Christine Ogren points out that normal schools became such a subject of ridicule in the early twentieth century that former normal schools have often “buried their roots as deep as possible” (2-3). Consequently, the story of normal schools is not widely known.

<sup>4</sup> I borrow this title from Ogren who notes the problematic conflation of normal schools with other institutions of higher education. “[A]lthough it ‘wasn’t much of a college,’” she writes, “the state normal school was a revolutionary institution in the field of higher education” (4).

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that colleges and universities were significantly different from each other during this period as well, both in terms of missions and methods. At the turn of the twentieth century, there was even the serious expectation among some education authorities that colleges would disappear altogether, squeezed out between 6-year high schools and research universities (see Brown 571-572; Foster 111-112; Lazerson 74). Nevertheless, the conflation of colleges and universities has predominated in composition histories, and I maintain it here on the grounds that the system of writing instruction—first-year composition—seems to have existed in similar measure at both types of school.

<sup>6</sup> Historians of ASU provide excellent examples of a bootstraps narrative that describes the transformation from normal to university. See, for example, Hopkins and Thomas; Hronek; “More ASU History”; Turner. As Ernest J.

Hopkins and Alfred Thomas, Jr. put it in *The Arizona State University Story*, “Arizona State University, as its Diamond Jubilee began in 1960, was a far cry indeed from the four-room, 31-student, one teacher institution of its Opening Day in frontier times” (303).

<sup>7</sup> Although teachers had traditionally been male, many school reformers believed that women were ideally suited to teaching, particularly at elementary levels, on the grounds that education was fundamentally a part of the domestic sphere. For example, during his time as Secretary of Education in Massachusetts, Horace Mann defended training women as teachers to the Board of Education, writing the following: “Is not woman destined to conduct the rising generation, of both sexes, at least through all the primary stages of education? Has not the Author of nature preadapted her, by constitution, and faculty, and temperament, for this noble work?” (qtd. in Herbst, *And Sadly Teach* 28). Jurgen Herbst and Christine A. Ogren discuss the relationship between women and teaching at length.

<sup>8</sup> The “Sub-normal” curriculum was disestablished in 1905 in a push to increase Tempe Normal’s standards (“The Tempe Normal School, Annual Catalogue, 1905-1906”).

<sup>9</sup> In 1928, administrators at Tempe Normal School (then Tempe State Teachers’ College) conducted a study of teacher qualifications and determined that “other than on the basis of years of experience, the faculty was not much better prepared academically than the students being graduated” (Thomas 2:435). At various times, and for various reasons, throughout Tempe Normal’s early existence, this was the case; however, it was not always the case, and for a long time, it was not necessarily considered as problematic, or as intriguing, as it seems in retrospect.

<sup>10</sup> Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, rhetorical exercises at ASU were combined with physical exercises, called “physical culture,” which were essentially equivalent to modern day physical education. In fact, for many years the English instructor at ASU was called the head of “English and Physical Culture” which was separate from the head of “Literature and Elocution”. There is no explanation for why English and physical culture were grouped together, but as it was a distinction that persisted throughout the tenure of several faculty members, I suspect it had to do with the belief that exercising the mind and the body were essentially the same task.

<sup>11</sup> I recognize that “current-traditional rhetoric” is now widely critiqued as a concept; however, it still serves as convenient shorthand for the elements of early composition/rhetoric theory I aim to discuss.

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, membership in one of the two literary societies, Zetetic or Hisperion, excused ASU’s students from taking a rhetoric course (Ogren 111).

See Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric* (47-48) for a discussion of the role of literary societies at colleges and universities.

<sup>13</sup> In the introduction to his documentary history of ASU, Alfred Thomas, Jr. asserts that hostile sectionalism always played a prominent role in the relationship between the university and the normal school (“Introduction” n.p.).

<sup>14</sup> Only Long, as superintendent of public instruction, served on both the Board of Education and the University’s Board of Regents. While it is unclear what Long’s feelings were about the University, Hopkins and Thomas note that “Long, fortunately, favored the Normal School” (73). In 1888, after Principal Farmer was dismissed for undisclosed reasons, Long served for two years as the second principal at ASU. Even after he stepped down as principal, Long remained superintendent of public instruction and was involved with the school in varying capacities for many years.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Mitchell points out that federal funds played an important role in what subjects U of A decided to emphasize. After the passage of the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided annual grants of up to \$15,000 for land grant colleges to establish agricultural experiment stations, U of A changed the name of the agriculture department and procured ten acres of land to take advantage of the funds (17). Even though the Arizona legislature had provided in the U of A’s charter for a normal department at the university, in light of a lack of additional funding, it was determined the needs of the territory were being “adequately served by the Territorial Normal School” (26).

<sup>16</sup> Mariolina Salvatori claims that the professional focus of normal schools became a political problem in the 1880s when some people “began to argue for the inadequacy of normal schools ‘to educate’ teachers [...] because of their exclusive and limiting reliance on ‘methods’” (xiv). Christopher J. Lucas makes a slightly different claim, attributing to Homer H. Seerly, president of Iowa State Normal in 1902, the following “representative judgment”: “The normal schools have made and still make too much of theory, dogma, and philosophy and too little of the real, the practical, and the essential” (*Teacher* 54).

<sup>17</sup> Although mechanical and agricultural majors were provided for in the normal’s charter, ASU would not establish curriculum for either until the 1910s. “The fundamental law of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens” was provided for throughout coursework.

<sup>18</sup> John Ogden’s *The Art of Teaching* (1879) offers a description of training teachers in general and subject-specific methods (iii-iv). Ogden, a leader in teacher education, lists the general methods as: school-room duties, study, recitation, school business, recreation, and school government.

<sup>19</sup> According to Larry D. Burton, “[T]here was surprising disagreement, particularly in the early nineteenth century, as to what these common branches were” (128). In normal school president Alfred Holbrook’s 1859 book, *The Normal, Or, Methods Of Teaching The Common Branches*, (a book education historian Wayne K. Durrill asserts was the one text which virtually all normal school students were obliged to read), the common branches are: orthoepy, orthography, grammar, geography, arithmetic, and elocution. Sixty years later, in *Teaching the Common Branches*, education professor Werrett Charters describes the common branches as: spelling, penmanship, language, grammar, reading, drawing, music, handicrafts, geography, history, civics, arithmetic, physiology and hygiene, agriculture, and subject-matter. In spite of the significant differences between these lists, it is clear that basic literacy was a nucleus of the common branches.

<sup>20</sup> According to the 1903 *Reports of the Commissioner of Education*, in order to earn an Arizona teaching certificate, applicants had to pass tests in orthography, grammar, reading, writing, composition, civics, U.S. history, geography, methods of teaching, defining, arithmetic, physiology, and hygiene (470).

<sup>21</sup> There were two courses of study to begin with: the elementary and advanced courses. Both courses of study prepared students to teach in Arizona’s schools, but the advanced course was longer than the elementary course and included Latin and classic subjects such as Virgil, Rhetoric, and German history. In recognition of the lack of high schools in Arizona, this course was designed to prepare students to attend colleges and universities instead of, or in addition to, teaching in primary schools. The curriculum was arranged so that students not wishing to become teachers could get an education meant to rival that which could be received in any other secondary institution. The academic course would then admit them to a college or university with the same credits as a high school graduate (Thomas 2:131). After Farmer left, the new principal, Robert Lindley Long, redesigned the curriculum into a single track, though students who had already completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade could start in the second year and many students left before completing the whole course of study.

<sup>22</sup> As I noted earlier, the notion of Tempe Normal’s teachers as “experts” is disputable in terms of credentials. Expertise was usually predicated on a record of successful classroom teaching, excellent references, and occasionally some college-level study. While the qualifications of Tempe Normal faculty members might seem suspect, the point that students were taught by teachers deemed experts, as opposed to being pawed off on novices, should not be overlooked.



## CHAPTER 4

### STANDARDIZATION, ACCREDITATION, AND ALL THAT JAZZ

American education at the end of the last century had come to be a variegated hodgepodge of uncoordinated practices—in school and college alike—which had never undergone any screening from anybody, and many of which were shoddy, futile, absurd beyond anything we now conceive of; and the Age of Standards—as the period of 1890 to 1915 may come to be called—brought order out of chaos.

C.M. McConn, “Academic Standards Versus US Individual Differences,” 1935

Voluntary accrediting, as contrasted with accrediting by legal authorities, has had the major influence in establishing the power of accreditation in higher education.

Tim Moore Stinnett, *Accreditation of Institutions for Teacher Preparation*, 1951

In Chapter 3, I argued that Tempe Normal School’s constitution as a normal school ensured that writing instruction was not considered remedial, as composition historians have long argued it was in other post-secondary institutions. Rather, writing instruction was fundamental to the normal school mission of preparing teachers for employment in lower schools, and, as a result, was distributed throughout the normal curriculum instead of being relegated to one or two first-year composition courses. In addition to extended practice in

learning to write because of the distributed curriculum, Tempe Normal's students were provided with opportunities to reflect on their writing as they considered how it could best be taught to students in elementary and high schools. In spite of obvious affinities with the system of first-year composition that apparently obtained at colleges and universities across the country, and in spite of the discernable influence of developments in rhetorical theory and composition pedagogy in catalogue descriptions of Tempe Normal's writing curriculum, I argue that Tempe Normal's normal school students were nevertheless exposed to writing instruction in very different ways from their collegiate and university counterparts. By 1922, however, the normal school model was beginning to lose favor in America. Tempe Normal School was threatened with the loss of accreditation unless administrators abandoned normal school status and redesigned the school as a teachers' college, which included expanding the 2-year post-secondary curriculum into a 4-year collegiate curriculum.

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, accreditation was one of the foremost concerns of Tempe Normal's administrators because of how it dictated Tempe Normal's relationships to the secondary and post-secondary schools in Arizona, how it defined the qualifications of Tempe Normal graduates to teach inside and outside the state, and how it affected the institution's enrollment and funding levels. As long as Tempe Normal was a normal school, accreditation was arranged by the president, who made agreements with schools and school boards in surrounding states. Based on those agreements, graduates from an accredited normal school would be eligible to teach in other states or

districts without having to take qualifying examinations, which were the primary instrument for determining a teacher's qualifications for employment in public schools into the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

National and regional accreditation agencies, however, slowly gained stature and power in American education during the first two decades of the twentieth century because of the relentless push for standardization in American education which I describe below. By the 1920s, schools at all levels were increasingly reliant on outside accreditation from national and regional agencies (Harper 138-140). For a number of complexly related reasons, accreditation standards pushed normal schools across the country, including Tempe Normal, to “upgrade” to teachers’ colleges if they wanted to remain relevant in American education. As normal schools outside of Arizona transformed into teachers’ colleges in response to changes in national education standards, which I discuss in detail below, Tempe Normal administrators had little choice but to follow suit. Tempe Normal, therefore, abandoned the normal school constitution and became Tempe State Teachers’ College (TSTC) in 1925. Shortly thereafter, a required, two-course first-year composition sequence resembling first-year composition at other colleges and universities was introduced into TSTC’s curriculum. English 101 and 102 have existed in the institution’s curriculum—and have been required of almost every student—ever since. In this chapter, I examine the pressures of standardization and accreditation in American education that eventually induced Tempe Normal to become a college in the mid-1920s. I look at the systems of accreditation that existed at Tempe Normal from 1900 into the 1930s and how the

school changed as accreditation expectations changed. I weigh the subsequent effect of Tempe Normal's transformation and accreditation on writing instruction at the school and argue that the developments in accreditation procedures redefined writing instruction at Tempe Normal, making it more recognizable in the context of the first-year composition tradition noted by composition historians.

In the next section, I provide a brief discussion of the push for standardization in American education in the late 1800s which begat the accreditation movement on a national level. In some ways, the push for standardization that I describe excludes normal schools, and I'll later argue that Tempe Normal was largely excluded for close to twenty-five years from the discussions about standardization and accreditation taking place with regard to high schools, colleges, and universities. However, the intentional exclusion of normal schools from national discussions of standardization and accreditation would eventually have important repercussions for Tempe Normal as a result of powerful alliances that developed between high schools and colleges/universities. After I describe the national development of standardization and accreditation, I return to Tempe Normal to situate its accreditation procedures in the system of national and regional accreditation during the first two decades of the twentieth century because understanding the process by which Tempe Normal became accredited is necessary for understanding how writing instruction was affected. Finally, I look specifically at the effects of accreditation on writing education at

Tempe Normal, including the demands that ushered first-year composition into Tempe Normal's curriculum.

### **Standardization on a National Scale**

The twin pressures of standardization and accreditation which precipitated Tempe Normal's change from normal school to teachers' college in 1925 had, according to Marc VanOverbeke, dramatically shaped the system of American education beginning in the late 1800s. Because there was no federal agency authorized to regulate schools, standardization had long been a concern of education leaders who were distressed because American education was poorly articulated and almost completely unregulated, and consequently uneven in terms of availability and quality.<sup>2</sup> According to VanOverbeke, in the nineteenth century the lack of systemic standards meant that secondary schools often offered college level work; colleges offered secondary work; normal schools, women's schools, scientific institutes, commercial schools, and independent professional schools (e.g., law and medical schools) offered secondary, collegiate, and professional instruction; and some secondary schools offered elementary, secondary, and normal school work (17-20). As T. Gregory Foster put it in his 1903 report to the Mosely Education Commission, "[T]he history and conditions of the different States vary widely, and, while there is active progress toward unification without uniformity in the educational institutions of America, the process has only just begun" (109).<sup>3</sup> In the absence of a mechanism for standardizing schools or the education they provided, for all intents and purposes any school could grant itself

institutional status by virtue of naming itself a grammar school, high school, or whatever else.

Lack of standardization was troublesome for secondary and post-secondary schools alike. On the one hand, secondary education was seen as a key to middle-class status throughout much of the nineteenth century, preparing students for professional jobs that demanded proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics beyond basic levels. VanOverbeke notes that middle-class parents strongly supported public high schools because “they valued the practical courses that most high schools and academies offered in grammar, history, science, modern languages, and mathematics” which they believed prepared students well for commercial pursuits (14). A high school education qualified graduates to be editors, accountants, and bankers, and to hold a host of other clerical, administrative, and management positions that ensured middle-class status.

Because high schools qualified students for most jobs, post-secondary education was considered beneficial by many people, but certainly not essential. Furthermore, because professional schools, including normal and technical schools, built additional training into their curricula to prepare students for specific lines of employment, attending a college or university was often seen as one option among many for students interested in education beyond high school (e.g., Cremin, “The Education of the Educating Professions”). Post-secondary schools of all types were constantly working to shore up their value, real and perceived, to potential students. Direct competition with powerful secondary schools was a serious impediment to their success.

On the other hand, in direct competition with post-secondary institutions for students and state or federal funds, secondary schools were also increasingly vulnerable for several reasons. First, high schools were not well equipped to prepare students to enter respected professions that had long been the province of colleges, especially law and medicine. And, as high school diplomas became progressively more common, they became less valuable for the kind of differentiation among applicants that business and industry were interested in (see Berlin, *Rhetoric* 21; VanOverbeke 15). Second, many post-secondary schools opened preparatory departments to address the varied levels of education that high schools provided, thereby calling into question the value of time wasted in public schools, especially in light of the inconsistent level of education students supposedly received in public schools. Third, professional schools that had long existed as options to colleges and universities were increasingly incorporated into college and university structures, thereby strengthening the claim of colleges and universities to providing the majority of education options beyond what could be offered at high schools (for example, Harvard founded a law school in the 1870s and Johns Hopkins opened a medical school in the 1880s). And fourth, due to the faith in science that permeated American culture generally, universities' concentration on research and scientific evidence, and the move among post-secondary institutions in general toward research, was increasingly valued as a driver of American culture, business, industry, and education (Cremin, *Transformation* 90; Hawkins 815; Lazerson 10). Secondary schools enjoyed significant status in nineteenth century American education, especially as

compulsory education laws gradually encompassed secondary education, but the threat of obsolescence was keenly felt as the twentieth century approached.<sup>4</sup>

One result of the pervasive interest in standardizing education is that the last three decades of the nineteenth century saw an abundance of associations, commissions, conferences, meetings, and committees among American's educational authorities dedicated to devising and supporting articulation from elementary to secondary and then post-secondary institutions meant to overcome the competition among schools.<sup>5</sup> Both secondary and post-secondary schools—neither of which, according to VanOverbeke, possessed sufficient power to act without substantial goodwill from the other (2)—supported the establishment of a defined education hierarchy “because it meant clarifying the purposes and roles of each level, and it meant aligning standards and courses so that students could flow seamlessly from one grade to another” (11). An education hierarchy meant schools at all levels would be necessary and competition would decrease dramatically. Evidence suggesting that colleges and universities were the prime movers in “upgrading” high schools in the late 1800s supports a faulty characterization of the relationship between secondary and post-secondary education. Secondary schools were equally engaged in the push toward standardization which helped define the purposes and roles of all types of schools. Therefore, rather than competing with colleges and universities, secondary schools assumed responsibility for determining who would go on to college by virtue of awarding diplomas.



Although standardization was an important force in American education, it did not solve many of the problems that existed among schools. For one, conversations taking place between secondary and post-secondary authorities often comprised only the elite schools and universities that have long been imagined as the arbiters of education policy. Because of their differing missions and student populations, the interests of other types of schools, including normal schools and rural primary and secondary schools, were often overlooked in official pronouncements even as these schools exerted significant force on American education by educating many thousands of students. Standardization measures often failed to reach schools not included in these conversations, not least because measures appropriate for elite schools were often hopelessly out-of-touch with material conditions at other schools.

As it happened, the advent of an education hierarchy, which seemed designed to ignore schools that were not deemed “representative,” did not ensure standardization. Perhaps most significantly, among the pressures of teacher professionalization, burgeoning enrollments, state and federal interests, compulsory education legislation, college preparation and vocational training, and an explosion in education interest groups (e.g., the National Education Association),<sup>6</sup> standardization helped to define the shape of the American education system without seriously addressing variations in courses and quality of study at various schools at the same level. High schools, for example, had a more definable role in the system of education as a result of standardization, but there was nothing to ensure that all high schools would meet a certain standard of

education or guarantee a certain amount of curricular rigor from one school to the next. At land-grant colleges, even legal requirements for basic uniformity set down by the federal government as a pre-condition of funding were insufficient for ensuring that students did equal amounts of work from one land-grant school to the next (see Addis 427). The education hierarchy was simply not well-suited to addressing standardization across schools, nor did it necessarily prevent other types of schools from existing outside the hierarchy, especially when their missions were focused on specific types of education (e.g., teacher education) or student populations.

### **Devising Standardization: Exams and Accreditation**

For many years, colleges and universities tried to account for the lack of standardization in American high schools by expanding college entrance examinations, which Mary Trachsel notes had long been a mechanism for ensuring students had the proper training to enter classical colleges (51; see also Broome). But, in the post-Civil War era, high schools grew increasingly frustrated with the individual standards at different colleges and universities. According to VanOverbeke, entrance exams varied greatly, and the variations were frustrating for the secondary schools that did want to prepare students to enter colleges (29-31). As students increasingly left local communities to attend post-secondary schools in other parts of the country, the variations in entrance requirements became unmanageable. The tensions between secondary and post-secondary institutions were exacerbated by entrance examinations. High school teachers and

administrators increasingly assumed responsibility for college preparation, but they also grew increasingly dissatisfied with the burden of meeting widely varied expectations at individual colleges and universities.<sup>7</sup> Colleges and universities needed high schools to accept the job of funneling students to higher education, but they were also confronted with unevenly prepared students and uncertainty about how to meet the challenges of educating a newly diverse student body. Although some schools, notably Harvard and Yale, retained entrance examinations for many years, entrance exams quickly became untenable for aligning secondary and post-secondary education on a large scale.

The system that emerged to advance standardization in American education was one of voluntary regional and national accreditation. Although accreditation takes, and has taken, many forms, at its base, it is “the recognition accorded to an institution that meets standards or criteria established by a competent agency or association. Its general purpose is to promote and insure high quality in educational programs” (Blauch 3). Beginning in the early 1870s at the University of Michigan, individual colleges and universities began to establish accreditation systems whereby university or college faculty members visited state high schools and deemed them worthy or unworthy of accreditation based on the quality of instruction and the rigor of the curriculum. Under Michigan’s system, faculty members visited state high schools to determine if teachers and curriculum were sufficiently demanding to prepare students for university-level work. High schools that earned accreditation could send graduates to the University of Michigan directly without requiring students to take entrance examinations,

whereas students from non-accredited schools could only be admitted on the basis of entrance exams. VanOverbeke asserts, “What started in Michigan as a state effort toward articulating higher and secondary education [in 1871] assumed a national scale by the early 1900s” (7). Soon schools across the country were considering accreditation as a means for standardizing education in a way that was advantageous to schools at all levels: colleges and universities would get consistency assured by accreditation, and secondary schools would be freed from having to teach to numerous entrance examinations (see, for example, Blauch, 10-14; Butts, “National Uniformity”; Reichel, 288-289; Selden 30-44).

In spite of its popularity, Michigan’s accreditation model soon faced significant challenges. Although it seems to have had little direct impact in Michigan, in the east, some elite colleges and universities rejected inspection visits because it shifted the responsibility for admissions from colleges and universities to the lower schools (VanOverbeke 47; Trachsel 36-37). The rejection of accreditation visits by post-secondary institutions left students and schools at the mercy of the examination system. More importantly, for schools that did adopt Michigan’s model, the demands of accreditation soon became prohibitive. In the beginning, Michigan faculty members visited high schools every year, but increasing demand from Michigan’s high schools, requests for accreditation from high schools in neighboring states, and the costs associated with inspections soon overwhelmed inspectors. The answer, both to the elite schools’ resistance and to the demands of accreditation, was the introduction of regional accrediting bodies. Regional accreditation agencies, such as the North Central Association of

Colleges and Schools (NCA), were established to bring some semblance of standardization to the American education system which boasted no fewer than twenty-five types of institutions where students could get some level of certifiable education in the late 1800s.<sup>8</sup>

The first regional accreditation association was the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools (NEACPS) formed in 1885. The association was made up of representatives from each of its member bodies and declared its purpose as “The establishment of mutually sympathetic and helpful relations between the faculties of the colleges represented and the teachers of the preparatory schools, and the suggestion to that end of practical measures and methods of work which shall strengthen both classes of institutions by bringing them into effective harmony” (qtd. in Brown, *Making* 380). In practice, the NEACPS was responsible for aligning the entrance requirements among elite colleges and universities in New England so that feeder schools could reduce the exams to which they needed to teach (VanOverbeke 83). At the behest of the NEACPS, the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission was formed in 1886 “for the purpose of maintaining and promoting uniformity in the requirements for admission” to member colleges and universities (“Requirements for Admission” 458).<sup>9</sup> This commission established a set of admissions requirements accepted by members of the NEACPS which aligned the expectations of high schools with colleges and universities in the region. In effect, the NEACPS and the subsequent commission on admissions established a model for regional accreditation that went a long way toward ensuring standardization in

member high schools,<sup>10</sup> aligning courses of study between high schools and post-secondary schools, retaining admissions decisions in the colleges and universities, and reducing the burden of and costs associated with inspections. Soon, regional agencies such as the NEACPS were relied upon throughout the country to certify the quality and standards of schools in their regions, from elementary schools to universities, and, VanOverbeke writes, “By the mid-1890s, accreditation programs had become the predominant method for admitting students to college” (59).

In describing national standardization and accreditation efforts in American education to this point, it has been necessary to overgeneralize and reduce the considerable complexity of both in the interest of time and space. I have vastly oversimplified the establishment of America’s education hierarchy during the last decades of the nineteenth century, which was a matter of much debate and often virulent disagreement (see, for example, “The Influence of the Uniform Entrance Requirements in English”; Kirtland; Stinnett; VanOverbeke). Likewise, the development and expansion of entrance exams and accreditation were far more complex than I have made them out to be (see, for example, Scott, “College-Entrance”; Selden 1-6; Trachsel; VanOverbeke 47). Nevertheless, I provide this simplified historical narrative for two reasons: first, even in this simplified form, it should be evident that standardization and accreditation were pervasive in discussions about the state of education at the time Tempe Normal was founded and during its formative years as a normal school; and, second, this basic context is necessary to understand how standardization and accreditation

would eventually affect writing instruction at Tempe Normal, the subject to which I turn my attention in the next section.

### **Standardization and Accreditation at the Normals**

Even in its simplified form, the above history of standardization and accreditation demonstrates an important disconnect between national education policy and the place of normal schools. As I have argued, discussions of standardization and accreditation often either ignored the existence of normal schools or imagined them out of existence, replaced by education departments in colleges and universities. In effect, the streamlining of education into a hierarchy in which students moved from elementary schools to high schools to colleges/universities was not designed to leave room for normal schools. Concerns about education standardization proliferated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and as accreditation found support from teachers, higher education leaders, education lobbying groups, and politicians, the education hierarchy strengthened, and normal schools were left to fit into the hierarchy or be sloughed off. As a result of normal schools' general exclusion from the education hierarchy, the standardization and accreditation which was shaping the collegiate model was somewhat distant from normals for many years.

Standardization was a concern for normal schools, just as it was at other types of schools, but it was a matter of standardizing normal schools independently from other types of institutions. That is, standardization was not an attempt to align normal schools with colleges and universities, but rather an effort

to ensure that normal schools in different places were serving similar needs for future teachers. Likewise, it was in the interest of colleges and universities to exclude normal schools from the education hierarchy because of the threat they posed to enrollments. In “Certain Influences in Teachers College Standardization,” dean of Southern State Normal School in Springfield, South Dakota, Walter W. Ludeman, describes the situation whereby college and universities opposed standards for normal schools “for fear that these institutions would cut into arts college enrollments” (363). At the same time, “The normal schools and teachers colleges have hindered their own standardization. Presidents and faculty representatives have failed to agree on matters of policy in connection with curricula, faculty preparation, etc., with the result that each institution has been a unit unto itself, making standardization difficult if not impossible” (Ludeman 363). When normal schools did attempt standardization, they calibrated themselves against other normal schools and what they perceived to be the demands of teacher training, not against colleges and universities which held a much different conception of teacher education as predicated on content knowledge, not teaching methods.

In Arizona, for example, in 1909, the State Legislature passed the “Uniform Courses of Study Act” which declared, “That the courses of study leading to graduation from the Territorial Normal Schools of Arizona shall be uniform and shall be approved by the Territorial Board of Education.” This act provided for no amendment of the state university or the high schools. Rather, the legislators wanted to make certain that attendees of one state normal school were



as well prepared as attendees of the other.<sup>11</sup> The curriculum at Tempe Normal changed several times over the course of its forty years as a normal school as the demands of the lower schools did, but discussions of and standardization were not about the same sort of articulation that characterized standardization for high schools and colleges.

Likewise, accreditation held different significance for normal schools than it did for other types of institutions. Maintaining accreditation meant aligning minimum standards with what normal schools in other states were doing. Accreditation at high schools, colleges, and universities was primarily about standardizing curricula and aligning different stages of education. Normal schools, however, tended to be established in rural areas, open to non-traditional students, and focused on providing and reinforcing the curriculum of lower schools. As a result, normal school teachers and administrators were less concerned than their collegiate counterparts about the kind of education students had before attending. In other words, because normal schools did not have the same concerns about maintaining uniform standards for entering students as elite schools, accreditation served the objective of standardizing normal schools as opposed to maintaining selectivity as it did at other schools.

In *A Century of Public Teacher Education*, historian Charles A. Harper argues that the first two decades of the twentieth century saw profound changes in what accreditation meant for normal schools. Accreditation agencies, such as the NCA, were primarily organized and administrated by college and university faculty; they accredited high schools; and they quickly assumed the task of

accrediting colleges and universities. NCA, which was (and is) one of the largest accrediting agencies, began accrediting high schools in 1902 and commenced accrediting colleges and universities in 1907. Ludeman points out that normal schools and teachers colleges were included in the NCA's college accreditation rolls until 1913, when they "were taken off the regular college list and placed in an unclassified list," probably because "most of them were so far inferior on the [higher] standards that were adopted" for colleges and universities in that year (364-365).

Since accrediting agencies had a vested interest in both high schools and colleges, they also had a vested interest in maintaining the education hierarchy. After normal schools and teachers' colleges were removed from the NCA's oversight, there was little need for them to promote normal schools' claims to teacher education. In other words, accreditation agencies had a vested interest in promoting collegiate education, as opposed to normal training, for teachers. For some years after the turn of the century, normal schools continued to educate teachers, revising curricula to meet the demands of lower schools, but essentially holding to the organizing principle that teacher education should remain focused on methods and pedagogy. At Tempe Normal, the courses of study meant to precede the normal school curriculum changed repeatedly, for example, but the normal curriculum remained relatively stable from the time the school opened until 1922 when the required course became three years instead of two. But it quickly became impractical for normal schools to resist adopting collegiate standards, since their graduates would be unemployable.

The characteristics which made normal schools unique, and therefore unsuited to the pressures of the standardization movement, would prove to be a source of serious difficulty for normals. According to Christopher J. Lucas in *Teacher Education in America*, normal schools had long had a reputation for poor academic quality and lax entrance standards, but by the turn of the twentieth century, normals were coming to be seen as grounded in outmoded theories and methods and incapable of meeting the needs of schools and students (see also Felmley). “Whatever the reasons for the negative perception of normal schools,” writes Lucas, “something had to be done” (54). As Lucas sees it, the negative perceptions of normal schools resulting from their poor quality pressured normal schools to take one of three routes in the first two decades of the century: (1) improve sufficiently to become colleges, (2) adopt secondary school standards and abandon teacher education, or (3) fade into extinction. By 1930, most normal schools had chosen one of these three routes, and normal schools were all but gone by the beginning of the Great Depression.

It is intriguing that Lucas chooses to gloss over the period in which normal schools transformed into teachers’ colleges because, in spite of Lucas’s assessment that normal schools were a dying breed in the early 1900s and gone within a few decades, there is ample evidence to suggest that 1900-1930 was a rich and eventful period for normal schools. In some states, normal schools were still being founded into the 1920s, even as other normal schools were trading in normal credentials for collegiate ones (Minnich 32-33). National organizations, including the highly influential National Education Association, had dedicated

resources specifically for normal schools into the 1930s. And major conferences were organized at sites across the country to discuss normal school issues (see Rettger). Normal schools changed dramatically during this period, but they were not a dying breed until well into the 1920s. Lucas's contention that normal schools were fading at the turn of the twentieth century ignores the robust literature about normal schools produced in the 1900s-1920s.

To say normal schools were academically inadequate is not exactly inaccurate, but it is a mischaracterization of normal schools' objectives and of the pressures that caused them to disappear. As I argue in the previous chapter, and as Lucas acknowledges indirectly, normal schools were not simply second-class colleges hoping to upgrade to "real" schools. This is evident in normal school proponents' unenthusiastic reactions to the contention that normal schools should become teachers' colleges. "Even when the conversion of a normal institution into a state teachers' college meant little more than a change in nomenclature," allows Lucas, "the promotion of once-lowly teacher-training agencies into free-standing state colleges or public universities did not go unopposed" (56). Lucas does not describe how this opposition was overcome, other than to say that the increase in high-school enrollments nationally helped "bolster the cause" of teacher education programs in colleges and universities. He simply avers that the combined pressure of colleges, universities, and high-schools demanding higher standards for teacher training caused normal schools to abandon their opposition and accept collegiate status—to stay in business, normal schools had to improve enough to become colleges. Lucas does not indicate how this pressure was

applied, or what instruments were used to bring about the change of normal schools to teachers' colleges, but he is right to note that it was a swift, widespread change in teacher education institutions. In the next section, I examine the system of accreditation at Tempe Normal before turning my attention to examining the effects of accreditation on the place of writing instruction in the school's curriculum.

### **Accreditation at Tempe Normal**

Tempe Normal's history indicates that accreditation, specifically the modification from individual accreditation agreements to regional accreditation, was a major cause of the pressure Lucas observes as well as the instrument for affecting change. As noted earlier, accreditation for Tempe Normal meant an agreement that schools in one state would employ normal school graduates from another state without additional examination in the subjects teachers were supposed to teach (e.g., orthography, grammar, reading, writing, composition, civics, U.S. history, geography, methods of teaching, defining, arithmetic, physiology, and hygiene). Accreditation at Tempe Normal, which was non-existent from 1886 until Principal Matthews was hired in 1900, started off as a way to ensure that normal school graduates were employable across state lines in a time when people were progressively more mobile (Stinnett 75).

In 1922, California's State Board of Education notified Tempe Normal's President, Arthur Matthews, that the twenty-year-old accreditation agreement allowing Tempe Normal graduates to teach in California schools would expire

unless Tempe Normal's curriculum was expanded from a two-year course to a four-year course.<sup>12</sup> The normal schools in California had recently been "upgraded" to colleges, and other states had also already begun to restructure their normal schools into four-year colleges. In a document entitled, "Arguments for the State Teachers' College 1925" circulated by the Alumni Association of the State Normal School Tempe, "75% of the states have converted all or part of their normals into state colleges" ("Arguments"). Administrators were confronted with a problem: unless they abandoned normal school status and became a teachers' college, Tempe Normal's graduates would only be allowed to teach in Arizona schools. They would not be eligible for jobs in other states' public schools. Tempe Normal's faculty and administrators were proud of their normal school credentials, but accreditation proved an inescapable force. Furthermore, "Arguments for the State Teachers' College 1925" announces that "Arizona is at present receiving 75% of her teachers from other states, including California. The turnover is so great in this state that the normal schools and the university supply only one-fourth of the teachers needed in the state." The document stresses that need in Arizona for a substantially higher number of teachers and the need for higher quality teacher education. According to Alfred Thomas, "In order to keep pace with the growth of the state, the establishment of high schools, and the advancement of the Normal School standards in the United States," Tempe Normal began to redesign the school as a teachers' college (2:315).

Beginning in 1922 and culminating in 1925, Tempe Normal administrators redesigned the school's curriculum to achieve teachers' college status, slowly

moving from a curriculum that overlapped with high schools and included two years of teacher training to a full, four-year collegiate course of study. Tempe Normal graduates continued to enjoy the privileges of accreditation agreements with surrounding states, but by 1925, President Matthews determined that it was also necessary to earn accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).<sup>13</sup> Matthews understood that NCA accreditation would have several benefits for Tempe Normal. First and foremost, accreditation from NCA would completely replace individual accreditation agreements, making Tempe Normal graduates eligible to teach in any NCA accredited school. Second, NCA accredited high schools required teachers to be educated in NCA or similarly accredited institutions of higher education (“North Central Approves College at Tempe”; see also Geiger, 186; Felmley 44; Thomas 2:630-631). It turns out, without proper accreditation, normal school graduates would eventually have been barred from teaching even in Arizona, and Tempe Normal would have been barred from training teachers altogether. Securing graduates’ ability to teach in other states was important, but securing the continued existence of Tempe Normal was the most pressing advantage of NCA accreditation.

Although accreditation agencies such as the NCA generally refused to dictate curriculum to accredited schools, accreditation nevertheless had profound effects on how Tempe Normal’s students were taught to write, as well as the relationship of faculty to writing education. For one, Tempe Normal’s change from normal school to teachers’ college meant that administrators were compelled to redesign Tempe Normal’s curriculum accordingly: secondary-level instruction

was discontinued altogether; the course of study was doubled, from two years to four; a bifurcated system of general education and elective majors was instituted; and, most importantly for this study, Tempe Normal adopted the system of first-year composition that existed at other types of post-secondary institutions to enable students to transfer to and pursue graduate education at other colleges and universities (“Regulations” 1-2; Thomas 2:415-430). By the end of the 1920s, the number of required English courses at Tempe Normal was diminished from five to two, and writing instruction was no longer the cornerstone of the remaining English courses, which were increasingly liberal arts-based literature courses. The distributed writing instruction and inherent reflective practice of Tempe Normal’s curriculum were supplanted with elective curriculum and remedial writing instruction that existed at other colleges and universities across the nation.

To this point, I have argued that accreditation was an influential, and often under-appreciated, force in normal schools’ transformation into teachers’ colleges. Specifically at Tempe Normal, accreditation played a visible role in inducing administrators to “upgrade” the normal school curriculum to a four-year collegiate course of study in order to maintain their graduates’ ability to find teaching positions, both in Arizona and in surrounding states. In the next section, I look more explicitly at writing instruction at Tempe Normal, comparing writing instruction as it appeared in Tempe Normal’s curriculum before administrators sought regional accreditation and after.



## **Accreditation and Writing Instruction at the Teachers' College**

The effects of accreditation for Tempe Normal in the years leading up to the introduction of first-year composition are complex. Accreditation at Tempe Normal still meant individual agreements as described above for most of this period, but regional accreditation agencies were making inroads.<sup>14</sup> Although there is no indication that Tempe Normal's administrators planned to abandon normal school status until 1922, the school was obviously beginning to accede more generally to the movement toward increasing "standards," which can be seen in a slow elimination of high school coursework beginning in 1919.<sup>15</sup> The progressive effects of accreditation no doubt had far reaching implications for the entire curriculum at the newly christened Tempe State Teachers College (TSTC), but changes in writing instruction at the school were noticeably shaped by two particular occurrences: (1) in 1926, the year following Tempe Normal's transformation into TSTC, the University of Arizona in Tucson refused to accept transfer credits from Tempe Normal students on the grounds that teachers' colleges did not offer comparable courses to those offered at the university; and (2) in the same year, the NCA communicated their intention to discontinue the accreditation of teachers' colleges.

As I described in Chapter 3, the University of Arizona was wholly distinct from Tempe Normal, both in curriculum and administrative structure. The university administration had no official authority to determine what would be taught at the normal school or how it would be taught, and the curriculum in place for Tempe Normal's first year as a teachers' college was little changed from the

normal school curriculum. It was still primarily focused on methods and pedagogy with additional coursework offered in general education subjects such as literature, history, economics, biology, mathematics. Writing instruction was still distributed throughout the curriculum as it had been for years. Nevertheless, as standardization and accreditation became guiding forces in the development of Tempe Normal into a teachers' college, the University administration suddenly found that they had new tools with which to exert some power over requirements at the newly constituted teachers' college. For years, Tempe Normal graduates were given transfer credits to the university for any post-secondary work completed at the normal school, and normal school graduates entered the university as juniors. But when Tempe Normal became TSTC in 1925, TSTC administrators received word from the university that teachers' college credits would not transfer. TSTC graduates were suddenly denied that consideration because University of Arizona administrators determined that the teachers' college did not provide a university-quality education based on the minimum NCA requirements for college accreditation.

Although TSTC administrators had based their curricular and administrative redesign on NCA standards for accreditation for teachers' colleges, according to Rebecca Tansil, NCA accreditation for teachers' colleges was on par with junior colleges (165).<sup>16</sup> In essence, accreditation requirements for teachers' colleges were lower than for colleges and universities on the "regular" list: faculty scholarship expectations were lower, required student credit hours were lower, and the number of books required to be in the library were lower (Ludeman 365;

see also, “Standards of Accredited Institutions”). As well, the type of coursework differed markedly in teachers’ colleges and other post-secondary institutions. Based on these lower requirements for teachers’ colleges, the University of Arizona’s president, Cloyd Heck Marvin, sought to block TSTC students from transferring to the University.

The University of Arizona and Tempe Normal had long had a vexed relationship characterized by mistrust and open hostility due to competition for funds and students, and Tempe Normal’s bid to become a teachers’ college was no exception. According to ASU historian Alfred Thomas, in 1925 President Marvin tried to block the bill that transformed Tempe Normal into TSTC by keeping it tied up in committee. Thomas writes, “Having failed in killing the Bill, Dr. Marvin had the title of the Degree, provided for in the Bill, changed from Bachelor of Arts in Education to Bachelor of Education [which was not equal to the BA granted by the University]” (2:359). Marvin went a step further, informing Matthews and Northern Arizona Teachers’ College President, Grady Gammage, that the inferior status of the Bachelor of Education degree, along with the inferior status of the teachers’ college as compared to a university, prevented the University of Arizona from accepting teachers’ college credits as equivalent for transfer or graduate work (Thomas 2:415-430).<sup>17</sup>

In other words, because the teachers’ college curriculum was still on the model of the normal school, Marvin concluded that students were not taking the same number or quality of courses, one being first-year composition. At the University of Arizona, first-year composition consisted of a two-course

sequence—English 101 and 102. Students who tried to transfer from the teachers' colleges to the university were compelled to make up any requirements they had not satisfied before transferring, which in turn meant that transfer students could expect to find their time to degree extended in order to meet the university's requirements—requirements which had not, it should be noted, existed until that point. Likewise, teachers' college administrators were informed that students interested in attending the University of Arizona for graduate work would be expected to have satisfied the university's undergraduate degree requirements, including passing first-year composition, prior to acceptance. It is apparent that proponents of the university would have preferred for the teachers' colleges to give up attempts to become bachelor's granting institutions and leave granting BAs as the sole province of the university (Hopkins and Thomas 202-204). Ironically, however, the university's interference left the teachers' colleges with little choice but to rework their curricula, including introducing English 101 and 102 into their course requirements, to conform to the university's standards if they wanted to ensure their students could transfer or attend graduate school in-state.

It is possible that the teachers' college administrators would have opted not to change their curricula to fit the university if not for another notification that they received at the same time the university balked at awarding transfer credits. According to Ludeman, "It was very evident by 1926 that the North Central Association did not care to assume responsibility for the standardization of teachers colleges" (365). NCA leaders decided that the American Association of Teachers Colleges (AATC) had finally drafted a list of teachers' college standards

that was sufficiently rigorous and enforceable for the NCA to discontinue the job of teachers' college accreditation without irreparable harm to the schools in their region. The AATC's requirements for accrediting teachers' colleges remained lower than those for BA granting institutions, but they were deemed sufficient because of the singular focus on teacher education. Although the NCA would not adopt a resolution to discontinue teachers' college accreditation until 1928 and would not follow through until 1933, it was widely apparent that the NCA would soon have two lists: one for secondary schools and one for colleges and universities. Any school that wanted NCA accreditation would have to be a high school or would have to meet the requirements of a liberal arts college (Ludeman 366). The NCA's definition of a college had three elements. "A standard American college, university or technological institution [...] is an institution:

- (a) which is legally authorized to give non-professional Bachelor's degrees;<sup>18</sup>
- (b) which is organized definitely on the bases of the completion of a standard secondary school curriculum;
- (c) which organizes its curricula in such a way that the early years are a continuation of, and a supplement to the work of the secondary school and at least the last two years are shaped more or less distinctly in the direction of special, professional or graduate instruction.

("Regulations" 1)

To meet the expectations of a "standard American college," TSTC had to upgrade the degree they could offer from a Bachelor of Education to a BA in Education,

which was accomplished in 1928. Administrators had already arranged for a high school diploma to be a prerequisite to admission. Finally, administrators had to rearrange the curriculum from a distributed curriculum, such as I described in Chapter 3, to a two-part course of study with the first two years consisting of what were essentially general education courses and the second two years consisting of major courses.

For TSTC, the combination of the university's newly instituted transfer conditions and the plans of the NCA to stop accrediting teachers' colleges virtually guaranteed the introduction of first-year composition into the curriculum. Because students attending the university were required to take first-year composition, so too would TSTC students be. Furthermore, in a survey published in *The North Central Association Quarterly* in 1927, it was noted that out of the 45 NCA accredited schools surveyed, all of them required first-year composition ("Report of the Sub-Committee on English"). If TSTC wanted to retain the NCA accreditation that linked them to the state's accredited high schools, they would meet NCA requirements for colleges and universities, including the implementation of a curriculum which pushed writing instruction into the first year to prepare students for more advanced, major specific courses in their last two years. First-year composition had to come first so students could be prepared to write papers in their agriculture and engineering courses (the University's largest majors).

To get a sense of accreditation's significance for writing instruction as Tempe Normal became TSTC, it is useful to look at one course catalog from just

before the change was even an inkling for administrators' and one from the year first-year composition came into the curriculum. In 1918-1919, Tempe Normal offered a full four-year high school course plus two years of normal training. For students that took the entire course of study, English instruction featured prominently in every year except the second year of normal training, which was devoted almost entirely to methods and pedagogy classes. According to the 1918 catalogue:

Instruction in English aims to secure knowledge of correct forms of expression, an appreciation of good literature, and ease and facility in expressing thought in oral and written forms. To accomplish these ends courses are given in word analysis, grammar and analysis, rhetoric, composition, theme writing, reading and literature. The work done in these courses is based on the requirements for college and university entrance as outlined by the American Board of College Entrance. ("Bulletin, 1918" 40-41)

Students took English in each of their first four years ("English 1 and Library" in the first year; "English 2 and Library" in the second year; "English 3" in the third year; and "English 4" in the fourth year), then Advanced Composition in their 5th year. Descriptions of the English courses illustrate that writing instruction was a central part of each year's class. English 3, for instance, is titled "American Literature," and in addition to "Appreciation and enjoyment of the best that has been written by American authors" and "thorough comprehension of the place of literature in the life and thought of the nation," there is also the statement that

“Composition, based upon phases of literary development, and upon the classics read, is required throughout the year” (42).

Although the description of English 3 appears thoroughly imbued with the humanist self-cultivation and self-refinement that Sharon Crowley critiques in *Composition in the University* as undermining the efficacy of composition courses in higher education, in the context of Tempe Normal’s course sequence, writing instruction seems to get far greater attention than literary study. English 1 is titled “Rhetoric and Composition” and focuses entirely on writing instruction, including spelling, word analysis, rhetoric, diction, unity, and coherence. The content is a grab-bag of current-traditional concepts, including the ubiquitous modes of discourse, but the focus of the course is clearly on writing instruction. In “English 2: Composition and English Literature,” the first semester focused entirely on composition and the second semester was dedicated to reading and appreciating English literature with one goal being “to exercise the student in collecting, arranging and presenting material in the form of well written papers” (42). After “English 3: American Literature,” in “English 4: Word Analysis, Grammar and Methods,” students turned to grammatical, etymological, and linguistic analysis, with particular focus on methods of teaching these subjects. In “English 5: General Literature and Advanced Composition,” students again combined literary study with advanced composition instruction, in this case paying special attention to “exposition and argumentation, both in the themes written and assignments read” (43). Finally, “English 6: Special English” was offered “for students who are deficient in English in any of the advanced grades” (18). English 6 was



offered to students in their fourth year and was “devoted largely to the acquirement of ease and finish in discourse, both spoken and written” (43).

The English sequence required of Tempe Normal students in 1918 is notable for several reasons. First, although literature is featured in several course descriptions, writing instruction (and lessons thought to enhance writing ability) was far and away the most prominent aspect of Tempe Normal’s English curriculum. Composition was always mentioned in connection with literary study, and both the stated and implied goals of the courses were primarily on teaching students to be better writers. Second, another noteworthy facet of Tempe Normal’s English curriculum is “English 6: Special English.” From a twenty-first century vantage point, English 6 might easily be recognized as a “remedial” course for “deficient students”—the kind of course that might have been called “Bonehead English” at Yale or Harvard or any number of colleges and universities by the middle of the century. At Tempe Normal, however, it was offered after the majority of required English courses. It was for students deemed in need of additional instruction in English, not as a prerequisite to other composition courses. Third, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, students had repeated training and practice in writing, both as students and as future teachers. Even in the sixth year of the normal school curriculum, Tempe Normal students discussed how to teach writing in elementary and high schools and taught writing as part of their student teaching responsibilities. So while the coursework in the final year of the normal school curriculum did not specifically call for writing instruction, it was still a subject of discussion and practice.

The writing curriculum at TSTC in 1927 looked very different. In December 1925 and March 1926, administrators and faculty from both Arizona teachers' colleges and from the University of Arizona gathered for conferences to discuss aligning the curriculum of the three institutions to meet the standards of a collegiate education (Thomas 2:422-430). Among other requirements, writing instruction at TSTC was brought into accord with the system at the university. Most obviously, English 1-6 were gone, replaced by a wholly new system of English courses: 100-level courses covered writing instruction and speech communication; the more advanced, 200-level courses were literature courses. The message is quite clear: writing and speech are "foundational knowledge" to be attained before the more specialized task of literary study can be undertaken. The new numbering structure seems also to indicate the dawn of a new conception of writing instruction at TSTC. As in the Tempe Normal English 1-6 sequence, English courses exhibit the traits of literary humanism. Unlike the earlier sequence, however, writing instruction was no longer the most prominent aspect of English classes. "English 100: English Grammar" was only required of students who did not take ancient languages in high schools; "English 110: Oral English" was an elective, as was "English 120: Public Address." And descriptions of the 200-level literature courses, all of which were elective, hardly mentioned writing instruction at all. The main work of the literature courses was reading literary texts and discussing the movements of which they were a part. Themes and reports and discussions would be required as a demonstration of knowledge, but there is no indication whatsoever that instruction will be given in completing

these assignments. Literature at TSTC was not only separated from writing instruction by course numbers, but writing was no longer mentioned at all in connection with literary study, except to note that it would be expected.

The redistribution of courses also demonstrates a fundamental shift in “remedial” English instruction. As noted, at Tempe Normal school, “English 6: Special English” was offered to students at the end of their coursework in the event someone needed additional instruction in “the acquirement of ease and finish in discourse, both spoken and written” (“Bulletin, 1918” 43). At TSTC, however, “remedial English” took on many of the characteristics of basic writing instruction Kelly Ritter describes in “Before Mina Shaughnessy.” According to Ritter, at Yale in the 1920s, a course existed for students whose writing “showed deficiencies” (21). At Yale, it was a non-credit course where “deficient” students were remanded to get additional writing instruction. At TSTC, “English 103,104: First Year English” served much the same role. English 103,104 is described as:

Similar to Engl. 101,102, but adapted to the needs of the students who require more practice in the technique of written composition. Attention to spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation is made the first essential of this course. Required of first year students whose rating in the preliminary standard test indicates a need of intensive drill in the mechanics of language. (“Bulletin, 1927” 51)

English 103,104 was somewhat different from the remedial course at Yale in that students did get credit, and in fact, passed out of their composition requirement upon successful completion of the course. Nevertheless, the description is notable

for two reasons. First, English 103,104 (like English 101,102 which I discuss below) is at the beginning of the curriculum. It is no longer for students who need additional instruction. It is for students who come into the school showing “deficiencies.” Second, the mention of entrance testing is a reminder of how accreditation changed what types of students could be expected to enter TSTC. Gone were the days when anyone with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education could enter and work to become a teacher. As of 1927, accreditation served the same function at TSTC that it served at Michigan and Harvard.

The 1927 English department also announces the end of writing instruction as a fundamental feature of the entire course of study. The only English courses required in 1927 were the ubiquitous first-year composition courses, of which there were three versions. “English 101,102: First Year English” was focused on “Exposition and argumentation; theme writing and theme correcting” (“Bulletin, 1927” 51). “English 103,104: Special English” focused on mechanical drills and basic linguistic structures for “deficient” students. And for students “who, by standard test, show special skill in English composition and aptitude for intensive study of literature,” there existed “English 105,106: Literary Appreciation” (52). The separation of students based on their abilities as measured by standardized test was not new to higher education, but it was new to TSTC, and once introduced, it has since remained. More important for the point of this chapter, however, is that the relegation of writing instruction to one of these three classes represented a distinct departure from writing instruction at the normal school. Gone were the days where writing instruction was part of all

coursework, which was itself focused on methods and pedagogy and teaching in public schools. Writing instruction was now remanded to the first year, just as at colleges and universities across the country.

## **Conclusion**

The adoption of first-year composition at TSTC is interesting for a number of reasons. On the one hand, because TSTC adopted first-year composition, it might well be argued that the force of rhetorical theory and Harvard's influence finally overtook the school—their full influence just took more time to be felt by the frontier normal school than it did to be felt by East Coast colleges and universities. It is apparent in course descriptions of English 101 and 102 that first-year composition at the teachers' college was in step with first-year composition at other schools. The curious part, however, is that first-year composition was not adopted primarily because faculty and administrators deemed it to be the most efficacious model of writing instruction, though they may well have believed it to be so. Whatever their personal feelings about first-year composition may have been, those feelings are not communicated in the course catalogues, memos, and annual reports that comment on English 101 and 102. What is clear is that accreditation was deemed important enough for the continued existence of the school that faculty and administrators had no option but to institute a fundamentally different model of writing instruction than had long existed at the school. The elimination of Tempe Normal's distributed model of writing instruction was a collateral effect of the school's effort to earn accreditation from

the NCA and to earn a measure of respect in the system of American education which prized standardization as a principal objective. As I have been arguing throughout this dissertation, institutional circumstances at ASU ushered in a new form of writing instruction as a condition of the school's existence, growth, and development.

In describing standardization and accreditation movements in American education, I have argued that writing instruction at ASU was irrevocably transformed by both. First, I described the national atmosphere in which standardization and accreditation developed and flourished, and then I situated Tempe Normal's transformation from normal school to teachers' college in the national movement. Finally, I examined the effects of Tempe Normal's transformation with regard to writing instruction. As Tempe Normal became a teachers' college and then sought formal accreditation from the NCA, the writing curriculum also began to resemble that found at colleges and universities. I argue that writing instruction went from the distributed normal school model to the first-year composition model that proliferated at colleges and universities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In effect, standardization and accreditation ossified the practices of writing instruction that existed in colleges and universities.

In Chapter 5, I turn my attention to the role of institutional upgrades undertaken at TSTC during the twentieth century on writing instruction. Within thirty-five years of becoming a teachers' college, the institution became a state college and then a state university as part of a continuous campaign to improve

and expand the school to keep pace with post-secondary institutions across the nation. Contrary to what many composition historians have argued, writing instruction at TSTC (in all its permutations) was neither ignored nor disregarded. I argue instead that the place of writing instruction in the curriculum was directly linked to administrators' ability to achieve certain institutional goals. As a result, during the years I survey (approximately 1930-1958) faculty and administrators sometimes deliberately manipulated the system of writing instruction to enable institutional upgrades, as when they hired additional faculty to bring down enrollments in writing courses as a means to securing NCA accreditation. In other instances, writing education was a bellwether of institutional status, as when "remedial" instruction was instituted to demonstrate to interested parties that the institution was sufficiently rigorous to merit university-status. In the next chapter, therefore, I assess correlations between changes in writing instruction and institutional upgrades to make the case that writing instruction was intimately tied to the status of the institution as it developed from teachers college to state college and state university.

## Chapter 4 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> In 1901, Tempe Normal's president, Arthur Matthews, traveled to California to secure accreditation agreements with California's schools. Tempe Normal was accredited by the California State Board of Education in 1902 and Tempe Normal's graduates were eligible to teach in California schools without examination for the next two decades. Agreements with schools in Colorado, New Mexico, and other nearby states were forthcoming. During Matthews's trip, he also visited the University of California at Berkeley and Leland Stanford University at Palo Alto. At the same time Tempe Normal was accredited by the state of California, Matthews was notified that Tempe Normal graduates would be given full transfer credit to Berkeley and Stanford for work completed at the post-secondary level and that transfer would be without examination. Alfred Thomas, Jr. comments, "This was indeed gratifying to the Normal students for it not only gave them recognition, but it showed the people of Arizona that the Normal was rapidly reaching a high educational standard in which they could have confidence. This confidence made them willing to invest more money toward building-up the institution" (2:22). Thomas's commentary is telling in that it recognizes the importance of agreements like those arranged by Matthews for making the case to Arizona's legislature that the normal school was valuable and worth funding. Many Arizonans, especially politicians who supported the University of Arizona in Tucson, were skeptical of Tempe Normal's value until other states expressed appreciation in the form of accreditation or transfer agreements.

<sup>2</sup> Although the United States Department of Education was founded in 1867, its sole purpose was to assemble education statistics. It was legislated into being "for the purpose of collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and Territories, and of diffusing such information [...] as shall aid the people of the United States in the establishment and maintenance of efficient school systems, and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country" (Snyder 1). In the 1876-1877 *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, it was apparently necessary to clarify that purpose. In his preliminary report, Commissioner John Eaton wrote, "As has been well said, 'the Office may be termed a clearing house of educational information.' But, however comprehensive its duty in regard to collecting and disseminating information, it provides for no exercise of authority and none should be expected from it" (*Report, 1876-1877* x). In his book, *American Education: The National Experience*, education historian Lawrence A. Cremin gives an exhaustive, and often cited, account of the pressures and influences that shaped American education in the nineteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> The Mosely Education Commission was a group of education experts assembled by the British government to study all aspects of the American system of education in preparation for implementing universal education in England. The



reports offer a fascinating look at what outside observers considered the strengths and weaknesses of American education at the turn of the twentieth century.

<sup>4</sup> The first compulsory education law was passed in Massachusetts in 1852 and mandated a common school education for all children. By 1918, every state had some law mandating education, though they varied widely in terms of how much education was required (i.e., some primary school, four years of high school, until a pupil turned 14, etc.). Arizona's legislators passed a compulsory education law in 1899, mandating education for children aged 6-16 or until they completed a 10<sup>th</sup> grade education.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most famous example of a group engaged in the national discussion about education is the Committee of Ten, which was formed at the behest of the National Council of Education to, in Arthur Applebee's words, "consider the whole problem of secondary school studies" (32). Applebee works from the assumption that colleges and universities were attempting to upgrade the quality of high schools—an assumption that obtains in many rhetoric and composition histories—but he also notes that the committee comprised educators from lower schools as well as colleges and universities. In fact, according to the *Report of the Committee of Ten*, the committee came about as part of an ongoing discussion "of uniformity in school programmes and in requirements for admission to college" (3). It is quite clear in the report that the subject was aligning the purposes and goals of secondary and post-secondary schools, not of simply considering the "problem" of secondary school studies. This mission is consonant with other evidence I have encountered that suggests "unification without uniformity" was the primary goal of many education reformers (Foster 109). Although some members of the committee, notably Harvard's Charles Elliot, imagined alignment in terms of "upgrading secondary schools" to meet post-secondary standards, his views hardly represented the views of everyone involved (see, for example, "The English Conference" and William H. Butts, "National Uniformity in Secondary Instruction").

<sup>6</sup> The proliferation of education interest groups in the late nineteenth century is stunning. The 1896-1897 Office of the Commissioner of Education report lists twenty-three "bodies throughout the country that are now engaged in [the] problem" of uniform entrance requirements for colleges and universities ("Requirements for Admission" 457). Not a single association listed is an official school or government entity. There is, in fact, a larger number of bodies engaged in the problem, but the rest are not listed for some reason or another. Although I discuss some of these bodies in more detail later in this chapter, I do not have the space to draw out the complex implications of the presence and power of these bodies for American education, both of which seem to me to be substantial and worthy of much more attention from composition historians.

<sup>7</sup> In 1903, as part of his report to the Commission of Education on secondary education, Elmer Ellsworth Brown noted that “[s]udies in English, algebra, geometry, and ancient history, after being introduced into the academies, were added by colleges, as we have seen, to their admissions requirements” (“Secondary” 560). With new studies came new entrance exams, to the effect that there were more than fifteen different entrance exams at various ivy league schools testing any number of the above subjects. Brown’s comment is interesting also for considering the relationship of secondary and post-secondary institutions. If Brown is right, colleges were taking admissions cues from secondary schools, not the other way around as many historians have claimed (see Veysey, for example). Nevertheless, different colleges and universities had different requirements, making general college preparation a nearly impossible feat for secondary schools.

<sup>8</sup> To name but a few: colleges, universities, technical schools, medical schools, law schools, normal schools, trade schools (evening, weekend, correspondence, and vacation), Sunday schools, institutes, truant schools, seminaries, academies, and more. Since education was largely unregulated, each type of school could claim to offer general and specialized education without having to establish any proof. This was especially problematic for universities which wanted to compel students to do research and therefore needed students who had already received a relatively uniform general education. For discussion of the roles many of these schools played in American education, see Cremin, *Reports of the Mosely Educational Commission*.

<sup>9</sup> “The commission as at present constituted has fifteen members as follows: Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.; Boston University, Boston, Mass.; Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.; Brown University, Providence, RI.; Colby University, Waterville, Me.; Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.; Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.; Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt.; Smith College, Northampton, Mass.; Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.; Tufts College, Massachusetts; Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.; Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.; Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.; Yale University, New Haven, Conn.” (“Requirements for Admission” 458).

Although there is not space in this dissertation for extended discussion of the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission, it is worth noting that there is evidence to suggest that Harvard established English A in response to the Commission’s English requirements, which were made up of two parts: (1) Reading and practice, and (2) Study and practice. The description of “Reading and practice” is worth quoting at length:

A limited number of books are assigned for reading. The candidate is required to present evidence of a general knowledge of the subject matter of these books, and to answer simple questions on the lives of their

authors. The form of examination will usually be the writing of a paragraph or two on each of the several topics to be chosen by the candidate from a considerable number—perhaps ten or fifteen—set before him in the examination paper. The treatment of these topics is designed to test the candidate’s power of clear and accurate expression, and calls for only a general knowledge of the substance of the books. (“Requirements for Admission” 458-459)

This statement is remarkably similar to Harvard’s entrance examinations, as they have been described by Kitzhaber and others, and it raises important questions about the whole notion of Harvard developing first-year composition because of the poor showing on exams by an influx of “underprepared students.”

<sup>10</sup> I suspect that many non-member high schools also designed curricula around these standards, particularly if their main objective was college preparation. At the same time, not all high schools were college preparatory, and in fact, some refused to “raise standards” because they did not believe high school students were well served by college preparatory courses in lieu of more practical curricula.

<sup>11</sup> A second normal school was established in Flagstaff, Arizona in 1901. It is now Northern Arizona University.

<sup>12</sup> As I explain later, Tempe Normal was already in the process of reducing their high school-level course offerings in response to the push among normal school proponents for higher standards. California’s State Board of Education was concerned with the length of the normal school curriculum, which was only two years.

<sup>13</sup> The changes to ASU’s administrative and curricular structures qualified ASU to seek accreditation from the American Association of Teachers Colleges (AATC), a national accreditation organization formed in 1917 at the behest of the North Central Council of State Normal School Presidents, a commission of the National Education Association (NEA), to ensure uniformity in normal schools. Accreditation from the AATC (later the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), which is still in existence) was considered less rigorous than regional accreditation (see Tansil 165-166; Ludeman 365-369). There is not space here to discuss the complicated relationship between would-be accrediting agencies vying to accredit teacher education institutions, but needless to say, the tension between national, regional, state, and local agencies with regards to teacher education standards was intense (see Ducharme and Ducharme 3-15; Mayor; Selden; Tansil).

<sup>14</sup> Regional accreditation was certainly not the only influence at Tempe Normal during this period. In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act was passed through Congress,

which allowed high schools to apply for federal money if they offered students vocational subjects including agriculture, home economics, and trade and industrial education. Years before, in 1908, administrators at Tempe Normal had raised their entrance requirements to accept only students who completed at least one year of high school. But in 1917, the Curriculum Committee redesigned the course to include all four years of high school, including a vocational track, and two years of normal school education (“Report of the Committee on Course of Study”). Just two years later, Tempe Normal started to move towards “higher standards” once again by raising requirements. In 1919, students could no longer enter Tempe Normal unless they had already completed at least one year of high school, the equivalent to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In 1920, entering students had to already have completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and so on.

While it is unclear exactly why Tempe Normal administrators decided to phase out high-school education just two years after reintroducing it, one distinct possibility is that they were responding to a set of standards developed by the NCA in 1918 for normal schools and teachers colleges (*Proceedings* 92-93; see Maxwell for a discussion of standards being raised at normal schools nationally). According to the report, “The work of the curriculum for such professional training of teachers, whether general or specific, shall comprise courses of collegiate grade only, provided that in sections of the country where conditions require, courses of secondary grade may be given for the purpose of preparing teachers for work in rural schools” (92). It is possible, and I suspect probable, that Tempe Normal administrators emulated schools that could not be dismissed as “rural” and, therefore, attempted to meet the highest standards available to confirm the quality of the school and the state.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that President Matthews may well have been involved in defining some of the standards that came to pass in American education. He’d been a member of the NEA, the most powerful education interest group in the country, since 1899, and he served on the executive council as Secretary, and perhaps in other capacities, from 1904 until at least 1922. Whether he was actively involved in shaping the NEA’s agenda or not is unclear, but there can be no doubt that he was well aware of it. His involvement with the NEA is especially salient considering the role the NEA played in shaping normal school standards and teachers’ college standards beginning as early as 1858 (see Roames 82-101).

<sup>16</sup> At the time of its transformation, the teachers’ college was not officially accredited by the NCA (or by any organization, for that matter).

<sup>17</sup> Northern Arizona Normal School became Northern Arizona Teachers’ College at the same time Tempe Normal became Tempe State Teachers’ College.

<sup>18</sup> A “non-professional degree” could still be designed to train students for a particular profession (e.g., teaching), but it needed also to include the elements of a liberal education—coursework befitting any “educated” person.

## CHAPTER 5

### ORIENTING THE INSTITUTION FOR SUCCESS

[T]he basic pattern of the university, as it clearly revealed itself soon after 1890, was that of a success-oriented enterprise.

Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*,  
1970

[B]uilding upon our initial commitment to quality teaching, the history of the Department of English has been, to date, a century of constant improvement and conscientious expansion to provide for the needs of the Arizona State University community.

“Decennial Review of Academic Program Department of English,”  
1984

In Chapter 4, I examined the national development of accreditation procedures in American education and the concomitant effects of accreditation on Tempe Normal School’s institutional status and writing instruction at the school. At the turn of the twentieth century, Tempe Normal’s president coordinated accreditation agreements with schools and boards of education in surrounding states on a case-by-case basis. But during the first two decades of the 1900s, accrediting bodies such as the North Central Association (NCA) grew in power and stature, so that by the early 1920s, Tempe Normal was at risk of losing long-

established partnerships with schools that were seeking accreditation from regional and national agencies. In short, unless administrators transformed Tempe Normal from a normal school into a teachers' college, graduates would eventually have been prevented from teaching in the growing number of accredited high schools across the country. In 1925, Tempe Normal officially became Tempe State Teachers' College (TSTC) and soon after abandoned the distributed normal school curriculum described in Chapter 3. In place of the distributed curriculum, administrators and faculty introduced a first-year composition sequence that conformed to NCA accreditation standards and ensured TSTC students could transfer to other colleges and universities. As a direct result of the change from normal school to teachers' college, writing instruction at the newly constituted teachers' college was redesigned to emulate the system of first-year composition that existed at colleges and universities across the nation. English 101 and 102 were introduced into the curriculum as required courses in 1926 and remain to this day.

Over the next four decades, no single occurrence would have the same intense effect on writing instruction at the institution as the change from normal school to teachers' college. Nevertheless, the transformation from normal school to teachers' college, coupled with its effects on writing education at the school, provides a useful lens through which to view writing instruction at the school over the next few decades. The normal school transformation was a prominent example of the institution's perpetual campaign to "upgrade" the school—to increase its quality, stature, and influence in line with trends in higher education generally—

which I discuss in more detail below. In the case of NCA accreditation, because the introduction of first-year composition was necessary to demonstrate the fitness of TSTC for accreditation, upgrading the institution was directly responsible for a major shift in how writing instruction was conceived and implemented at the school. In other instances, some of which I analyze in this chapter, the association between institutional upgrading and developments in writing instruction is not as direct. Still there are strong correlations between movements to upgrade the institution and developments in the place of writing instruction at the institution throughout much the twentieth century. In this chapter, I focus on the pressure to upgrade the institution exemplified by the transformation from normal school to teachers' college, and I evaluate the effects of institutional upgrades on writing instruction through the middle of the twentieth century.

In *The Emergence of the American University*, Laurence Veysey concludes that by the beginning of the twentieth century, American higher education had adopted the characteristics of a "success-oriented enterprise" (439). In short, Veysey claims that institutions of higher education were engaged in a perpetual effort to expand the quality of education they provided, the numbers of students they provided an education to, and the influence they exerted in American culture. In Veysey's words, "The promise of numbers, influence, and respectability could not seriously be ignored or resisted in high places" (439). Although Veysey's comments are focused specifically on the emergence of the American university structure in the late 1800s, the "success-oriented enterprise" has generally defined higher education in America ever since.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Cohen



notes, “Between 1870 and 1944 the number of colleges quintupled, and enrollments increased by several thousand percent” (103). Enrollments grew even more precipitously after World War II ended as a result of the GI Bill (see Snyder). Accompanying the explosion in colleges and enrollments was an explosion in research, graduate training, funding, institutional competition (both among schools and within them), “academic excellence” (variously defined), faculty credentials, student qualifications, curricular offerings, and more. Cohen writes, “Enrollments, finances, institutions—all aspects of the system expanded” (175). As Cohen demonstrates throughout his book, for various reasons and to varying degrees of success, expansion and improvement have been two consistent trends in higher education since at least the 1860s. To put it another way, for better or worse, American institutions of higher education have consistently sought to upgrade themselves in virtually every respect since at least the middle of the nineteenth century.

A brief survey of ASU’s history demonstrates, not surprisingly, that the institution was no exception to the national trend of upgrading. In the move from normal school to teachers’ college in 1925, the institution earned accreditation; in the move from teachers’ college to state college in 1945, the institution introduced a tenure system; and in the move from state college to state university just thirteen years later in 1958, administrators introduced a university structure—four independent colleges with their own administrative hierarchies (there are now fourteen colleges and schools at four campuses). During the first seventy-five years of its existence, enrollments at the institution went from 31 students in 1886

to over 12,000 students in 1960. As well, the campus expanded, the curriculum expanded, and the institution's prestige expanded. In the decades following Tempe Normal's transformation into TSTC, administrators and faculty alike sought perpetually to increase the size and stature of the institution with the effect that what started as a lowly frontier normal school now ranks among the top public universities in the nation in quality and tops every other traditional university in size.<sup>2</sup> These momentous changes in institutional status, as well as less momentous changes that contributed to the expansion and improvement of the school over the years, have had considerable—if complicated—effects on the place of writing instruction in the curriculum.

It is not the objective of this chapter to make the case that upgrading institutions of higher education was (or is) ultimately a positive or negative trend. Rather, in keeping with my overall argument that national developments in higher education had as significant an impact on writing instruction at ASU as disciplinary or theoretical developments in English or rhetoric and composition, I contend that as ASU evolved in order to meet the demands of national movements in higher education, writing instruction was meaningfully shaped by institutional upgrades meant to keep the school competitive with other institutions. In this chapter, therefore, I survey approximately 30 years of developments in writing instruction at ASU between the early 1930s, when Tempe Normal finally earned NCA accreditation, and the late 1950s, soon after it became Arizona State University. I consider developments in writing instruction in relation to three major periods of institutional upgrades during this span: (1) the period leading up

to the change from single-purpose teachers' college to a multi-purpose state college (c. 1931-1944); (2) the period immediately following the establishment of Arizona State College (ASC) and the mounting campaign to become a university (c. 1944-1953); and (3) the period leading up to and including the state college's transformation to a state university (c. 1953-1958).<sup>3</sup> In each period, I weigh the effects of institutional upgrade(s) on developments in writing instruction at ASU to argue that the state of writing instruction, especially conditions guiding developments in first-year composition, was a vehicle for, and indicator of, institutional success at the school.

### **On the Heels of Accreditation (1931-1944)**

Accreditation was an important factor in how writing instruction was carried out at TSTC for many years. As described in Chapter 4, in the immediate wake of the transformation of Tempe Normal School into TSTC, first-year composition was introduced as a means for ensuring two things: (1) that TSTC students would fulfill similar curricular requirements as other college and university students, and would therefore be eligible for transfer to or graduate work at other colleges and universities, and (2) TSTC would be eligible for accreditation by the NCA, which accredited more than 2500 high schools and colleges in more than fourteen states by 1930 (Geiger 187-189).

The introduction of first-year composition, although necessary for the school to evolve as a teachers' college, was hardly the only demand for meeting the requirements of NCA accreditation, which TSTC would not actually earn until

1931. According to Alfred Thomas, “Accreditation in the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges as a class A institution of higher education required *improvement and up-grading throughout the institution*” (2:620, emphasis mine). This included: (1) dismissing faculty members who could not “measure up to the new requirements of the Doctor’s degrees necessary for respectability as faculty in an accredited Teachers College” (2:620);<sup>4</sup> (2) ranking faculty members as assistant, associate, and full professors based on their academic qualifications;<sup>5</sup> and (3) significantly reducing class sizes across the institution.<sup>6</sup> Administrators undertook to make these “improvements and upgrades,” sometimes ruthlessly, and TSTC was provisionally awarded NCA accreditation in 1931, pending re-inspection in 1932 and 1933 to monitor some “issues of concern” that threatened to undermine the school’s fitness for accreditation. The general attempt to bolster the quality and reputation of the newly formed teachers’ college affected different areas of the campus community in different ways. Some programs, including the agriculture program, were dramatically reduced in size and stature. Writing instruction, however, was not reduced in size or stature. Instead, to earn accreditation, the NCA inspector determined that TSTC’s writing program, specifically, needed to be upgraded.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1933 NCA inspection report for TSTC, the inspector noted two concerns with regard to writing instruction that had been problematic since the first visit and which had yet to be sufficiently addressed. The inspector’s first concern with regard to TSTC’s writing classes was that they were too uniform for all students. According to the report, “The faculty is, for the most part, well

trained. [However,] the inspector cannot feel that the work in English Composition is satisfactory. The students are not separated according to ability or previous training. This criticism rests with the organization and not with the instructors” (“Inspection Report” 4). The inspector’s second concern was that class enrollments, including in English composition, were well above the NCA recommendation of no more than thirty students. In the report, it is noted that English composition classes enrolled approximately 55 students (4). “It is sufficient to state,” the inspector writes, “that either some of the departments are under staffed or too many students are scheduling certain courses” (4). Demonstrating fitness for NCA accreditation meant specifically addressing these concerns, and in so doing, TSTC’s administrators again reshaped writing instruction by shrinking faculty to student ratios and instituting a hierarchical system of remedial composition courses.

TSTC administrators attempted to address the second issue, large class enrollments, in a rather predictable manner. Because first-year composition was required of all students in accordance with TSTC’s collegiate status, and because the institution was consistently adding more students each year,<sup>8</sup> the only way to reduce class sizes was to add new faculty members to teach additional sections of writing courses. Even as faculty members across the institution were being fired in droves, the English department expanded from three faculty members in 1930-31 to eight faculty members in 1932-33, all of whom were ranked and all of whom taught at least one section of first-year composition each semester (and in many cases, they taught only composition courses, regardless of rank). Although

increases in enrollments during the Great Depression off-set some of the expansion in faculty, class sizes gradually began to drop toward the end of the decade.<sup>9</sup>

The responses of TSTC administrators to the inspector's concern about differentiating course levels were perhaps also predictable, but they illustrate in small measure the complexity of the relationship between institutional status and writing instruction that would persist over the next few decades. From 1926 onward, writing courses at TSTC were differentiated based on placement tests given to all students who matriculated. As noted in the previous chapter, at the same time English 101,102 was established, English 103,104, "Special First Year English" was established. English 103,104 was described as "Similar to English 101, 102, but adapted to the needs of students who require more practice in the technique of written composition" ("Bulletin, 1928" 51). Students were placed into English 103,104 based on their test scores, and according to the course description, attention was paid to spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation, and included "intensive drill in the mechanics of the language" (51). Soon after English 101,102 and English 103,104 were introduced, a third course, "English 105,106: Literary Appreciation," was launched. English 105,106 was for "freshmen who, by standard test, show special skill in English composition and aptitude for intensive study of literature" (52). It is apparent, based on placement procedures and course descriptions, that three levels of writing courses were available for students "according to ability or previous training" for at least five years before the inspector's report was filed.

The inspector's concern about differentiating students based on ability or training is curious in that three levels already existed well before the first accreditation inspection was conducted, but the steps TSTC administrators took to address the concern suggest a way to understand the critique. Prior to the 1931 inspection, students were placed in one of the three available writing sequences based on test scores, and upon satisfactory completion of any sequence, students were considered to have fulfilled their composition requirement. In other words, any of the three sequences satisfied the same first-year writing requirements as the others. In 1931, however, soon after the first NCA inspection, English 103,104 was officially declared remedial ("Bulletin, 1931-1932" 93).<sup>10</sup> English 103,104 could no longer be substituted for English 101,102, but instead preceded it. "If, however, a student makes exceptional progress in the special course," the catalogue explained, "he [sic] may be transferred after one semester to the regular course, and in such circumstances will be considered as having fulfilled the requirement" (93). Although there is no specific mention of the reasons for English 103,104's change in status, it is reasonable to infer that the status of English 103,104 was amended to satisfy the demands of the NCA inspector. It seems that proper differentiation of students was not the real concern; ranking the categories of students was the real concern.

When the NCA inspector's report calling for more differentiation was filed in 1933, the heirarchicalization of English 103,104 and English 101,102 was apparently not sufficient, prompting further action at TSTC. Again, the inspector did not specify in any detail what the concern about differentiating the sections

was, nor did the report make specific suggestions for correcting the concern. Nevertheless, in 1934, the English 103,104 sequence was discontinued altogether. In its place, “English A: Special First Year English” was introduced “For freshmen whose ratings in the preliminary standard test indicate a need in the mechanics of language” (“Bulletin, 1934-1935” 95). Whereas English 103,104 had carried six units towards graduation—three units per semester—English A carried no credit, and was not specified for a required time. It could take one semester or two (or presumably more), and students passed out of English A and into English 101,102 based on the determination of the department chair that they had been sufficiently remediated. The introduction of English A represented a real differentiation in levels of writing instruction: anyone who did not meet the minimum requirements for written communication as determined by test scores was prevented from joining the college community until they could prove they were “fixed.”<sup>11</sup>

A striking aspect of the three-year process of differentiating writing instruction at TSTC is that institutional quality was once again directly tied to the system of writing instruction. Many rhetoric and composition historians have suggested that composition was essentially ignored in colleges and universities during the first half of the twentieth century—maintained as an unfortunate necessity, but relegated to the first year, poorly staffed and funded, and uniformly detested.<sup>12</sup> But at TSTC, writing instruction was highly visible as it related to the overall institution. Accreditation, on more than one occasion, was predicated on the way writing was taught at the school. The NCA inspector made no mention of



the English department or literary study, and consequently, there seems not to have been much change in any part of the English department that was not related to writing instruction. In contrast, over the course of three years, writing instruction at TSTC was fundamentally reshaped, apparently to ensure that NCA accreditation could be earned and retained. Concurrent with the adoption of English A, TSTC's accreditation was made official. Even as English department faculty and administrators were conducting experiments into the best way to teach students to read and write, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the demands of upgrading the institution played a major role in how students would encounter those practices determined to be the best ones.

The same pressure to upgrade continued to drive the administration of TSTC in the years following the NCA's conferral of accreditation. During his three year presidency at TSTC (1930-1933), Ralph W. Swetman had upgraded the institution through faculty realignments and curricular redesigns to earn NCA accreditation. In 1933, after his mission was accomplished, Swetman resigned and was replaced by the president of Northern Arizona State Teachers' College, Grady Gammage. According to Hopkins and Thomas, after three years of economic and psychological distress, Gammage believed that what TSTC needed "was a sound pattern for the recovery of the Teachers College, plus faith in its self-reviving ability if the right long-term pattern for recovery could be devised and followed through" (224). In other words, Gammage arrived with a long-term plan to upgrade the institution, a plan which he undertook to implement immediately upon his arrival. One of Gammage's earliest actions was to survey

TSTC students to determine whether and to what degree their needs were being met at TSTC, particularly with regard to the curriculum. According to Alfred Thomas, the survey “found that students attending ASU often had little or no interest in being teachers, but had no other options for a 4 year college in the largest metropolitan area in the state” (3.1:495). Many students completed the teachers’ college curriculum because it was the only one available within a reasonable proximity to their homes, and others took as many transferrable credits as possible at TSTC before transferring to institutions that granted BAs in other subjects. Gammage decided, in light of the survey results, that TSTC needed to expand its degree offerings if it was to continue to meet the needs of its student body.

The specific actions that Gammage undertook to expand TSTC’s degree offerings, which included lobbying the state legislature and procuring Public Works Administration funds to expand the campus, are too numerous to detail, but his general campaign to upgrade TSTC precipitated developments in the English department that would have lasting effects on the place of writing instruction at the school. Gammage’s success in obtaining federal funds to expand the physical structure of the campus, for example, had the effect of increasing the status of TSTC in the Southwest, which further boosted enrollment. The Arizona legislature eventually came to recognize that increased enrollments necessitated increased faculty, and the legislature allocated funds for a wave of hiring between 1936 and 1938, in conjunction with Gammage’s campaign to expand degrees. The added funds enabled Gammage to hire several new English faculty members in

the latter half of the 1930s while other institutions were still feeling the effects of the Great Depression. The new hires included Louis M. Myers, a linguist and future CCCC executive board member, who replaced Lionel Stevenson as chair of English in 1937. Myers was interested in how linguistic knowledge could be used to improve the teaching of writing in high schools and colleges, and as chair of the English department, he played an integral role in the place and shape of first-year composition at TSTC for nearly two decades, often in relation to the school's attempts to upgrade in one way or another.

Myers contributions to the Department of English, and in particular to writing instruction, cannot be overstated. He chaired the department for nearly two decades, during which time he completely redesigned many aspects of first-year composition. For example, almost immediately after his hire, Myers changed the focus of reading instruction in the required English courses from literary appreciation to reading for composition (essentially restoring the “classical approach” to reading and writing discussed in Chapter 3). In his annual report after his first year, Myers laid out six goals for writing instruction in the department that included (1) demanding higher standards for mechanical accuracy, (1) demanding more written work from composition students, (3) providing more training in reading, (4) providing more thorough library training, (5) preparing “models or written forms and a system of minimum essentials of mechanics” which would be expected across the courses at the school, and (6) better coordination of the “proper content of the college composition course” with junior colleges and secondary schools throughout the state (“Annual Report,

1937-1938"). The goals Myers specified in 1938, which remained relatively constant for many years, represent a major change from how writing was conducted under Stevenson. Literary study was deemphasized, functional linguistic knowledge and expository reading were reinforced, and practice in writing took on a much more significant role than it previously enjoyed. In addition, Myers' goals, some of which were better met than others in the following years, forecast many of the broad developments in composition theory during the twentieth century, including the ubiquitous research paper assignment and library research, writing across the curriculum, and cross-institutional coordination of curricular goals. Myers also oversaw the implementation of the school's first reading clinic and writing clinic, both of which were independent of the English department, but which served students throughout the institution in much the same way modern writing centers are designed to.

For all Myers's knowledge of and contributions to writing instruction at TSTC and to the field that would become rhetoric and composition,<sup>13</sup> his leadership at TSTC is also unmistakably tied to attempts to upgrade the school. Myers was very influential in institutional matters during his tenure at the school, and it is clear that he strongly supported Gammage's plan to expand and improve the school. The degree to which this support made an impact on writing instruction is evident in Myers correspondence with President Gammage. In Myers's 1940-1941 report to the president, he writes the following:

This year for the first time we eliminated some of the obvious incompetents from freshman composition, and also from other courses where a

good deal of reading was required. These students were given an opportunity for separate make-up work; but only a few of them took any real advantage of it. [...]

It will probably be wise in the future to segregate a larger proportion of the freshman class; academic standards which permit the lowest fifth of our freshman students to stay in college cannot possibly be considered high. (“Annual Report, 1940-1941”)

To contemporary readers, Myers’ disparaging attitude toward students and his anachronistic word choice may be the most striking aspects of this passage. Additionally, however, this passage clearly illustrates that in the course of making decisions that would affect how writing was taught at TSTC, he was actively concerned with administering the required composition courses to enhance the quality and reputation of the school. If TSTC hoped that the Arizona legislature would allow the school to expand its degree offerings, it was imperative that faculty and administrators demonstrate that the school was of sufficient quality to merit that added responsibility. One way for the school to demonstrate its quality, as Myers notes, was to become more selective. Additionally, Myers wrote in his report that he believed most of the students who were eliminated “have little or no chance of successfully completing a college curriculum,” so while modern readers may balk at what seems a callous attitude to basic writers, he seems genuinely to have believed that eliminating “obvious incompetents” would be beneficial to the students who he believed were unable to complete the collegiate course and beneficial to the school for indicating high academic standards.

The same concern about institutional quality with regard to basic writers is evident in subsequent years. In 1942, for example, Myers advocated eliminating from English 101 “the lowest ten percent on the basis of a reading test” and segregating students into “‘A’ and ‘B’ ability groups” to facilitate appropriate levels of instruction (“Annual Report, 1941-1942”).<sup>14</sup> In the same report, however, he acknowledges that in light of the war program, segregating students might not serve the students or other departments well in the following years, even though it was deemed to have worked out “very well” by the English faculty (and, as it turns out, ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections actually remained until 1953, the reasons for which I discuss later). The concern Myers expresses in his report is in keeping with Gammage’s broad program to upgrade TSTC. Myers’ plan for administering first-year composition was predicated on concerns about how the English program generally, and the writing courses in particular, would affect the quality and status of the teachers’ college. Eliminating underperforming students and splitting first-year composition into ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections undoubtedly influenced TSTC’s writing instruction, affecting how students were taught to write, how they came to understand themselves as writers, and whether or not they continued to earn a college degree. In effect, these actions reinforced the “intellectual and social stratification that plagues” basic writers across institution types (Ritter 14). At the same time, those decisions were carefully calibrated to increase the quality and status of the institution, not just to punish “deficient” students.

Soon after Myers filed his 1942 annual report, he took leave for three years to serve in the United States Signal Corps during WWII as a translator. In his absence, little seems to have changed, either with regard to Gammage's general improvements to teachers' college or the writing curriculum. Enrollments dropped off dramatically as male students enlisted in the war effort, and the legislature continued to deny the TSTC's lobbying efforts to expand degree offerings, but the conditions under which writing instruction existed at the school seem not to have been much disturbed. Nonetheless, the period of build-up that began with a drive to earn NCA accreditation established a pattern for how writing instruction and institutional status would interrelate in years to come. In some cases, Gammage's attempts to upgrade TSTC translated directly into developments in writing instruction, as with the hiring of new faculty that enabled significant reductions in course sizes. In other instances, including the hiring of Myers, Gammage's campaign had more indirect, but often more important, effects on writing instruction. In either case, changes in writing instruction were often tied to the overall program to bolster the quality and status of the school—sometimes in line with theoretical developments in writing instruction that would ultimately spawn the field of rhetoric and composition, but almost always with attention to how the school could be expanded and improved to benefit students, faculty, administrators, and the local community.

In the next section, I shift my attention to the period from 1944 to 1953, which includes TSTC's transformation into a state college and the subsequent campaign to become a university. As higher education exploded in size and reach

after World War II as a result of programs like the GI Bill, the institution in Tempe sought to keep pace by expanding into a state college. Unlike in the previous period, writing instruction did not seem to undergo any complicated changes that correlated closely with administrators' attempts to meet the changing mission and scope of the institution, but changes made in this period would ultimately have wide-ranging effects on writing instruction at the school.

### **The Soldiers Come Home to College (1944-1953)**

In 1945, President Gammage's lobbying efforts to expand degree offerings finally came to fruition. Against the wishes of the University of Arizona and its supporters, the Arizona legislature was persuaded to upgrade Tempe State Teachers' College from a single-purpose teacher-training institution into Arizona State College (ASC), a multi-purpose institution of higher education. The upgrade from teachers' college to state college enabled the school to offer bachelor's degrees in arts and sciences disciplines in addition to the education degrees that had long been available from the teachers' college (see Hopkins and Thomas 252-262). In short, following the passage of the GI Bill, the legislature was made to understand that if Arizona wanted to benefit from the surge in enrollments promised by the return of WWII veterans, and the concomitant surge in federal funds available to the institutions of higher education who admitted them, Arizona's teachers' colleges (TSTC and Arizona State Teacher's College of Flagstaff) needed the authority to grant arts and sciences degrees.



The transition from teachers' college to state college was neither smooth nor easy, especially politically, but unlike the upgrade from normal school to teachers' college, which resulted in a fundamental change in the way writing instruction was present in the curriculum, the change from teachers' college to multi-purpose state college had almost no immediate effects on writing instruction. Writing instruction at the state college was, in effect, the same as writing instruction at the teachers' college, and it essentially remained unchanged until 1953, when ASC adopted a "university structure." The 'A' and 'B' sections Myers introduced in 1942 were retained; English 101 instructors continued to study "the nature and purpose of the course with the intention of eliminating its weaknesses and improving the quality of work done both by the faculty and students," as they had since Lionel Stevenson was chair of the English department ("Annual Report, 1945" 2); and the goals outlined by Myers in his 1938 annual report continued to guide how writing was taught and administered throughout this period. However, several changes in the constitution of the institution took place which would have lasting effects on writing instruction in the future of the school, including the unification of general education offerings, the realignment of institutional governance, the introduction of liberal arts degrees, and the adoption of a faculty tenure system. In this section, I briefly describe these developments and introduce their importance to future changes in writing instruction at the institution which are important in the remainder of this chapter and Chapter 6.

One change that would eventually affect writing instruction at TSTC in dramatic ways was the modernization of the school's general education program. In anticipation of the political battle to upgrade TSTC into a state college, the school's administrators introduced a redesigned general education curriculum in 1944. General education courses were first introduced into the curriculum in the 1920s as part of the reform to earn teachers' credit status, but in the teachers' college system, general education was tied into each major. That is, a student seeking a degree in teaching high school English would take a set of general education courses designed to best prepare him or her for major-specific courses in English. While general education courses were part of every major, and while many general education courses, including English 101,102, were part of every general education sequence, there was not one general education system for everyone. In 1944, however, at Gammage's behest, the general education system was unified, bringing into place a single system for every student entering the school. In the 1944 "Report of the Committee on the Liberal Arts Curriculum," committee members note the following:

The first of our objectives [in establishing general education] is the development of communicative skills. This is, of course, a major function of the elementary and secondary schools. All that the college can hope to do is to extend this training to a level of competence considered adequate for college-trained individuals. We have indicated for this purpose the year course called First Year English already in the curriculums. This is to be required of all students. (7)

First Year English was already required for virtually every student, but with this proclamation, administrators for individual majors could no longer choose not to adopt it (or choose to waive it). Everyone would take first-year composition as part of the general education sequence.

The unification of general education seems at first to do little more than continue the system of writing instruction already in place. Everyone already took English 101,102 because of transfer and accreditation requirements. As well, the prescription of First Year English for every student, regardless of major, meant nothing for the way the course was taught. And in practice, the unified general education sequence meant nothing for the system of writing instruction for nearly a decade after it was first undertaken. Nevertheless, what it did do was to reinforce the subtle, implicit message that writing instruction and institutional status were inextricably linked. That is, in adopting first-year composition as an institution-wide requirement, the General Education Committee introduced a level of administrative responsibility for the course that subsumed the English department's administrative responsibility.

There was, as I noted, no immediate consequence for writing instruction, but as college administrators ultimately turned their attention to earning university status, this move on the part of the General Education Committee would eventually result in considerable changes, particularly in the way the writing program was administered. In 1953, in conjunction with an administrative reorganization which I discuss in the next section of this chapter, the general education sequence was divided into five sections. Unlike the other English

courses, which were categorized as “Humanities” courses, first-year composition was categorized as a “Communications” course. It was still housed in the English department and overseen by the department chair, but it was administratively separated for the first time from other English courses inasmuch as the General Education Committee, rather than the English faculty, undertook responsibility for “obtaining evidence regarding deficiencies in reading and writing skills among our students and achieving methods to improve the services offered by our school to remove any such deficiencies” (“Report of the Committee on General Education”). Writing instruction had long been tied to institutional status, but before general education, the English department was wholly responsible for teaching, studying, and developing first-year composition. The introduction of the unified system of general education opened up the door for extra-departmental bodies to exert more direct pressure on the administration of the courses, an issue which became more apparent in later decades and which I discuss in Chapter 6.

The second development during this period that would have significant consequences for writing instruction was the realignment of institutional governance that was written into the legislative bill establishing ASC. After sixty years under the governance of the Arizona State Board of Education, as described in Chapter 3, ASC came under the governance of the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), the governing body established in 1885 to oversee the University of Arizona. Whereas the Board of Education had provided oversight for both the lower schools and teachers’ colleges, which ensured some degree of common interest and alignment, ABOR was generally disconnected from the lower schools

in the sense that it had no responsibility for or to the lower schools. So suddenly, many of organizationally defined links that tied the teachers' college to the state's primary and secondary schools were dissolved. As with general education, the immediate repercussions for writing instruction were negligible. Many English department faculty, including Louis Myers, remained closely involved with various aspects of teaching English in the primary and secondary schools, but the obligation to do so was somewhat weakened.

As in the case of general education, the new system of governance would eventually be important for writing instruction at ASC. The first, and most immediately obvious, effect of ABOR's governance on writing instruction was the establishment of the BA and BS degrees sought by President Gammage since the mid-1930s. As long as TSTC was limited to offering education degrees, literary study was also somewhat limited at the school. As I have described, literature earned some measure of status in the 1920s and 30s in conjunction with writing instruction's shift to the first year, but the breadth of courses was relatively narrow because students could only take so many literature courses for credit in the teachers' college program of study. With the introduction of the English BA at ASC, one of the first twenty programs established at ASC, the limitation of the teachers' college was removed. The BA in English was, perhaps inevitably, a literature degree, so the state college now *had* to offer literature courses.

Along with the adoption of first-year composition as part of general education, ABOR's establishment of the literature BA and the English faculty's

interest in teaching literature essentially replaced writing instruction as the major focus of the department. Literature offerings were expanded, many of the English faculty (an increasing number of which had PhDs in literature) preferred to teach literature instead of writing courses, and students were apparently interested in taking literature courses. In his 1947-1948 report to the President, Myers writes: “[T]he increased enrollment in upper division courses has made it possible to enrich the offering at this level, and we are now in a fairly sound position as regards to undergraduate work. There is now beginning to be a distinct demand [...] for three-hundred courses in English to be offered in the evenings during the regular school year” (“Annual Report, 1947-1948). Within a relatively short period of time, the English department turned from essentially a writing department—focusing predominantly on writing courses with additional offerings in literature—into a bona fide literature department that also taught the writing courses.<sup>15</sup> The transition was not as stark, nor as quick, as it may seem in this narrative, but it happened with the result that writing instruction demanded less and less of English faculty members’ attention in subsequent years.

One other effect of ABOR’s governance for writing instruction deserves brief mention before I move into the next period: tenure. Along with the change from teachers’ college to state college, ASC adopted a tenure system. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges (AAC) issued a joint statement in 1940, titled *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, which restated the importance of tenure for college and university faculty, and schools nationwide soon moved to

adopt tenure as the statement described (“Appendix B: 1940 Statement”; see also Brown and Kurland; Ludlum; Metzger, “1940” and “Academic” 155). At TSTC, de facto tenure had existed for many years,<sup>16</sup> but as part of the upgrade from teachers’ college to state college, the AAUP’s formal system of tenure was adopted in line with the tenure rules at the University of Arizona.<sup>17</sup> The introduction of tenure at ASC seems not to have been the topic of much discussion at the time; and in the same mold as general education and institutional governance, tenure did not have immediate import for writing education at ASC. I mention it here because, as unremarkable as it seems to have been in 1945 (or at least, unremarked), tenure would eventually become a major force in the system of writing instruction at the school. As I describe in Chapter 6, the increasing role of research in tenure decisions beginning in approximately 1960 would come to have important repercussions for writing instruction and writing program administration soon after ASC became ASU.

By 1953, it is apparent that administrators at ASC were seeking another major upgrade: from state college to university status. As was the case at many schools after World War II, enrollments had ballooned. Within ten years, from 1944 to 1954, enrollment at ASC grew from 738 students to 5,258 (“Actual and Projected”),<sup>18</sup> and administrators determined that the only way to effectively meet the needs of the growing student population was to expand the school from a college into a university and redesign the administrative structure accordingly. In addition, the pressure of being part of the “the success-oriented enterprise” virtually guaranteed that, once a “university-structure” was necessitated,

administrators would inevitably seek to upgrade the school from a small, regionally-focused college into a nationally recognized university. In the next section, I continue looking at upgrade efforts at ASC by turning my attention to the next period, 1953-1958. During this period, ASC administrators and faculty embarked on a concerted effort to upgrade the college into a university, and as in previous periods, writing instruction was deeply affected—sometimes intentionally, sometimes inadvertently.

### **An Arizona State University Story (1953-1958)**

During the period of 1953-1958, ASC administrators began a concerted effort to upgrade the college to a university, and this period included some of the most significant changes in the system of writing instruction at the school since the introduction of first-year composition in 1926. For one, so-called “remedial instruction” was restructured twice: first, ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections were abandoned and English X—a course resembling English A which had existed in 1934—was introduced; then, after five years, “remedial English” was dropped altogether.<sup>19</sup> A graduate degree in English was put into place, and graduate students were authorized to teach first-year composition; a limited number of part-time instructors were also hired so full-time faculty could be free from teaching composition in order to direct thesis committees and teach graduate courses. And a writing program administrator position was created to train and oversee teaching assistants, administer placement exams, direct first-year composition exemptions, and handle student complaints. The relationship of writing instruction to



institutional status as ASU is as evident in the five year period I discuss in this section as any other period in the school's history.

In 1951, there were nearly six times as many students enrolled at ASC as there had been in 1945, and according to Hopkins and Thomas, the “old Teachers College form of organization—14 Departments, each with its own head, all reporting directly to the President” was “far outgrown” (280). Gammage appointed a committee to study the problem of institutional organization and recommend a new structure befitting the growing size of the college with the result that in 1953, the school was reorganized into a “university-structure.” The university-structure established three things: (1) a College of Arts and Sciences, comprising fourteen departments and a Dean to whom department chairs reported; (2) a School of Education, also with a Dean acting as an intermediary between faculty and the President; and (3) a doctoral degree in Education, the D.Ed. This administrative restructuring was the first in a series of changes at the institutional level that would culminate in ASC becoming ASU, but more importantly for this chapter, it signaled changes in the system of writing instruction that took place over the next several years.

In accordance with the new university-structure, the school's commitment to general education was reaffirmed, and the five sections of general education noted above were established: Communications, Humanities, Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, Health and Adjustment. As I argued earlier, first-year composition was largely unaffected by the unification of general education in 1945, but the 1953 reorganization meant a major administrative shift. For all

intents and purposes, the classification of first-year composition as a communications course rather than a humanities course separated composition from literature at an administrative level, making it officially (as opposed to practically) a service-course, “required of all students so that the needed skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening might be developed” (“Report of the Committee on General Education”). The General Education Committee described this move as a way to demonstrate to the NCA, still an important influence at ASC, that general education at the school was well suited to providing students with sufficient general knowledge to undertake more specialized study later in their program of study.

The importance of demonstrating a general education program notwithstanding, the realignment of first-year composition also afforded ASC the chance to make a case for university status. In preparation for the new university-structure, the English department restructured first-year composition to emulate the system in place at the University of Arizona, which Louis Myers describes in his annual report in the spring of 1953. Myers writes:

The most important change in the curriculum has been the revision of the first year English program which will go into effect in September [of 1953]. The division of all students into ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections has been abandoned. Instead, approximately the lowest fifteen per cent of the students will be put in ‘X’ sections, which will carry no college credit, but attempt to remedy the deficiencies of earlier training. The plan is roughly similar to the one already in force at the

University of Arizona, but has some modifications which we believe are improvements. (“Annual Report of the English Department, 1952-1953”)

Prior to the introduction of English X in 1953, nearly ten percent of students had been routinely turned away from English 101 as deficient. The rest were organized by ability (as ascertained from entrance tests (see Allee)) into the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections. But, in an effort to establish Arizona State College’s university potential, the system was changed. Entrance requirements were raised (if only slightly), and no one who met those requirements was turned away. Instead, “deficient students” were shunted into “English X: Remedial English” to be fixed as was done at the university.

The development of English X is especially interesting for a number of reasons. For one, it resurrected the practice of implementing a system of writing instruction, particularly remedial instruction, to demonstrate institutional quality—a practice that had been established many years prior when teachers’ college administrators were seeking North Central Association accreditation. Furthermore, this practice was undertaken by faculty and administrators who were largely hired after the school had become a teachers’ college and after NCA accreditation was being sought. The alignment of writing instruction and institutional quality which was represented by English X carried across decades, across administrations, and across institutional missions, which is interesting in that it suggests that the direct link between writing instruction and institutional quality was in some ways considered fundamental. That is, whether the link existed at schools other than the institution in Tempe, and I strongly suspect that it

did, in Tempe administrators made decisions across time and in very different institutional contexts that assumed writing instruction and institutional quality were mutually informing.

In the years following the introduction of English X, Myers' annual reports about its successes were glowing. In 1954, he wrote, "The English X program instituted this year has proved very valuable. [...] More important, the instructors of English 101 sections are unanimous in feeling that the general quality of work done in regular first year English has been much higher this year than at any time since the war" ("Annual Report of the English Department, 1953-1954"). The following year, Myers reported, "The effects of the English X Program, instituted in 1953-4, are beginning to show. Instructors agree that they are getting definitely better work in both composition and sophomore literature courses. Next year, for the first time, an instructor will be assigned full time to English X, and further improvement is expected." And again in 1956, Myers commented on a study conducted by ASC administrators which showed that English X promoted growth in students. Myers noted that the results showed students "made more progress in a single semester than the average of comparable students throughout the country for the whole year" and were "highly gratifying" ("Annual Report of the English Department, 1955-1956"). In the same report, however, Myers also sounded a new note. According to Myers, "the average scores of our entering students and the cut-off point for Remedial English [...] are dangerously low. If we are to achieve university standards we should raise our admission requirements in such a way as to eliminate most students of the sort

now assigned to remedial English.” Regardless of the effectiveness of instruction noted in earlier reports, Myers’ 1956 report suddenly evidenced a realization that English X needed to be rethought because it was an impediment to upgrading the school from a college to a university.<sup>20</sup>

Myers’s message was plain. If ASC truly expected to become a university, administrators would have to raise standards. Myers did not openly advocate abandoning English X, but he did state that if standards were raised, “We could then use remedial English to aid weak but not hopeless students, and maintain the instruction in First Year English at a level which should result in a much higher standard of competence not only in English classes but in all other classes requiring literacy throughout the college” (“Annual Report of the English Department, 1955-1956”). Administrators above Myers, however, apparently believed that doing away with remedial writing instruction altogether would better demonstrate ASC’s quality. In 1958, Academic Vice President H.D. Richardson sent a memo to President Gammage stating that the Coordinating Committee for Curriculum Development passed a motion recommending that English 01, Remedial English (formerly English X) be discontinued in the fall semester of 1958. “If you concur with this recommendation,” wrote Richardson, “we shall prepare an announcement to the faculty and students and a publicity piece for the newspapers” (“Memo from H.D. Richardson”). The function of so-called remedial writing instruction as an indicator of institutional status is even more compelling in light of the abandonment of English X (then called English 01) in 1958. In the course of just five years, English X went from being a vehicle for

showing ASC's quality in relation to the University of Arizona to being terminated as a way to show that standards were being raised.

The intended effect was not wholly realized, as is apparent in a letter from Gammage to Richardson and other administrators regarding the discontinuation of remedial English worth quoting at length. Gammage writes:

The *Tucson Citizen* said that Arizona State had seized academic leadership when we recommended and the Regents passed the program of eliminating bonehead English or high school English or whatever you want to call it. The saving in faculty salaries, etc., was pointed out.

Now the University representatives are saying that this, simply, is a watering down of all of our English. It does not mean raising standards but lowering standards, and that we are putting the poor students in with the others and giving them college English.

I think in carrying this program out it should be made very clear that it is a tightening up, and the plan should prove this. ("Letter from Grady Gammage to Dr. Richardson")

As Gammage pointed out, the program to eliminate "bonehead English or high school English or whatever you want to call it" was made at the highest levels (by the Arizona Board of Regents), and it was manifestly concerned with raising the school's stature sufficiently to earn support for university status to go with ASC's university-structure. Nevertheless, ASC administrators needed to make a concerted effort to communicate the anticipated effects of the change: terminating remedial English meant upgrading the school.

At the same time that remedial writing instruction was undergoing radical changes in relation to institutional upgrades, graduate study was becoming a more prominent aspect of ASC's offerings. Since the school first opened in 1886, writing courses through all their permutations had been taught by full-time faculty members, including the most senior and experienced members of the department. Graduate study, however, changed the entire system. According to Katharine Turner, "Only if they could support themselves by teaching Freshman English were many graduate students able to work on advanced degrees. Only with teaching loads free of Freshmen paper grading could senior faculty advance in scholarship and in the time-consuming direction of graduate assistants" (100). With the expansion of graduate study at ASC, first-year composition became a recruitment tool and a training site for graduate students to gain teaching experience in addition to the other goals it was supposed to meet.

Soon after the Arizona Board of Regents undertook the governance of ASC, administrators were encouraged to establish graduate-level degrees. The teachers' college had been authorized to grant a master's degree in education beginning in 1938 (as a consolation for not receiving authorization to grant a wider selection of bachelor's degrees (Thomas 3.1:495)), and the implementation of the unified general education program in 1945 aligned ASC's course of study with the NCA's requirements for doctoral granting institutions. Because the school was technically qualified to grant doctoral degrees without compromising the school's accreditation, administrators installed the D.Ed. degree along with the university-structure in 1953. The establishment of the D.Ed. presented an

opportunity for the English department. Enrollments at the school had continued to grow after the end of WWII, and in order to maintain class sizes, some faculty members were being paid additional stipends to teach overloads, particularly in fall semesters. In 1954, however, when the first D.Ed. students were enrolled, Myers arranged to have them teach English X courses for Practice Teaching credit instead of cash. Aside from the economy," he writes, "we believe this will make for rather better instruction" ("Annual Report of the English Department, 1953-1954"). Myers does not comment on the quality of teaching by D.Ed students in subsequent reports, but once it was established, the system apparently stayed in place.<sup>21</sup> In the summer between the 1953-1954 school year and the 1954-1955 school year, graduate students accepted responsibility for a limited number of composition courses that were once taught by full-time faculty members.

By 1956, with the introduction of master's-level work in English, responsibility for teaching composition courses was increasingly passed from full-time faculty to graduate students.<sup>22</sup> Full-time faculty continued to teaching writing courses, but the most senior members of the department were steadily freed from their responsibility for doing so. In 1956, just over a decade after ASC was established, ABOR authorized ASC to begin granting graduate degrees in four fields, one of which was English (Turner 100).<sup>23</sup> As part of the program proposal, teaching assistant positions and part-time faculty appointments were requested and granted. In his annual report in 1955-1956, Myers wrote:

The greatly increased freshman enrollment, together with the prospect of an M.A. in English, and the possibility of a D.Ed. in English, have made advisable



a modification in our staff set-up, which is now underway. Hitherto we have aimed at a single permanent staff. Next year we shall have six graduate assistants teaching two sections of First Year English apiece, as well as several temporary instructors. Thereafter we hope to have even more graduate assistants. A series of seminars has been arranged (though not yet presented to the Board of Regents) which will ensure that the assistants receive adequate supervision and assistance. The size of the permanent staff can thus be somewhat reduced, even in the face of growing enrollments. (“Annual Report of the English Department, 1955-1956”)

Myers believed that the combination of graduate students, part-time faculty, and teaching seminars would improve the department in four ways: (1) more highly trained faculty members could be used more effectively than they currently were teaching first-year composition; (2) it would afford “sound training for apprentice teachers”; (3) the budget could be reduced or reallocated; and (4) the graduate program could be improved.

In this report, we see the beginnings of contingent faculty issues that continue to be problematic in higher education, as well as issues of graduate training, the proper function of first-year composition, and the role of permanent faculty in writing education. But what is also apparent is Myers’s concern with the quality of the graduate program and the institution. Graduate study symbolized an important upgrade in the quality and status of ASC, and in order to build the MA program, it was necessary to attract students with options for funding their graduate work and to free full-time faculty to direct graduate students, which further enhanced the graduate program. Hence Myers’ belief that

literature faculty could be used more effectively teaching graduate courses than writing courses. Graduate study caused writing instruction to be conferred from the most highly-regarded members of the English department to the least highly-regarded in service to upgrading the institution.

A third major shift in the place of writing instruction at ASC also occurred during this period with the establishment of a Director of Freshman English position. Teaching assistants and part-time faculty gradually took over writing instruction in 1956, and it was assumed that they needed supervision and training. As well, in 1957 the General Education Committee determined that first-year students should be granted the option of exemption from first-year composition in the event they took four years of high-school English and performed well on a departmentally administered writing examination. The feeling was that higher quality students would be more willing to attend ASC if they could avoid some of the less pleasant curricular requirements (see Turner 221-222). In prior years, these tasks would have fallen to Myers as department chair, but in the summer of 1956, the school's administrative structure was again redesigned in such a way that administering composition became too much of a burden. In this redesign, the English department was split into five separate departments: English, Foreign Language, Humanities, Mass Communication, and Speech and Drama. Myers was appointed Head of the Division of Languages and Literatures (which included all five departments) in addition to remaining chair of English.<sup>24</sup> The addition of administrative tasks associated with writing instruction along with the refashioning of departmental administration and Myers' increased responsibilities

opened a space for the establishment of a Director of Freshman English. When D.Ed. students first became composition teachers in 1954, Myers requested funds for a full-time staff member to oversee them (“Annual Report of the English Department, 1953-1954”). When Myers became Head of Languages and Literatures, the funds were finally allocated and in the fall of 1957, Leslie Bigelow was appointed.

The events that lead to the introduction of the Director of Freshman English position illustrate a concern regarding writing instruction at the school that would be compounded in future years in that writing instruction was increasingly atomized within the institutional structure. Writing courses remained in the English department after the split and were taught by English faculty and graduate students; but composition fulfilled Humanities requirements, and was overseen by the Director of Freshman English. Whereas English instructors had once been specialists in teaching writing (broadly conceived) to future teachers, faculty writing specialists—those that existed—no longer necessarily taught composition and composition teachers no longer specialized in writing. The person most directly responsible for overseeing the writing courses may or may not have been a writing specialist, but in any case, the Director of Freshman English was responsible to the English and Humanities chairs and a Freshman English committee with regard to curricular and institutional decisions. During Myers’s tenure as department chair, the person responsible for writing instruction (Myers) interacted directly with the school’s top administrators. When the Director of Freshman English was appointed in 1957, decisions were made in

conjunction with the newly established Freshman English Committee, then the director reported to two department chairs, who then reported to the Head of Languages and Literatures, who then reported to other administrators. In essence, the establishment of a Director of Freshman English placed administrative responsibilities in the hands of a faculty member with virtually no administrative autonomy and at a serious divide from the people responsible for making institutional decisions—a major shift from when the English department chair administered the courses.<sup>25</sup> As was the case with so many changes relating to writing instruction undertaken in the middle of the twentieth century at the school, the introduction of a Director of Freshman English signaled an upgrade in the quality of the institution inasmuch as it indicated enrollment growth and the expansion of the graduate program. The following year, 1958, Arizona State College officially became Arizona State University.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship of institutional quality and writing instruction at ASU was (and is) a complex one. In some cases, improving writing instruction precipitated upgrades at the school, as when lowered course sizes facilitated accreditation; in others, writing instruction was sacrificed on the twin altars of improvement and expansion. The tendency among composition historians has been to see attempts by faculty and administrators to increase the quality and prestige of higher education as directly proportional to decreases in the regard for collegiate writing instruction (see Crowley, *University*; Miller; Ohmann, *English*).

In the long run, writing instruction at ASU certainly seems to have suffered in relation to institutional upgrades, especially as the college sought to become a university. On the other hand, the common conception among composition historians that, throughout its existence, collegiate writing instruction has been the lowliest intellectual endeavor in the academy belies the significance of writing instruction as a vehicle for and indicator of institutional upgrades at ASU, and presumably at similar institutions across the country. Writing instruction, specifically its place and function in the curriculum, was directly linked to the type of institution the school was and the type of institution it could become. Writing instruction at ASU suffered as a result of the success-oriented enterprise of higher education even as it played a key role in facilitating it.

In keeping with the idea that institutional upgrades helped to define the role of writing instruction in ASU's curriculum, in the next chapter I turn my attention to the tenure system at ASU, which I introduced earlier. As noted, tenure was formalized when Tempe State Teachers' College became Arizona State College in 1945, and in the ensuing years, the process for earning tenure changed radically at institutions across the country, notable especially for the increase in research expectations for tenure-track faculty. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing until the present time, administrators at ASU turned the attention they spent on transforming the college into a university toward becoming a "major research university," a distinction that carried with it grant money, donor funds, and international prestige. In concert with the new focus, there has been a sharp increase in research requirements for faculty members seeking tenure at ASU

(and elsewhere). In Chapter 6, I argue that research as a growing component of tenure had profound consequences, bad and good, for writing instruction and writing program administration at ASU. Therefore, I turn my attention in the next chapter to tenure and research requirements at ASU and argue that increases in research expectations for faculty across the institution effectively decreased the respect for writing instruction and writing program administration at the school for decades. Nevertheless, as a result of complex local events and influences, research and tenure also played an important role in re-establishing some semblance of professional esteem for writing instruction, writing program administration, and rhetoric and composition at ASU.

## Chapter 5 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> John R. Thelin's *A History of American Higher Education*, particularly in chapters 6 and 7, expands usefully on the notion of higher education as an enterprise. *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration*, David O. Levine also notes the pervasive "culture of aspiration" in American higher education, which he believes radically reshaped higher education in the decades between the world wars.

<sup>2</sup> Quality is here measured in terms of institutional rankings in publications such as *U.S. News and World Report*, which as of 2011 ranked ASU #143 in its "Best Colleges" section. I recognize that there is a long list of research demonstrating that such rankings mean very little about the actual quality of an institution, but my goal here is not to prove that ASU is of the highest-quality, but only to demonstrate that it is conceived of as such. Furthermore, such rankings are highly influential and well-regarded by the millions of people who use them to choose a school to attend or endow. In terms of size, ASU enrolled more than 70,000 students in Fall 2010 across four campuses, making it the largest traditional university in the country. There are, however, many online schools, particularly the University of Phoenix, which have much higher enrollments than traditional universities but are often not regarded as equivalent to universities for any number of reasons, not the least of which is related to accreditation.

<sup>3</sup> I recognize that periodization represents, in Robert Connors's words, "a sort of taxonomic lowest common denominator, and that it gives less of an impression of analysis than do conceptual taxonomies" (*Composition-Rhetoric* 7). Nevertheless, like Connors, I think that in some instances periodization can offer important insights that are likely to be obscured by conceptual taxonomies. This chapter is one of those instances.

<sup>4</sup> According to Hopkins and Thomas, between 1930 and 1933, "the axe fell upon 31 faculty members—more than half of [the] 56-person faculty" (216). The faculty members that were dismissed were those that had not earned advanced degrees in their fields of study. Even as faculty were laid off, others were hired to replace them, suggesting that economic concerns were not the primary factor for the massive round of faculty cuts.

<sup>5</sup> As of 1930-1931, the first year in which faculty at TSTC were ranked, "rank" actually denoted associate or full professor status as explained in the NCA's "General Report—Colleges and Universities": "We are using the ruling that to be eligible to academic rank a faculty member must possess the master's degree. Faculty members who do not possess master's degrees are now classified as assistants. They will be ranked as soon as the master's degrees are earned. We hope that ninety per cent of all faculty members may be ranked not later than

1933” (“General Report” 5). J.L. Felton, who had been replaced as chair the previous year after 20 years leading the department, was ranked an associate professor having completed only a masters degree.

<sup>6</sup> According to NCA regulations, classes (exclusive of lectures) should enroll no more than thirty students. Classes that were larger than thirty “should be interpreted as endangering educational efficiency” (“Regulations” 2).

<sup>7</sup> The term “writing program” is one I am applying to the collection of writing courses offered at TSTC at the time. There is no indication that faculty or administrators considered it a “writing program” as we think of now, but in essence, writing courses were grouped together, spoken for as a collection by the department chair (who also administrated all the writing courses), and generally characterized in the way a modern writing program might be.

<sup>8</sup> Enrollment in the fall semester of 1929 was 523 students; by spring of 1932, enrollment was 864 students, an increase of more than 65% in less than three years. Even before ASU boasted record numbers of students, the school maintained fairly steady growth from year to year, with enrollment increasing in all but eighteen of the first seventy five years (Thomas 4:XXVIII 9). Nine of the eighteen years in which enrollment shrank were war years. Of the remaining nine, eight years followed institutional redesigns which disestablished curricular offerings for entire grades of students—in 1921, for example, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum was abandoned so there was no longer an incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade class. Since 1960, enrollments have maintained a similar pattern, occasionally dropping minimally or remaining flat for a couple of years, but generally continuing to increase steadily. Between 1970 and 2010, fall enrollment decreased only five times (“Fall Headcount Enrollment”).

<sup>9</sup> In Lionel Stevenson’s 1936 annual departmental report to the president of the school, he notes that the five sections of English 101 offered in Fall 1935, enrollments were between 50 and 70 students (“Annual Report, 1935-1936”). By 1937, however, enrollments had apparently come down to more manageable levels. Curiously, although the increase in faculty did decrease class sizes, English 101 and 102 would not consistently meet the NCA recommended thirty-student caps until the end of the 1940s. Because the NCA inspector’s concern about class sizes included composition as one of many problematic classes, it seems likely that this concern was addressed sufficiently in other departments and programs to merit overlooking over-enrolled composition courses.

<sup>10</sup> Writing courses and services for students deemed “remedial” have taken many different forms at ASU over the course of the twentieth century, spanning from regressive to cutting-edge. See Appendix A for a timeline of ASU’s responses to the needs of basic writers.



<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, English A lasted only one year. In 1935, Lionel Stevenson, who had been on sabbatical the previous year, returned. Whether Stevenson opposed the course is unclear, but for whatever reason, English A ceased to exist upon his return. Students who did not meet the entrance requirements were simply prevented from entering English 101,102 until they could demonstrate proficiency. Depending on their scores, some students were refused entrance to the school altogether, while others were allowed to take courses in other subjects while they worked on their English proficiency in anticipation of a retest.

<sup>12</sup> See Tirabassi 12-20 for a good overview of this historical view.

<sup>13</sup> Myers's contributions to rhetoric and composition over the span his 35-year career are noteworthy. He was influential in the early development of CCCC as a perennial conference attendee and then executive board member; he wrote and published textbooks that were adopted in writing classes across the country (e.g., *Guide to American English*); and he published articles in disciplinary journals, including *College Composition and Communication* and *College English*, that combined cutting-edge linguistics research and the teaching of rhetoric and composition (e.g., "Linguistics"). Much of his work, including his 1940 *Arizona Teacher* article, "A Step Toward Correlation in English Teaching," evidence a progressive attitude toward linguistic standards that presage in attitude the 1974 Conference on College Composition and Communication's *Students' Right to Their Own Language* (see also Myers, *An American English Grammar*). As his nomination form for the American Association Faculty Achievement Award in 1965 attests, "Dr. Myers has earned national recognition, first, through his books for freshman composition courses, and, more recently, through his history of the English language" ("Nomination Form").

<sup>14</sup> The A and B sections are reminiscent of the English 103,104 sequence in existence before the NCA demanded differentiation among students of different ability levels. It may seem a bit ridiculous that within less than ten years the system of bifurcated instruction that was driven out as a way to upgrade the school was then re-adopted as a means to upgrade the school. It should be remembered, however, that much of the faculty and administration in 1940 was hired after NCA accreditation was secured in 1933. Only Dorothy Schilling and Blanche Pilcher were on the English faculty in 1933 and still there in 1940.

<sup>15</sup> The department chair's annual reports to the President are a striking example of the shift. Up until 1946, the reports were primarily, and often exclusively, focused on first-year composition. They noted trends in scholarship, enrollments, plans for future research and teaching, and more. In the 1947-1948 report, for the first time, there is no mention whatsoever of composition. In subsequent reports, while composition was mentioned regularly, literature was the major focus.

<sup>16</sup> Teacher contracts had to be reviewed and renewed each year, but after a teacher had demonstrated their “fitness” as a faculty member, those contracts became a formality barring egregious violation of administrative regulations. De facto tenure did not, of course, extend to everybody. The Arizona Board of Education had a policy whereby female teachers in Arizona’s primary and secondary schools, normal school, and teachers’ colleges could not be married (“Arizona Board of Regents Meeting Minutes,” 12 Dec. 1925). If a woman were to get married during the term of her contract, she would be dismissed immediately unless the Board of Ed determined that she could be allowed to fulfill the remainder of her contract year. A married woman could not be retained beyond that year nor could she be rehired, regardless of her fitness as a teacher. This provision was outlawed by the Arizona State Supreme Court in 1943.

<sup>17</sup> Tenure, in various forms, had existed at the University of Arizona for many years, though it was a regular source of controversy (see, for example, Adams, et. al, “Report on the University of Arizona”; “Devol vs. Board of Regents”; Novak 105; “Tenure in the University of Arizona”). In 1921, a faculty constitution was formalized “which gave University of Arizona faculty members comprehensive rights of tenure and promotion” (Novak 105). When TSTC came under the Arizona Board of Regents’ authority nearly a quarter century later, the tenure-system in place at the university was applied to the teachers’ colleges.

<sup>18</sup> By 1959, over 12,000 students were enrolled at the school, and by 1970 the number doubled to approximately 24,500. In the twenty-five years from fall 1945, the semester before returning GIs first hit campus, to fall 1970, enrollment at ASU increased by nearly 4400%.

<sup>19</sup> In the place of English X, “English 111/112: English for Foreign Students” was introduced. There is not room here to discuss the role and/or implications of English 111/112, but the ongoing relationship of administrators and faculty at the school to minority students, non-native speakers of English, and non-white citizens in the geographical area is worthy of sustained attention (see, for example, Muñoz, especially Chapter 5).

<sup>20</sup> In the 1957-1958 annual report, acting chair Collice Portnoff writes tellingly that the abolition of remedial English will result in “a general tightening and added richness of instruction, in deference both to the increasing academic rigor of the college and to the national sentiment that higher education standards should prevail” (“Annual Report of the English Department, 1957-1958”).

<sup>21</sup> It is not clear exactly how long D.Ed students taught composition courses, but there are occasional references to the employment of D.Ed students into the late 1950s, even in some years after the MA in English was established in 1957. It seems likely that the introduction of Ph.D.-level study in the English department

beginning in 1960 eventually obviated the need for D.Ed students, but I have not found a definite date for the end of their tenure as composition teachers.

<sup>22</sup> MA coursework in the English department began in 1956, but ABOR did not officially sanction the degree program until the following year. The 1956 students were technically earning credits toward a D.Ed. or an MA in Education with the expectation that the MA in English would be authorized. To minimize confusion, I mark 1956 as the beginning of the MA in English because that's when teaching assistantships in the department began.

<sup>23</sup> According to Turner, the English department had designed a graduate program as early as 1952 (99). It took until 1956 for ABOR to approve the proposal and until 1957 for it to actually begin.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, Myers was gone for that year, and Collice Portnoff was acting Head of Language and Literature and acting chair of the department. In the following year, Portnoff was English chair and Myers held only the Head of Language and Literature position.

<sup>25</sup> No doubt my suggestion that the English department chair had significant institutional clout will strike some readers as inaccurate. However, at ASC, which had been a relatively small school until the 1950s, the English department chair had real clout (as did most department chairs) because of the limited number of administrators. Myers, in particular, served on a number of influential committees and worked closely with the presidents and other institutional administrators throughout his tenure as department chair.

CHAPTER 6  
TRACKING TENURE

Very few members of [a] promotion and tenure committee—who will be looking for excellence in scholarship and teaching—will find that [...] significant administrative work warrants tenure.

Duane H. Roen, “Writing Administration as Scholarship and Teaching,” 1997

As any WPA knows, local politics are an important component in the creation and shape of the composition program.

Barbara L’Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo, “Why Administrative Histories?” 2004

In Chapter 5, I argue that writing instruction was used as a catalyst for, and considered an indicator of, improving institutional quality at the post-secondary institution in Tempe in its various iterations as teachers’ college, state college, and university. I describe changes in the writing curriculum at the institution that correlated closely with changes in the constitution of the school and attempts by faculty and administrators to demonstrate the increasing quality, prestige, and influence of the school. The introduction and elimination of courses and resources for basic writers, as one example, correlated closely with administrators’ and faculty members’ expressed beliefs about how such

instruction would enhance the quality and profile of the institution. If basic writing was deemed an indicator of high institutional quality, it seemed to be offered; if basic writing indicated low institutional quality, it soon disappeared or was reallocated to auxiliary services such as reading and writing centers.

Institutional quality, particularly as reflected in the constant campaign by faculty and administrators to “upgrade” the school, shaped writing instruction in multiple ways, some positive and others less so. By the end of the period under consideration in Chapter 5, as the institution sought to exchange state college credentials for university status, the first-year composition sequence, English 101 and 102, was well-established in the curriculum and represented the only required writing instruction in ASU students’ coursework.

In 1958, the year Arizona State College officially became Arizona State University, many of the trappings of modern writing programs were in evidence at the school, including graduate teaching associates, contingent labor, and a writing program administrator (WPA). In Chapter 6, I turn my focus on ASU’s writing program in the two and a half decades following the school’s emergence as a university. During this period, approximately 1958-1985, the writing curriculum at ASU underwent some notable changes, including the introduction of an Advanced First-Year English course in the late 1960s. However, for the most part writing instruction was well-fixed in its place as a first-year foundational sequence that students were expected to take and move past.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in Chapter 6, I depart slightly from previous chapters, and instead of looking at changes in the place of writing in the curriculum, instead I consider

developments in the writing program more generally in relation to developments in higher education. Specifically, I assess the status of writing program administration<sup>2</sup> at ASU in relation to what I am calling the research and tenure movement—the increasing importance of research in academic tenure decisions in the middle of the twentieth century.

In contrast to the common belief in composition studies that writing program administration gained status as the field of rhetoric and composition professionalized (see, for example, Connors, “Composition History”; Corbett, “A History”; Heckathorn, “Moving” and *Struggle*; McLeod), I argue that writing program administration at ASU, such as it was, garnered considerable status for many years after the position was introduced in 1957, at least with respect to faculty tenure. Writing program administration was considered a service assignment at ASU from its inception; however, tenure decisions were based predominantly on (1) teaching excellence and (2) service to the university and community. As long as this was the case, program administration was considered a significant professional contribution and worthy of tenure consideration. However, as research expectations in higher education increased throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, and as administrators at Arizona State University sought the “major research university” distinction, which I discuss below, respect for writing program administration effectively decreased in tenure decisions. I contend that by the early 1980s, writing program administration was no longer a tenurable effort in the absence of academic publication, and therefore became a burden without rewards. In this chapter, I assess the conditions of writing program

administration at ASU in relation to changing tenure expectations over approximately three decades, and I argue that changes in the system of tenure—particularly the growth of research as an expectation of tenure for the writing program administrator—wrought substantial changes in how the writing program was administered in ASU’s English department. Moreover, I argue that the status of the writing program was strongly, if indirectly, tied to the value of research in the WPA’s tenure expectations. In the next section, I sketch a thumbnail history of tenure and research expectations in the twentieth century to contextualize my later discussion of the relationship of writing program administration and tenure at ASU.

### **Tenure in the Twentieth Century**

Teacher tenure, at both secondary and post-secondary levels, first earned significant attention at the beginning of the twentieth century as progressive reformers sought to protect teachers from the whims of political appointment (see Gove; Lazerson 5; Metzger “Academic Tenure”) and the influence of vested interests (Joughin 167). In post-secondary institutions, specifically, tenure was championed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) as means to ensuring academic freedom so scholars and teachers could advance knowledge without the fear of losing their jobs. The AAUP first published a statement of tenure and academic freedom guidelines in 1915, entitled “A Declaration of Principles” which outlined desirable procedures for ensuring the

academic freedom necessary to conduct the three purposes for which universities exist:

- A. To promote inquiry and advance the sum of human knowledge.
- B. To provide general instruction to the students.
- C. To develop experts for various branches of the public service. (Joughin 164)

According to the authors of the 1915 document, ensuring and defending academic freedom would require that universities adopt four measures, which included “action by faculty committees on reappointments,” “definition of tenure of office,” “formulation of grounds for dismissal,” and “judicial hearings before dismissal” (Joughin 174-175). In effect, the declaration called for stronger protections for teachers through more explicitly defined contractual commitments and increased faculty involvement in governance. According to academic freedom and tenure historian Walter P. Metzger, the 1915 statement represented the first time that academic freedom and tenure were officially linked together in one professional proposal (“Academic” 136).

Between 1915 and 1940, because of the legal barriers to enforcement, tenure was a secondary concern for the AAUP. Tenure was not always recognized or respected by administrators, but neither was it legally enforceable for various reasons, including state laws that prohibited employment contracts for state employees that extended for longer than one year (see Metzger 132). By and large, however, as long as faculty carried out their professional responsibilities satisfactorily, they could assume continued employment based on what Metzger



calls “presumptive competence”—“the presumption that, until proven otherwise, the tenure holder was proficient” (124). Consequently, the AAUP’s main focus during this period was on academic freedom—ensuring (1) that research and teaching were protected “against both covert and overt attacks”; (2) that college executives and governing boards were protected against “unjust charges of infringement of academic freedom, or of arbitrary and dictatorial conduct”; and (3) the profession could be rendered “more attractive to men of high ability and strong personality” (Joughin 174). In the relatively rare instances in which a faculty member felt he or she was dismissed improperly or had his or her academic freedom impinged upon, the AAUP could be called upon to serve as an arbiter of good faith. The AAUP would appoint a committee to investigate the circumstances and make a determination about whether or not academic freedom had been violated. Often the committees determined that no violation had occurred, but if a school was deemed to have infringed upon academic freedom and/or tenure, the institution could be censured by the AAUP.<sup>3</sup>

In 1940, the AAUP’s statement of principles underwent a revision which strengthened and codified the tenure system, including reducing the number of recommended pre-tenure years from ten to seven and indicating that the pre-tenure period should be tied to years in the profession, not just at a single institution (“Appendix B: 1940 Statement”).<sup>4</sup> As a result of the revisions, Metzger writes, for the first time tenure would “accrue to the faculty member not by institutional say-so but by many turns of the working clock” (153). Additionally, the 1940 statement declared that all tenured-faculty dismissals needed to be for

cause and needed to be judicially determined under faculty oversight. At the same time the AAUP's faculty tenure guidelines were strengthened, the 1940 statement also addressed institutional needs: faculty non-renewals were not required to be for cause if they occurred during the pre-tenure period, nor was there the expectation of faculty review for non-renewals. In short, the now-familiar seven-year tenure clock was established whereby at the end of the pre-tenure period, faculty members would either be retained and tenured or denied and dismissed. Following the 1940 revision, many colleges and universities moved to adopt the AAUP's definition of tenure and academic freedom, in whole or in part, as part of their official regulations (see Joughin 34-35; Keast 3; Metzger "1940" and "Academic"; Van Alstyne 79).

The widespread adoption of tenure protections by institutions of higher education in the mid-twentieth century occurred as a result of complexly related pressures, including the growing influence of the AAUP and court decisions defending many of the tenets of academic freedom and tenure (see Rosenblum; Van Alstyne). But there were other pressures as well. For one, following the contraction of the academic labor force during the Great Depression, schools in the 1940s began to aggressively recruit new faculty members to teach a rapidly expanding number of students. In an effort to attract the best candidates, some schools began offering tenure as an incentive to new faculty (see Lucas, *American* 247-252; Metzger 156; Thelin 281, 310-311). In the 1950s, tenure retained its importance as an incentive for faculty members, and its value was reinforced in light of Cold War anti-higher education campaigns, including attacks on academic

freedom by Senator Joseph McCarthy (see Loope 4; Lucas, *American* 243-247; Thelin 274). In the 1960s, tenure again became a recruiting tool, both to attract new faculty members and for universities to attract or retain faculty who had access to the substantial grant funds attached to newly-developed federal research programs, such as the National Defense Education Act (Cohen 259-266; Thelin 272; Whitman and Weiss 4).<sup>5</sup> Within a relatively short period of time, tenure transformed, in Metzger's words, from presumptive competence to presumptive permanence (158). By the 1960s, that is, faculty tenure was pervasive in American higher education and it essentially ensured a lifetime appointment.

As long as faculty were in short supply, institutions offered tenure rather liberally to attract new teachers and made the expectations of earning tenure relatively light. But beginning in the 1960s, faculty began to lose their bargaining power. For approximately thirty years, from the early 1940s into the late 1960s, higher education enjoyed an unprecedented infusion of federal and private funding, particularly funding tied to research, that facilitated a huge expansion in numbers of faculty, from just seventy thousand in 1930 to over half a million in 1970 (Metzger 157). However, by the late-1960s, the growth of the professoriate began to slow significantly for a number of reasons tied to reductions in funding, the leveling-off of student enrollments, political unrest, and calls for external accountability (Graham and Diamond 86-88). Professors who earned tenure in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s had often earned tenure when they were young and were therefore not expected to vacate their positions soon. Additionally, numbers of qualified graduate students competing for open positions had surged as a result of

a surge in graduate programs in the 1950s and 60s. The result was that the abundance of tenure-track faculty positions disappeared very quickly. Tenure-track positions soon became highly competitive, and the competition was increasingly based on research productivity for reasons I discuss below.

As the characteristics of tenure changed during the twentieth century, so did the role of research in higher education and, eventually, tenure. In 1915, research was accepted as such a central aspect of academic freedom that the committee responsible for the 1915 “A Declaration of Principles” commented in their discussion that it was “almost everywhere so safeguarded that the dangers of its infringement are slight” (Joughin 158). Although accepted as an important aspect of academic freedom, research was not an expectation for a large majority of the American professoriate. In *The Rise of the American Research University*, Hugh David Graham and Nancy Diamond assert that before WWII, “most faculty spent their careers bound by local or regional horizons, teaching heavy course loads in undergraduate colleges and engaging in academic research only marginally if at all” (20). At research universities, such as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Chicago, the research ideal proliferated, and professors were expected to conduct, facilitate, and publish research as a key component of their professional responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> But at most other schools in the early twentieth century, including the normal schools, liberal arts colleges, and technical schools that constituted the majority of post-secondary institutions, research was admired, valued, and often encouraged, but it was not expected of most faculty members.

Following WWII, research took on new importance in American institutions of higher learning. The federal government, building on wartime successes in scientific research and development, introduced a national science agenda and opened up merit-based funding opportunities to universities and their faculty for conducting scientific research. Federal funding spurred new research, and as funding opportunities grew, many schools that had long been primarily undergraduate, teaching-focused institutions began to develop research and graduate programs that would enable them to compete for federal research funds. Research took on increased significance in faculty responsibilities and institutional missions in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. Like tenure, research opportunities were used to recruit new faculty members, particularly in the hard sciences. Teaching loads were reduced in many schools to enable faculty to conduct research, and faculty members with higher research productivity could command better jobs and benefits (Graham and Diamond 21; Tuckman *Publication* 58, 73). In addition to faculty rewards, the research conducted and funded at a school also became intimately tied to institutional quality (see California; Carnegie; Kerr 35-63). The “best schools” were often so-designated because of high research activity, abundant research funds, and nationally-ranked research faculty, and many institutions were eager to compete for research resources that would raise their status in line with what I described in Chapter 5 as the national campaign to “upgrade” post-secondary institutions throughout the twentieth century. By 1960, faculty research expectations were rising precipitously in institutions across the country, establishing a pattern of research

growth that has continued more or less steadily in subsequent decades (see Gebhardt 9-16).

There is ample evidence of the rapid rise in research and publication in higher education following WWII, and it is not necessary to rehearse it all here. What is necessary, however, is to note that beginning in the 1960s, the rapid rise in research combined with other factors to bring about significant changes in how tenure was granted in American colleges and universities. At the beginning of the 1970s, higher education faced many new challenges, including reductions in federal funding (Graham and Diamond 84-103), attacks on professors as radically out-of-touch with mainstream society (Mayhew 103-104), and attacks on tenure for “protecting incompetence and denying appointment of minority groups and women” (Mayhew 102).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, roughly concurrently with the growth of the professoriate, administrative/managerial structures had grown as a means for managing the rapid expansion of higher education. Higher education historian Arthur Cohen argues that the increase in business-minded “middle management”—provosts, deans, and vice presidents—produced tensions between administrators who controlled budgets on one hand and faculty, students, and alumni groups competing for increasingly scarce resources on the other hand. The combination of shrinking resources, shrinking faculty positions, and expanding expectations of accountability, along with other pressures, precipitated a focus on objective evaluation of excellence as a condition of faculty promotion and tenure. The authors of a 1973 Carnegie Commission policy report summed up the conception among higher education officials well when they wrote, “Generally,

the principle of tenure should be retained. However, appointments to tenure should be made only after a most careful review and should be based on demonstrated merit rather than on seniority” (Mayhew 103).

The demonstration of merit was (and often still is) based largely on research and publication. In their American Association for Higher Education research report, “Faculty Evaluation: The Use of Explicit Criteria for Promotion, Retention, and Tenure,” education specialists Neal Whitman and Elaine Weiss contend that faculty evaluation prior to 1970 was based less on academic merit than on other factors, “including the ability to get along and not make waves” (1). In the 1970s and 80s, however, in the face of economic uncertainty and unpredictable enrollments, colleges and universities developed more explicit faculty evaluation criteria. Whitman and Weiss assert that, while research, teaching, and service are the traditional areas evaluated for tenure decisions, in reality “little weight is given to service” and “although many administrators and faculty would like to give more weight to teaching, the state of the art of evaluating teaching does not instill confidence in the reliability of validity of teacher evaluation” (1-2). Therefore, since research in the form of publications is commonly the easiest factor to ensure “quantitative objectivity,” this factor is often the most highly regarded (15).

Whitman and Weiss’s assessment is a common one. According to economist Howard P. Tuckman, publication provides a qualitative measure of faculty productivity, whereas success in “teaching, committee work, advising, and a host of other activities that confront a faculty member [...] is hard to quantify

and unlikely to bring professional recognition” (“Academic Reward” 187). In short, focusing on research and publication as the primary measure of tenure decisions helped academics demonstrate to administrators, legislators, and other critics that: (1) faculty were neither lazy nor incompetent, and (2) tenure decisions were based objectively and quantitatively on faculty excellence—not seniority, race, gender, or other factors. As academic rewards accrued to faculty members with higher research and publication productivity, research and publication continued to grow in importance for faculty advancement (Graham and Diamond 103-116; see also Cuban). By the 1980s, virtually all faculty members at the majority of four-year institutions were expected to conduct research and publish to varying degrees.

The preceding history of tenure and research is necessarily limited and simplified. Nevertheless, it demonstrates some of the complex influences that stimulated and the growth of tenure in American higher education and the inexorable growth of research as the main component of tenure decisions in the latter half of the twentieth century. In terms of the history of tenure and research, the national story is Arizona State University’s story, particularly with regard to the increase in faculty research expectations in the 1960s, 70s and, 80s. According to Marvin Fisher, former faculty member and English department chair at ASU, research was becoming more valued as a faculty activity at ASU as early as the 1950s (Fisher 23 Apr. 2010). In 1961, six doctoral programs<sup>8</sup> were developed to take advantage of the federal aid that was available for promoting research (Sabine 15) and the president of ASU, G. Homer Durham, actively encouraged



faculty research by providing in-house research support funds and by supporting faculty members in their applications for federal and private grants (89-90). At the beginning of the 1960s, ASU had virtually no access to outside research funds, but by the end of the decade, “Research burgeoned as millions of research support dollars flowed in from government and business foundations” (199). Nicholas Salerno, also a former ASU faculty member and English department chair, reiterates Fisher’s assessment of the expansion of research. Salerno recognized that beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, new faculty were being recruited and hired for their scholarly credentials as opposed to their teaching credentials (“Very Personal”).

Tenure and promotion applications at ASU reflected the growing esteem of research. Echoing tenure scholars, some of whom are cited above, Fisher contends that faculty evaluation throughout the 1960s and 70s was increasingly evaluated on the demonstration of “academic merit,” which largely translated to quantity and quality of research and publication as determined by members of the personnel committee (23 Apr. 2010). Helen E. Nebeker, who served as English department faculty at ASU for many years before becoming associate chair of the department in 1980, remembers that in the early 1960s, a new policy was introduced whereby “all assistant professors would have their teaching loads lightened from twelve hours per semester to nine, thus freeing them for research” (“Out of the Dark” 42). Nebeker draws very clear connections between research and promotion and tenure at ASU, noting that in the early 1960s she was advised by the chair of the department to focus on teaching and not to bother publishing as

she would never be recommended for promotion because she was female and did not possess a Ph.D. (42).<sup>9</sup> A negative assessment, to be sure, but also evidence that promotion was predicated on scholarship more than teaching. Furthermore, when Nebeker was finally recommended for promotion to associate professor some years later, she was denied on the grounds that her lack of a doctorate “mandated more significant publication than was usual” (43). Although Nebeker was repeatedly refused tenure and promotion as a result of other factors (including her gender), she implicitly asserts that publication quickly became the main criterion for tenure and promotion for the vast majority of ASU’s faculty members through the 1960s and 70s.

At the beginning of the 1980s, faculty research and publication expectations rose even further at ASU. Beginning in 1979, the Arizona Board of Regents issued a series of “mission and scope statements,” which included a mandate for ASU to become a “major research university.” According to this policy statement, ASU was expected to “[b]ecome competitive with the best public universities in the nation” by expanding research and graduate programs (“Arizona University System”). For tenure decisions, according to Salerno, research and teaching were each supposed to make up forty percent of faculty members’ time, and were therefore weighted as such in tenure files. Service was counted as twenty percent of a faculty member’s tenurable effort (Salerno, 17 Aug. 2010). For merit raises, research expectations were even higher than for tenure cases, constituting sixty percent of the decision, with teaching and service each counting for twenty percent (“Letter from Nicholas A. Salerno to English

Department”). If publication was favored in faculty tenure and promotion applications prior to the Regents’ policy statement, it became a mandatory condition of tenure and promotion for all faculty members at ASU afterwards. In the remaining sections, I look at the effects these changing tenure expectations wrought in ASU’s writing program, including the relationship of tenure and writing program administration from the late 1950s into the 1980s.

### **Tenure and Writing Program Administration at ASU (1957-1971)**

As noted above, research training and qualifications for faculty at the Tempe institution were on the rise by the 1950s. Statements of personnel policy from the mid-1950s show that by 1953, coinciding with the establishment of the first graduate programs at Arizona State College, administrators were actively encouraging all faculty to earn advanced degrees, particularly doctoral (“research”) degrees, by offering protected leave to faculty pursuing further training (“Letter from Grady Gammage to Department Heads”). In the same year, personnel policies began to stress the promotion of faculty members based on “merit” as opposed to longevity. The institution’s 1956 “Faculty Personnel Policy” echoes prior drafts, noting that “Promotion shall not be granted merely on length of service but on the grounds of excellent performance of duties, professional growth, and promise of future usefulness to the College” (4)—essentially, teaching, research, and service. Descriptions of faculty positions—instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor—stressed the ability of faculty to “evidence ability to do original work” to an increasing degree

as they moved up the career ladder (5). Even before ASC became ASU, research was commanding more and more attention from faculty and administrators.<sup>10</sup>

The increasing importance of research notwithstanding, in the 1950s and for some time after, teaching effectiveness and service were the two most important criteria for faculty evaluation at ASU. Teaching was considered the primary responsibility of professors at ASU, and was therefore the primary factor considered for faculty promotion and tenure. In terms of evaluation, however, while there were classroom visits and other means of evaluating teaching, teaching effectiveness was largely taken for granted in the absence of student complaints or other evidence of obvious incompetence for the same reason cited above: evaluating teaching was difficult.

Service to the campus and community, on the other hand, was weighted heavily because it provided tangible evidence of “institutional usefulness”—one of the stated responsibilities of faculty in the personnel policy. The value of research and publication were also unmistakable in the personnel policy—publishing articles and books was a stated expectation of associate and full professors—but in interviews, former ASU faculty members have suggested that it took some years after the personnel policy explicitly mentioned publication before it was actually expected from faculty. According to Helen Nebeker, “Maybe before 1967, in around that time, there was nothing, there was no emphasis placed upon publication. The emphasis was placed on committee service, university committee service” (28 Apr. 2010). In Nebeker’s estimation, university committee service commanded the highest respect in faculty

evaluation, and service assignments at college and departmental levels contributed to tenure and promotion applications as well in the 1950s and well into the 60s. The valuing of service is understandable because many ASU faculty had been hired in the 1940s and early 50s before extensive publication was a realistic expectation of most professors. Into the 1960s, ASU's personnel policy stated that professional progress could be indicated by "publications, research, or other service of special value to the institution" (3)—a disclaimer that allowed for tenure and promotion decisions to be made on the basis of professional work which was not published research even as the school began recruiting active scholars.

In spite of Barbara L'Eplattenier's assessment that "WPAs have little legitimacy—historical or otherwise—because they are seen as doing nonintellectual service work for a service course unworthy of serious study or research," ("Finding" 136), it is reasonable to infer that writing program administration was valuable for earning tenure and promotion at ASU on the basis of institutional service. The writing program administrator position was introduced in 1957,<sup>11</sup> in the years when institutional service was still significant for tenure and promotion. It was a visible, demanding, and necessary position at the institution. According to Delmar Kehl, who directed the writing program from 1968-1971, the WPA was a service position, but it was a demanding position visible to the entire institution (19 Feb. 2010). "Everybody was interested in improving writing," he said, and the WPA was responsible for attempting to meet that charge. As a result, much of Kehl's time as WPA was spent meeting with

department chairs across the university, faculty members in each department, and the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences to discuss ways to improve student writing and meet the needs of the institution. Nebeker affirms Kehl's assessment, noting that the first-year writing program was "Fundamental, absolutely fundamental, and necessary, absolutely necessary" in the department, college, and university (28 Apr. 2010). The writing program administrator was actively involved across the institution and involved with administering a necessary (and required) program. Although there is no specific mention to weighing writing program administration in tenure cases, it is highly probable that directing the writing program was regarded as a service of special value to the institution.

The evidence that supports the value of writing program administration in tenure cases is largely circumstantial, but it is nevertheless strongly suggested by the actions of ASU's early WPAs. Early WPAs were uniformly non-specialists, coming from literature and secondary education backgrounds, and they therefore had negligible disciplinary interest in running a writing program to go with the negligible institutional clout that they possessed while carrying out the responsibilities of the job. From the point of view of composition historians, these men represented the non-professionalized character of WPAs at institutions across the country in the absence of serious disciplinary respect for rhetoric and composition. At the same time, however, during the period when ASU's WPAs were non-specialists, they dedicated significant time and energy to running the writing program. Richard Welsh, for example, directed the program in 1959-1960 as an interim WPA. In his one year term, he redesigned the English 101 and 102

syllabi, surveyed seventy-six writing programs at colleges and universities across the country to assess their class sizes, and introduced the first Honors sections of first year composition (Turner 137-139).

Welsh was not unique for his commitment to the writing program. Wilfred Ferrell (WPA from 1960-1967) and George Herman (WPA from 1967-1968) served for multiple years on a committee in the late 1960s that was charged with determining whether obligations to freshmen and to the college were being met in terms of trends in basic English practice throughout the nation, whether more extensive use of entrance examinations in English might not move more students into advanced courses, whether the Junior Proficiency Examination was accomplishing its purpose, and why only grades of A or B in Freshman English provided exemptions from it. (Turner 223)

During his three-year term at WPA, Delmar Kehl started ASU's writing clinic, the predecessor to the writing center, as a way to provide students with additional attention for their writing without burdening students with the costs and challenges of a required "remedial" course (Kehl 19 Feb. 2010). Kehl also instituted "Master sections" or "observation sections," in which a ranked faculty member would teach first year composition and teaching assistants would be invited to attend the class as often as they liked throughout the semester to watch, take notes, get assignments, and provide feedback for the teacher. He lobbied for a resource room for writing program teachers, which included disciplinary journals and curriculum resources.

In addition to their work on-campus, several of the “non-professionalized” WPAs attended CCCC and RSA and tried to meet the needs of the people in ASU’s writing program to the best of their abilities. Certainly the effort and attention paid to the writing program by non-specialist WPAs was a function of their commitment to strong writing, the needs of the institution, and doing the best job they could. Nevertheless, their demonstrated dedication and effort, which seems to far exceed what might be considered minimal expectations, strongly suggests that there was also a professional benefit to being active and engaged as a WPA. It is probable that a successful turn as WPA contributed to a strong tenure case in an institution that valued service, and the research and publication opportunities that they inevitably passed up were offset in their tenure cases by the valuation of their special service to the institution.

Additional evidence demonstrates that, even if directing the writing program did not aid tenure cases, neither did it impede writing program administrators’ career progress at ASU in the 1950s and 60s. Wilfred A. Ferrell, for example, was hired as an assistant professor in 1959, assumed the WPA position in 1960, earned tenure and promotion to associate professor in 1963, and was promoted from WPA to Dean of the Graduate School in 1967.<sup>12</sup> Delmar Kehl was a third-year assistant professor when he became WPA in 1968, and he was not impeded by his stint as WPA in his bid for tenure and promotion, either. He became an associate professor in 1972, the year following his three-year term as WPA. According to Kehl, he turned over the WPA position because he wanted to teach more, not because he needed time to publish. Neither Ferrell nor Kehl had



substantial publications at the time of their advancement to tenured associate professor, but both had demonstrable service to the institution as writing program administrator.<sup>13</sup> The degree to which writing program administration aided their specific tenure and promotion cases is uncertain, but it was obviously not an impediment to their advancement and seems likely to have contributed to their advancement in the absence of extensive publication.

I do not want to overstate the case about the value of writing program administration at ASU during the 1950s and 60s, so there is some need to clarify the notion of value with regard to writing program administration as I make the case that it was important in tenure and promotion. As noted in Chapter 5, in 1957 the newly-appointed WPA had very limited authority and virtually no institutional clout, especially in comparison to the outgoing English department chair, Louis M. Myers, who had administered the school's writing courses from 1938-1956. The first WPA, associate professor Leslie Bigelow, had three main responsibilities: training and supervising TAs, administering an exemption test for students hoping to avoid one or both semesters of first-year composition, and updating the curriculum for English 101 and 102 as needed (Turner 131-140). All three responsibilities, and any others that arose, were conducted in cooperation with the Freshman English Committee—a committee of twelve to fourteen English faculty members chaired by the WPA and responsible for assisting the WPA in his<sup>14</sup> or her responsibilities. In interviews, when asked about the status of writing instruction and program administration, several former faculty and program directors, including Frank D'Angelo, Delmar Kehl, and Helen Nebeker

announced without reservation that composition was a service course and the administrator held a service position.

Based on descriptions of the WPA's responsibilities, authority, and status, there is little indication that the position was respected as an intellectual exercise, in spite of the fact that Louis Myers was in attendance at CCCC in almost every year during the 1950s and Bigelow was listed as the co-secretary of the 1958 CCCC workshop, "Administering the Large Freshman Program."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, even as writing program administration was not necessarily well-respected as an intellectual endeavor, it was a university-level service assignment. In an institution that valued service as an important responsibility of faculty and a primary factor in faculty evaluation, writing program administration was demonstrable evidence of professional and institutional usefulness of the sort Nebeker and ASU's personnel policy suggests was expected of faculty members. The WPA's value was in that the position was necessary, and it was demanding enough to impede other professional responsibilities, such as publication. Faculty members who took the assignment, therefore, were granted some measure of professional acknowledgement for serving the institution, whether or not program administration was highly regarded as an intellectual or academic endeavor.

### **Rhetoric, Composition, and Research at ASU (1971-1978)**

The 1970s saw a fundamental change in the relationship of ASU's writing program administrator to research expectations—a change which would eventually reduce the value of writing program administration in tenure and

promotion applications. In 1971, Frank D'Angelo took over as director of the writing program in his second-year as an assistant professor, and by all accounts, he represented a new direction for ASU's writing program. D'Angelo was the first WPA at ASU with graduate-level training in rhetoric, and he was actively involved in building the discipline of rhetoric and composition on a national level during his time at WPA. At the same time he was serving as ASU's WPA, he also published prolifically. In the seven years D'Angelo was WPA, from 1971-1978, he published two books (one textbook and one monograph) and nineteen articles or book chapters.<sup>16</sup> According to Nicholas Salerno, as a result of his scholarly work, D'Angelo gave the writing program real respectability for the first time (22 Feb. 2010). Nebeker adds that "Frank D'Angelo was the first director of freshman English [who] got publicity. He'd send out all of his writings under 'Director of Freshman English'" (28 Apr. 2010). In line with the rise in research and publication occurring throughout the institution and nation, D'Angelo's service as WPA was marked by a substantial increase in publications in comparison to previous WPAs. In this section, I argue that the professional status D'Angelo earned for the WPA at ASU through extensive publication shifted the relationship of writing program administration, research, and tenure in connection with changing research expectations in the institution as a whole. In the following section, then, I argue that the shift brought about by D'Angelo's term as WPA affected his successors in complicated ways.

D'Angelo's service as WPA at first seems in accord with histories of writing program administration written by rhetoric and composition scholars. The

few histories of writing program administration that exist tend to recount measured progress during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. As writing program administration historian Amy Heckathorn writes, “[By] [a]ligning administrative concerns with composition problems in general, WPAs were able to jump quickly toward outlets of resolution—riding the tide of intellectual status composition was gaining” in the 1970s (*Struggle* 41-42). In “A History of Writing Program Administration,” Edward P.J. Corbett offers 1963 as a beginning point, from which rhetoric and composition scholars took on the intellectual responsibilities of teaching and administering composition courses. He notes that interest in administration faded briefly, but that Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) revived interest in 1976, and “We might say that the WPA is now fully enfranchised” (70). Likewise, in her book *Writing Program Administration*, Susan McLeod recounts the story of the professionalization of the writing program administrator in connection with the professionalization of rhetoric and composition beginning after World War II and extending into the 1990s (58-79). Heckathorn calls 1964-1979 “The Transitional Era,” “when WPAs gained more public responsibility and acknowledgement and began to form a group identity to address the problems hindering professionalization” (“Moving” 192). Chief among those problems, according to Heckathorn, was a lack of publication by WPAs and the service function of the position which determined that it was “not worthy of senior professors or published research” (193). According to these narratives, as rhetoric and composition developed, writing program administrators such as Frank D’Angelo were able to meet the problems that had until that time

limited their professional respect. That is, rhetoric and composition specialists drew on their disciplinary knowledge to inform their administration of writing programs. Viewed through this historical lens, the WPA at ASU seems to have gradually professionalized by attending CCCC and publishing in disciplinary journals in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. WPA professionalization culminated in D'Angelo's service during which he was closely connected to the burgeoning discipline of rhetoric and composition and he published widely about composition, rhetoric, and, to a lesser extent, program administration. As a result, the writing program gained respect in ASU's Department of English, as well as in the institution.

This historical narrative, however, overstates the deliberate connection between D'Angelo's intellectual work and his administration of the writing program. By his own admission, D'Angelo did not connect the intellectual work of rhetoric and composition with his service as writing program administrator. When asked about his interest in writing program administration, D'Angelo replied, "I was interested in it simply because I was an administrator, but to tell you the truth I was really more interested in developing a graduate program because I saw some good possibilities for all of us [in the discipline of rhetoric and composition], not just for me" (13 Apr. 2009). The work of writing program administration was for D'Angelo, as it was for his predecessors at ASU, merely service. "All I was trying to do was really maintain the status quo," he said, and his administrative responsibilities therefore remained relatively limited, if still demanding:

My only duties at that time were twofold. They were to try to educate the new T.A.s as much as possible, which wasn't very sophisticated because we weren't doing very much in those days just introducing them to the textbooks. [...] The other thing which was a little bit more involved, it was more headaches than anything else. It was just that when students would come in from other universities I would have to make an evaluation about whether or not we would accept the work that they had done for writing credit. [...] The other thing was, as you know, just being an arbitrator.

The T.A. would have problems with students in class. (30 Mar. 2009).

In spite of his connection to the intellectual work of rhetoric and composition, which WPA historians have suggested informed writing program administration and facilitated the rise in status of WPAs, D'Angelo saw his WPA duties as purely administrative and believed that the real intellectual value and potential was in the graduate program. When he left the WPA position in 1978, it was because he felt burned out by the often-trivial and time-consuming tasks. When asked about it, he said "After a while, it wears you out being an administrator, it wears you out. First of all you're dealing with everybody's problems. Secondly, you're dealing—these are important things. I'm not saying they're not important, but they're not intellectual" (30 Mar. 2009). As he makes clear, D'Angelo believed the work of writing program administration was important in the sense that it needed to be done, but he did not regard his leadership of the program in intellectual terms, nor did he seem to regard his scholarship as fundamentally tied to his work as director of the writing program.<sup>17</sup>

In the sense that D'Angelo viewed the WPA position as wholly administrative, the connection between his service as WPA and his intellectual commitments to rhetoric and composition were unintended. Nevertheless, although D'Angelo regarded his scholarship and administration as separate endeavors, his extensive publication record during his administrative appointment redefined the research expectations for ASU's WPA. As Salerno noted, D'Angelo brought respectability to the writing program by publishing extensively in rhetoric and composition and driving the field and discipline forward. D'Angelo's prolific publication lent creditability to rhetoric and composition scholarship at ASU, and by virtue of his position as WPA, credibility also accrued to the writing program and the writing program administrator under his guidance.

The effects of this ancillary credibility were not necessarily as advantageous as they may at first seem. Rather than demonstrating and defending the intellectual value of program administration, D'Angelo instead demonstrated to his colleagues in the English department that the WPA position enabled extensive research for rhetoric and composition scholars. That is, ASU's previous WPAs had been literature scholars and teachers, and the WPA position was therefore considered a diversion from their intellectual work—a special, and time-consuming, service to the university that inhibited their research and publication. When previous WPAs went up for tenure, their lack of publication did not impede their promotion; when D'Angelo went up for tenure, he was qualified on the basis of service as well as publication. Since D'Angelo's publication was not inhibited, and since his intellectual interests and administrative duties were apparently

mutually informing, D'Angelo demonstrated that the WPA position need not be considered as solely a service to the institution. To put it another way, the apparent connections between D'Angelo's intellectual work in rhetoric and composition and his administrative work as WPA suggested that the position could facilitate research in addition to its service aspects—a benefit in an institution that increasingly valued research and publication. Ironically, by lending the WPA credibility and respectability through research and publication, D'Angelo inadvertently shifted the value of the WPA from a tenure benefit in terms of institutional service—evidence of institutional usefulness—to a potential research site, a shift that would have important consequences for the WPAs that followed D'Angelo, especially as tenure was involved. In the next section, I look at ASU's WPAs in the decade following D'Angelo's departure from the position in terms of their research and tenure circumstances.

### **Evaluating the Intellectual Work of ASU's Writing Program Administrator (1978-1986)**

The effects of tenure's evolution on ASU's WPA were largely imperceptible in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. However, as I argued earlier in this chapter, by the early 1980s, the relative value of research, teaching, and service as components of tenure and promotion at ASU were shifting in line with a general trend toward valuing research at schools across the country. Following Frank D'Angelo's term as director of the writing program, changing tenure standards at ASU dramatically affected the tenure status of the WPA in a number of ways,



which eventually included the hiring of tenured—as opposed to tenure-track—faculty members to direct the writing program. In this section, I look at tenure in the period after D’Angelo’s turn as WPA ended in 1978 and before a tenured faculty member, David Schwalm, was hired to direct the program in 1986.

In considering the relationship of research, tenure, and writing program administration at ASU in the period after D’Angelo, it is most useful to look specifically at the circumstances surrounding one WPA, Dorothy M. Guinn. Guinn was hired in 1981 with the expectation that she would assume the duties of ASU’s WPA in 1982, which she did until she left ASU in 1984. The most obvious reason for looking at Guinn’s circumstances is that she was the only WPA to apply for tenure after D’Angelo left the position. Immediately following D’Angelo, associate professor of English education, William Ojala, was appointed as WPA. Ojala was a tenured faculty member when he accepted the position, and he ran the writing program until Guinn took over in 1982. Guinn served as WPA from 1982-1984, during which time she applied for tenure. Every WPA since Guinn has either been tenured at the time of their appointment or has been ineligible for tenure. From 1984-1986, several interim co-chairs participated in directing the program, including former WPA Wilfred A. Ferrell, two non-tenure track faculty members (M. Clare Sweeney, Director of the Writing Center, and John Mateja, a temporary research fellow in the Education department), and at least one graduate student. According to Sweeney, Ferrell served mostly an advisory role, and the daily operations were divided among the other three (non-tenure track) co-chairs, to be completed in addition to their other professional

responsibilities to the institution (24 Apr. 2010). Then in 1986, Schwalm was hired as a tenured associate professor to be the full-time WPA.<sup>18</sup> Since Guinn was the only faculty member to come up for tenure in the 1980s, her example offers an interesting opportunity for comparison with WPAs before and after her.

The second reason for looking at Guinn's circumstances is that she was denied tenure. In 1983, as I discuss below, Guinn was denied tenure as a result of a limited research and publication record. Guinn's term as WPA is interesting because it represents a crossroads in the historical relationship of ASU's WPA and tenure. After decades in which WPAs could be tenured without extensive research and publication records because directing the writing program was considered an impediment to publication and constituted "special value to the institution" on tenure applications, Guinn was the first WPA at ASU who was expected to publish widely in order to gain tenure.

Before I continue, it is imperative that I point out that the circumstances surrounding Guinn's departure are important not for their sensational quality and not for determining blame, fault, or responsibility. I begin from the assumption that everyone involved was well-intentioned in spite of the regrettable outcome. I use Guinn's example because of the conspicuous nature of writing program administration and research in her tenure case which brings tenure issues into sharp contrast. Her relatively short time at ASU is as informative as any other WPA's in the history of the school for considering research and tenure as they affected the writing program.

The conditions under which Guinn was hired are as striking in some ways as the conditions under which she left ASU. When D'Angelo opted to leave the WPA position in 1978, he was replaced by an existing ASU faculty member, William Ojala. None of the former faculty members I spoke with remember the occasion for Ojala's appointment, except to say that it was unlikely that he was appointed to the position as a result of his expertise or particular qualifications since he had no disciplinary ties to rhetoric and composition. Although he was WPA for four years, the consensus seems to be among my interviewees that, whatever the reason for Ojala's appointment, his service as WPA was meant to be a temporary fix until the department could hire a faculty member who possessed the necessary qualifications to run the writing program.

Guinn was hired because she possessed those qualifications, including disciplinary expertise. Guinn had earned her PhD in rhetoric from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1978, she came to ASU in 1981 after serving as the writing program director at the University of Tulsa (TU) for two years, and according to Marvin Fisher, she was hired in part based on Frank D'Angelo's recommendation (31 Mar. 2010).<sup>19</sup> She came to ASU having spent four years as an assistant professor at TU and one year as an instructor at USC. At TU, she'd served on university and college-level committees, including the University Senate and the Faculty Affairs Committee ("Decennial Review"). She had served on professional committees, presented at national conferences, and was a member of the Rhetoric Society of America's Board of Directors. Additionally, according to her curriculum vitae, Guinn had directed TU's writing center from 1977-1981,

in addition to directing the writing program (“Decennial Review”). Guinn’s disciplinary and administrative experience suggested that she was well-qualified to run ASU’s writing program.

By the standard of institutional service that had guided tenure and promotion cases of previous WPAs at ASU, including Ferrell and Kehl, Guinn seems an excellent candidate. For one, Guinn was the first faculty member ever to be hired specifically as the WPA at ASU. Whereas all previous WPAs, including D’Angelo, had been existing faculty members when they were asked to serve as the writing program administrator, Guinn was hired to direct the writing program (Salerno 22 Feb. 2010). Additionally, the professional and institutional service assignments enumerated above suggest she was actively involved in rhetoric and composition, and she was actively providing “special value to the institution” in the sense that ASU’s mid-century personnel policies described. Furthermore, before coming to ASU, Guinn had been “in the profession” by the AAUP’s definition for five years—four years as an assistant professor and one year as an instructor. Her tenure application in 1982, then, reflected six years of professional activities, including extensive professional and institutional service, at the instructor-level or higher, which would have contributed to a strong tenure case based on the AAUP’s 1940 tenure guidelines and ASU’s early personnel policies. Guinn did not, however, earn tenure because, despite ample service to the institution and profession, her publication record did not meet the expectations of tenure cases in an institution aspiring to meet the “major research university” distinction.

Guinn's tenure case reflects the increased expectations for publication in tenure cases at ASU just one year after the Arizona Board of Regents had filed their mandate for the institution to aggressively pursue a research agenda. Guinn's publications were comparable in number to those of WPAs that had earned tenure in the years before D'Angelo. At the time of her tenure application, Guinn had published eight articles or chapters (of varying lengths), in addition to giving thirteen presentations at national or regional conferences dating back to 1974 ("Decennial Review"). While this publication record seems likely to have been sufficient some years earlier, by the early 1980s, especially taking into consideration D'Angelo's publication record, Guinn's record was considered insufficient. As Fisher explained, "I tried to educate her on the realities of academic tenure. [...] We were looking for evidence of professional publications and presentations" (23 Apr. 2010). It is apparent from Fisher's account that all faculty members were expected to be actively publishing, in addition to, and regardless of, the service they provided to the institution and profession if they expected to be tenured at ASU. Guinn's tenure application apparently did not reflect those expectations, nor did it reflect the expectation, established by D'Angelo's example, that the synchronicity of research and administrative responsibilities for the writing program director would facilitate a strong publication record.<sup>20</sup>

As research and publication became the central element of tenure cases at ASU, the professional benefits of being a successful WPA gradually diminished. Guinn's example demonstrates that by the 1980s, dedicating time and energy to

running the writing program did not, on its own, contribute to a strong tenure case. Rather, if the time and effort needed to run the writing program became an impediment to publication, active engagement as WPA would be an impediment to earning tenure. If early WPAs were encouraged to be active and engaged in service to the institution, WPAs in the “major research university” no longer seemed to get such encouragement.

### **Writing Program Administration in the Research Years**

It is tempting to speculate about how the leadership of the writing program at ASU changed during and after this shift toward research and publication, especially as the demographics of the institution also changed with the addition of more than 15,000 students between 1970 and 1985. Surely the administrative demands on the WPA at an institution of 25,000, for example, were less onerous than the administrative demands at an institution of 40,000. Additionally, although the description of responsibilities for the WPA was similar in 1984 after Guinn left to the description from years before (see “Decennial” 116), one cannot help but wonder how the development of rhetoric and composition as a discipline altered the conception of what writing program administration should be even as tenure priorities gravitated toward research and publication. Perhaps the evolution of the discipline caused WPAs to feel it necessary to spend more time considering the implications of TA training, textbook selection, and exemption examinations than had the non-specialist WPAs of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The evidence, in the archives and in interview subjects’ memories, is insufficient for making strong

determinations about how leadership of the writing program changed between 1957 and 1984, except as to its shrinking importance for tenure. What is certain is that the research and tenure movement which brought about Guinn's unfortunate departure eventually changed the relationship of ASU's WPA to tenure and promotion.

In 1984, the Department of English completed a review of the department's development from 1974-1984. In describing the instructional programs, the authors of the document noted with regard to the First-Year English program, "[C]rucial to the development of excellence which we envision for the first year program is the new senior faculty appointment of Director of First Year English, a position presently under search. The appropriate appointment will ensure our continued emergence in national recognition" ("Decennial" 5). The case for a senior faculty appointment in the "Decennial Review" is notable because it rehearses the long-standing connection of the composition program and institutional quality. At nearly the same time the review was filed, Salerno filed a proposal for seriously expanding the department's focus on writing, rhetoric, and composition (see Salerno, "Decision Package").

More importantly for my argument in this chapter, however, is that the case for a senior faculty member to fill the position of WPA was recognition that the demands of administering the program necessitated the security and authority of a tenured faculty member. Unless the department and university were prepared to find regular replacements for junior faculty WPAs who might not meet the publication expectations as a result of their administrative responsibilities, the

position needed to be filled by faculty members who could run the program without the simultaneous constraints of the tenure clock. The inherent concession that the WPA position did not guarantee extensive publication is accounted for in the appeal to “continued emergence in national recognition” that the hiring of a tenured professor to direct the program would facilitate. When David Schwalm was finally hired as the permanent WPA in 1986, he was hired as a tenured associate professor.

The steady increase in research expectations for ASU’s WPA over the course of three decades is more than just good evidence that tenure expectations changed. Rather, as tenure expectations changed, so did the status of the writing program administrator (and by extension, it could be argued, the writing program). By the time Dorothy Guinn arrived at ASU, the WPA position was no longer respected as a service to the institution; it was necessary, but its professional value was negligible in the major research university. The hiring of a tenured professor to run the program, then, was a sort of return to an earlier period in the sense that Schwalm and his successors were again empowered to be active and engaged in running the program without fear of being denied tenure for lack of publication. As I described in Chapter 1, ASU’s writing program has subsequently been the site of much innovation and professional distinction, which has resulted, at least partially, from the protections afforded to tenured WPAs who could focus on the needs of the program instead of tenure expectations. Schwalm and ASU’s other WPAs were expected to publish, and they did, but their major



concern was addressing the needs and demands of the writing program, which have always been demanding.

## **Conclusion**

The example of the historical development of the WPA at ASU from the 1950s into the 1980s in relation to the research and tenure movement complicates some of the commonplace assumptions that have long informed rhetoric and composition and writing program administration. For one, it complicates the comforting notion that disciplinary development begets professional status, either national or locally. At ASU, the increasing respect of rhetoric and composition as a discipline seems to have led the English department to value the expertise of rhetoric and composition specialists for running the writing program. At the same time, the expectation emerged that rhetoric and composition specialists could meet the expectations of program administration in addition to meeting changing measures of faculty excellence. That is, the professionalization of rhetoric and composition seemed to communicate to faculty members in the English department that composition specialists could be prolific researchers and competent WPAs because of what appeared to be natural parallels in the two tasks. The professional development of rhetoric and composition actually proved detrimental to writing program administration at ASU, at least for the first half of the 1980s. At ASU, and perhaps elsewhere, writing program administration earned some measure of professional status in the form of a tenured director because of one spectacular and visible failure. Administrators professionalized

ASU's WPA to avoid further trouble resulting from incompatible publication and administrative expectations, not necessarily because of developments in the field of rhetoric and composition. In effect, the history of writing program administration at ASU suggests that the relationship between research, tenure, writing programs, and their administrators is considerably more complicated than traditional narratives have suggested.

In the final chapter, I conclude by considering some of the implications of this study for rhetoric and composition. Specifically, I consider the broader implications of the relationship between writing instruction at Arizona State University and national movements in higher education discussed in this study for composition history, theory, pedagogy, and administration. I assess the relationship of ASU's history to histories of institutions across the country. And, I consider how attention to the kinds of relationships noted in this study might contribute to a better understanding of the place of writing instruction, rhetoric and composition, and writing program administration in the cultural and institutional arrangements that structure our work in the contemporary academy.

## Chapter 6 Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that official descriptions make it seem as if not much actually changed in the institution's writing courses, at all, for many decades. In more than five decades following the introduction of first-year composition at ASU, little changed in the catalog descriptions, for example. There is not room to print them here, but suffice it to say, the 1928 catalog descriptions for English 101 and 102 are essentially identical to the descriptions from 1961, and the 1961 descriptions differ from the 1981 descriptions in diction, but not in meaning in any significant way (see "Bulletin, 1928" 51; "General Catalog, 1961/1962-1962-/1963" 304; Shadlow 12). Based on course descriptions alone, one could deduce that the composition courses students enrolled in on the eve of the Great Depression were identical to those they took in the years just before the Great Society and during the reign of "The Great Communicator." A similar consistency can be found in published descriptions of the writing program. In 1961, English Department chair, Louis M. Myers, described the first-year composition program in *College Composition and Communication* ("English Language"; see also Ferrell, "At Arizona State" and "Freshman English"). Seventeen years later, in 1978, Director of Composition, Frank D'Angelo, published a description of the writing program that was remarkably similar to Myers's, in spite of significant developments in composition theories during that period (D'Angelo "Freshman Composition"). I have evaluated enough other materials, including syllabi and sample assignments, to know that this analysis grossly oversimplifies the evolution of writing instruction at the school during these five decades. Nevertheless, it is useful as a reminder that the "evidence" of what happens in writing classes or in a writing program—especially the evidence available to people not actively involved in the program—can be problematic for representing the real complexity of writing instruction in higher education.

<sup>2</sup> There is not a lot of consistency in ASU's archives with regard to the director of the writing program's position title. It is alternately referred to as Director of Composition, Director of Freshman English, Director of First Year English, among other titles. For the sake of consistency, and because I am considering the position in relation to disciplinary discourses, I will refer to the position title as writing program administrator or WPA throughout this chapter unless there is a good reason to do otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> Censure often had little official impact on a school's ability to conduct business. However, the AAUP's involvement in such cases carried weight for two reasons. First, because faculty, administrators, and trustees at schools across the country were often actively involved with the AAUP, censure was rarely challenged and held significant enough gravity within the academic community to merit action by most censured parties (Fuchs 253-256). As the number of AAUP-registered faculty members grew across the country, and as the AAUP secured the support

of other education associations, the impact of censure grew in importance because of the weight of scorn within the academic community (Metzger 151). Second, in part because of the AAUP's advocacy, cases involving academic freedom gradually became a matter of United States case law (Fuchs 256-262; see also Rosenblum; Van Alstyne). As courts gradually moved to protect the employment rights of unionized workers, civil service employees, and others in the 1920s and 30s, academics gradually came under the protections afforded to other groups of workers (Metzger 155).

<sup>4</sup> The declaration of principles had undergone a revision in 1925, which Metzger believes "marked a significant retreat by the association from its primal hopes and demands" (151). He does note, however, that the 1925 revision earned support from a variety of associations and professional groups, particularly the American Association of Colleges, which strengthened its authority among post-secondary institutions.

<sup>5</sup> The National Defense Education Act, better known as the NDEA, is probably the most prominent federal research program introduced in the mid-twentieth century. When it was inaugurated in 1958 in response to the Sputnik launch, the NDEA provided federal funds for expanding and improving math, science, and engineering education with the idea that American students needed be better trained for the kinds of jobs and careers that could contribute to national defense. In 1961, representatives from NCTE, MLA, and other English organizations testified before Congress that improving English teaching would also contribute to national defense. As a result of that testimony and other lobbying efforts, Congress authorized the funding of Project English—the English counterpart to the math/science/engineering programs already in effect. In short, beginning in 1962, hundreds of thousands—and eventually millions—of federal dollars were poured into expanding and improving the teaching of English. With these funds, research centers were established, research agendas in English departments were formulated and funded, English programs in elementary and high schools were redesigned, as was teacher education. For a good discussion of the relationship of the NDEA to composition, see Joseph Harris's *A Teaching Subject*.

<sup>6</sup> According to Graham and Diamond, academic research prior to WWII was predominantly conducted at just sixteen universities: UC Berkeley, Caltech, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Illinois, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Stanford, Wisconsin, and Yale (28).

<sup>7</sup> See Nisbet for an oft-cited example of attacks on tenure as "a refuge for the lazy, incompetent, and delinquent" (28). What distinguishes Nisbet's article from many other attacks on tenure is that he was a tenured faculty member at the University of Arizona, as opposed to a politician or social critic.

<sup>8</sup> The first six Ph.D. programs at ASU were in chemistry, education, engineering, English, physics, and psychology.

<sup>9</sup> Nebeker's article, "Out of the Dark," offers interesting insights into ASU administrators' attempts to demonstrate increasing quality at the institution in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. As just one example, after completing all of the requirements to earn a Ph.D. in English at ASU, she was advised to drop out of the program before completing or else she would forfeit her teaching privileges "because of the taint of 'inbreeding'" (41). Instead, on condition of foregoing the Ph.D., she was offered an assistant professorship with full benefits and privileges. Into the 1960s, ASU's personnel policies indicate that faculty could be hired as instructors or assistant professors without a Ph.D. if they were otherwise qualified. Later, however, the lack of a Ph.D., which Nebeker finally earned in 2009, would be a major barrier to her career advancement which was only offset by her high publication productivity.

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that one reason for the rise in research is that the NCA, still the accrediting body for the school, demanded evidence that the faculty were qualified and capable of facilitating graduate study before they would accredit ASC's fledgling graduate programs. Another reason was directly related to the ability of the administrators to demonstrate institutional quality—more faculty PhDs meant more respect for ASC as an institution. At the risk of belaboring the point, influences and pressures that shaped the early years of the institution continued (and continue) to be factors in administrative decisions throughout the existence of Arizona State University.

<sup>11</sup> Appendix B lists the Writing Program Administrators at ASU from 1957 to the present, along with the years they served.

<sup>12</sup> The first two WPAs, Leslie Bigelow and Richard Welsh, left ASU soon after directing the writing program. Bigelow retired due to ill health and Welsh left academia to pursue a career in industry. There is no indication that their departures were related to directing the writing program, nor that program administration affected their advancement.

<sup>13</sup> Ferrell had published two short articles describing the composition program at ASU before his promotion—one in *CCC* and one in *Arizona English Bulletin*, each two pages long. Kehl had published six essays by the time of his promotion, but only two of them were in his field, twentieth century American literature. None of his articles was longer than eleven pages, and only three were longer than five pages. This is not to discount the quality or value of Ferrell or Kehl's publications, but rather to suggest that their publication records were relatively limited at the time they were tenured, especially by contemporary standards. Kehl's publication record at the time he was tenured in 1972 compared to

Ferrell's at the time he was tenured in 1963 seems indicative of the rise of research at ASU in the 60s and 70s.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that all the writing program administrators at ASU were men until the 1980s. The WPA who was denied tenure was ASU's first female WPA. I do not claim, nor have I heard anyone else claim, that gender played a role in the denial of tenure. Nevertheless, considering Nebeker's claim that her gender contributed to repeated denials of her advancement, it is interesting to consider the degree to which the decision to deny tenure to ASU's first female WPA may or may not have been affected by gender. For discussions of gender, writing program administration, and tenure, see Barr-Ebest; Enos; and Schell.

<sup>15</sup> One issue of *College Composition and Communication* each year, usually the October issue, listed the sessions and participants at the previous April's conference (Goggin 63). The practice was discontinued in 1974.

<sup>16</sup> D'Angelo earned tenure in 1975.

<sup>17</sup> To be clear, D'Angelo did describe drawing on disciplinary knowledge to make decisions about faculty development, textbook adoptions, teaching theories, and course content during his time as WPA. In that sense, his disciplinary knowledge informed the work of the writing program. He did not, however, regard his administrative duties as tied to his intellectual interests in the sense described in the Council of Writing Program Administrators' "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration," for example (Council).

<sup>18</sup> Including Schwalm, eight full-time WPAs have directed the writing program at ASU since 1986. Seven were tenured at the time they directed the program, one was non-tenure track.

<sup>19</sup> According to Fisher, D'Angelo recommended Guinn because she'd been recommended to him by Guinn's committee chair at USC, Ross Winterowd. D'Angelo also knew Guinn from rhetoric and composition conferences (D'Angelo, "Professing," 272).

<sup>20</sup> In 1983, Guinn filed legal action against ASU for wrongful termination (Salerno, "Very Personal"), the third high-profile tenure lawsuit filed against ASU in just over a decade. The first and most famous tenure lawsuit against ASU was filed by Morris Starsky, a tenured philosophy professor who was dismissed in 1970 for cancelling class to attend a political protest in Tucson. In 1976, the AAUP determined that ASU had violated Starsky's academic freedom and censured ASU until the legal case was resolved in 1983. The second suit was filed in 1981 by English department faculty member, Mark Harris, a creative writer. Harris had been recruited from the University of Pittsburgh two years earlier with the expectation that he would automatically be tenured after two years. When the

department tried to give him a terminal contract, Harris sued and won. He was granted tenure as a result of the suit, which also concluded in 1983, and he remained at ASU until his retirement in 2001. On the heels of the Starsky and Harris decisions, Guinn filed her suit.

For more on the Starsky case, see the Morris Starsky Papers in ASU's Department of Archives and Special Collections. Restricted files related to the Harris suit are located in the Marvin Fisher Papers. Access can be obtained by contacting ASU's Department of Archives and Special Collections. I have not been able to locate decisions regarding Guinn's suits, and none of my interview subjects remembers the specific outcomes. Considering the absence of legal records, and considering Guinn's departure as scheduled in 1984, it seems likely that the actions were dropped, settled out of court, or dismissed.

CHAPTER 7  
CONCLUSION

By being a WPA [...] I could see where freshman English was in this whole thing. And this gave me, finally, a way of getting to this institutional perspective, rather than just seeing it from the perspective of the English department, and it was actually very helpful. Because I could figure how things I really wanted to do from my narrow perspective could be shown to be beneficial globally to the university.

David Schwalm, Personal Interview, 2008

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that national movements in higher education have radically shaped (and reshaped) writing instruction at Arizona State University throughout its existence as a post-secondary institution. Although there were certainly many complicated influences on the writing program and in writing instruction during the institution's first century, this dissertation provides evidence that four broad movements in higher education—the normal school movement, the standardization and accreditation movement, the “university-status movement,” and the research and tenure movement—undeniably influenced the place of writing in the curriculum at the institution in Tempe as faculty and administrators sought to address the complicated demands put on them as a result of these movements. As this study shows, the place of writing in the curriculum contributed to determining the status of writing



instruction and the writing program in the institution which consequently determined the goals, expectations, and conditions for writing faculty and administrators at the school.

The assertion that broad cultural developments necessarily shape administrative and curricular structures in higher education is not such a radical one. But sometimes the specific effects of administrative choices in relation to broad cultural developments—about tenure conditions or regional accreditation requirements, for example—are hard to imagine, especially for how they affect individual schools and programs, to say nothing of individual classrooms, teachers, and students. In making the case that broad movements shaped writing instruction at ASU, therefore, I have joined other scholars in rhetoric and composition, including David Gold and Katherine Tirabassi, in asserting that local histories have much to offer composition historians for reconsidering how writing instruction, rhetoric and composition, and writing program administration have developed in American higher education. Local histories enable historians to look at the specific conditions at one school—as the epigraph to my opening chapter suggests, to consider the dreams, objectives, frustrations, defeats and victories of the people who in their time molded an institution. In so doing, historians can better assess some of the important, and not so important, factors that contributed to current conditions.

There is the concern that local histories often yield only local results. Certainly, to some degree this is often the case. To give just one example from this dissertation, it is difficult to imagine that university presidents in every state

blocked transfer credits for normal school students out of spite. Interesting and illuminating though such examples and anecdotes may be, it is not easy to extrapolate general lessons from such personal examples. Nevertheless, I contend that while the conditions, circumstances, and decisions that shaped writing instruction at Arizona State University were often intensely local and curiously idiosyncratic, just as often they were widely generalizable. The movements that shaped writing instruction at ASU, for example, were not localized. Along with the institution in Tempe, hundreds of normal schools sought to achieve similar objectives to those that structured Tempe Normal's curriculum; hundreds of teachers' colleges amended or remodeled their institutional and curricular structures to meet the demands of accreditation agencies; hundreds of institutions were ambitiously transformed from local and regional colleges into world-class universities; and virtually every American post-secondary institution pushed faculty members to increase their research and publication credentials. These movements likely played a much more important role in writing instruction at schools across the country than has generally been recognized in composition histories. ASU's history does not explain how these movements played out in every instance or at every institution, but such movements come into stark relief in ASU's local history and reveal avenues for further research by composition historians.

In addition to making a case for local histories, this study has further demonstrated that examining local circumstances through an institutional lens can yield insights that are not often discernible through other lenses. Most

significantly, by using an institutional lens, this study shows that writing instruction at the school in Tempe was profoundly affected by the institutional context in which it was situated. As Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo point out, often the most important component in the formation and existence of a writing program is local politics: "interactions with deans, presidents, chancellors, boards of trustees, alumni, and the like" ("Why" xix). As this history of ASU's writing program demonstrates, the ambitions and aspirations of writing teachers and administrators repeatedly intersected with those of other people and programs in other parts of the institution, the state, and the nation. Budgets, certification programs, regional hostilities and affinities, interpersonal interactions, and more played important roles in determining how ASU's writing program was formed and has existed. There can be no doubt that teachers and administrators contributed importantly to writing instruction at the school, but I contend throughout this dissertation that, when viewed through an institutional lens, teachers' and administrators' pedagogical and institutional choices take on different meanings that can offer rhetoric and composition scholars fresh insights. This dissertation extends the use of institutional lenses for considering how and where writing instruction has been situated in American higher education institutions, as well as considering why it has been so situated.

The value of local histories and institutional lenses aside, the main implication of this dissertation for rhetoric and composition scholars is that it calls in question many of the common assumptions that inform most rhetoric and composition histories. By looking at the institutional effects of four national

movements in higher education on the writing instruction at a single institution, I have shown that some of the most familiar historical narratives that have shaped contemporary conceptions of the pedagogical, theoretical, administrative, and disciplinary conditions of rhetoric and composition overlook important factors that have structured the place and the role of writing instruction in higher education. The deficit model of writing instruction that constructs students, faculty, and writing program administrators as poor unfortunate souls, for instance, simply does not adequately explain the development of writing instruction at ASU or the people it was expected to serve. Neither do developments in rhetorical theory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or changes in English department politics, account fully for the pressures and influences that caused the formation and shaped the existence of writing programs in institutions in cities and towns across the country.

In particular, this study challenges three assumptions: (1) that composition teaching was in the hands of the least qualified faculty members, (2) that administrators in American higher education were openly hostile to writing instruction beginning as early as the 1880s, (3) that rhetorical theory and writing instruction were degraded in higher education in relation to teacher qualifications and administrative hostility. When the school was founded as a normal school in 1885, and continuing well into the 1950s, writing faculty were the most senior members of the department and the administrator responsible for directing the writing courses was the chair of the department. Furthermore, with the hire of J.L. Felton in 1910 and continuing to the present day, the institution has employed

faculty members who were actively engaged in rhetoric and composition scholarship, participating in the professional development of the field and discipline. At ASU, in its various institutional guises, many people—some of whom were influential in the institution—have been interested in writing and rhetoric. The writing curriculum was not just a training ground for disinterested, overburdened, unhappy teaching assistants and junior faculty.

Equally as important, administrators at ASU, from writing program administrators to school presidents, have actively engaged with the writing program, rather than casting it off as an unnecessary nuisance or a site of institutional gatekeeping. Administrators have not always appreciated or valued the writing program, to be sure, but neither have they been universally antagonistic to the needs and values of the writing program. Neither has the writing program or writing faculty been subjected to naked hostility at the hands of faculty in other areas of specialization, either in the English department or elsewhere. Consequently, rhetorical theory and writing instruction have enjoyed a relatively prominent place in the institution's curriculum and structure throughout its existence. What degradation may be said to have occurred often resulted from institutional factors, including the rise in research expectations as a condition of tenure, rather than as a result of hostility for writing, rhetoric, or composition. At ASU, and quite likely at many of the schools across the country which resembled ASU institutionally, the assumptions that have long underpinned histories of rhetoric and composition are simply inadequate for explaining the development of writing instruction over the years.

In effect, this dissertation demonstrates that many schools—probably most schools, including normal schools, teachers’ colleges, and state colleges—operated under conditions that have not been fully appreciated or studied for considering how writing instruction spread through American education, why it was maintained in spite of astronomical costs and administrative hassles, and why it continues to be an important touchstone in American higher education. In opening up those conditions for additional study, and by enabling reconsideration of many of the assumptions that have informed what scholars have previously understood, this dissertation invites scholars to also reconsider our disciplinary existence. In an era in which federal and state budgets, education assessment tools (e.g., No Child Left Behind, Common Core Standards, and Race to the Top, to name but a few), and legislative agendas determine what and how students learn beginning in pre-school and continuing through graduate school, there are many lessons to be learned by reconsidering how writing instruction came to be the most widely required course in the history of post-secondary education. Recognizing the shaping effects of national education movements on writing education can be useful and instructive in the current education environment. Recognizing the rhetorical and administrative choices earlier writing teachers and program administrators have made (for good or ill) to address, challenge, or enhance those effects is paramount for making similar rhetorical and administrative moves in similar rhetorical and administrative situations. But there is much work to be done before those lessons become clear, and much work

beyond that before those lessons become applicable for teachers, scholars, and administrators in contemporary institutions.

Even as this study contributes to a view of influences on writing education that are often overlooked, it is necessarily limited in important ways. For one, because this dissertation considers how institutional forces shaped the place of writing instruction at ASU, it does not consider how writing was actually taught in response to the tectonic shifts in higher education I have identified. The conditions and events in individual classrooms, the experiences of teachers and students, and the assignments and materials that contributed to writing instruction are not well represented in this dissertation, and are therefore a fertile area for future study, especially in conjunction with what can be learned by using an institutional lens. For another, an institutional lens does not always lend itself to understanding important differences among the people at a single institution or for representing those differences. For example, the experiences of Native American, Mexican, and non-native speakers of English are alluded to in materials dating back at least to the first years of the twentieth century when President Matthews was engaged in writing the education section of the state's proposed constitution. However, the writing classes at the institution in Tempe were not designed to specifically acknowledge racial or linguistic differences until 1958, when "English 111/112: English for Foreign Students" was introduced. An institutional view of writing instruction at ASU has not shed much light on the experiences of those students or the conditions of their learning, though they were obviously

present. Likewise, differences in gender at ASU are largely overlooked in this dissertation and might well yield additional insights.

In addition to the limitations of this study for looking more closely at the experiences of teachers and students, the time frame I have adopted presents limitations. Further research that considers writing instruction at ASU over the last twenty-five years would necessarily have to consider a host of influences such as the American culture wars; changes in articulation agreements between schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions; the enormous expansion of contingent labor in higher education; and dramatic budget cuts in higher education following the recent (and current) economic meltdown, among others. There is considerable opportunity for research that extends from the time period represented in this dissertation, research which could be usefully aided by the presence of people involved with the writing program in recent memory.

The most obvious limitation of this study is the exclusive focus on Arizona State University, which is necessarily restricted to only hinting at some of the possible conditions that shaped writing instruction at thousands of other institutions across time and space. This limitation, however, points to the most obvious areas for potential future research by opening avenues for similar work to be done at other institutions, which may be distinctive for their institutional mission(s), geographical location, needs and demands of local communities, and more. It seems likely that normal schools in the Old West differed from normal schools in the Reconstruction South, for example, in interesting and important ways. It would benefit rhetoric and composition scholars and historians to



understand why and how those differences exist as we work to understand why and how students have been taught to write in American classrooms. Likewise, many and varied movements in higher education refracted through many and varied institutional lenses may help rhetoric and composition scholars and historians offer the more nuanced and representative picture of the past that David Gold asks for in his introduction.

In the end, as Robert Connors writes in “Writing the History of Our Discipline,” we have a responsibility to seek out composition’s history because “without it, we are cut off from information of vast usefulness” (69). The people, places, and events that have preceded us permeate our scholarship, our teaching, our service, and our professional lives. How we understand the many histories that make up our collective history infuses meaning into the conditions in which we work and live. By revisiting, rethinking, and revising those histories—especially with attention to local influences—rhetoric and composition scholars and historians are invited to revisit, rethink, and revise our contemporary circumstances. Or as Connors puts it: “We are not here alone; others have come before us, and from their situations, struggles, victories, and defeats we can build the context that will give our work as teachers and theorists background, substance, and originality. Only by understanding where we came from can we ascertain where we want to go” (69). This dissertation is one contribution to understanding the situations, struggles, victories, and defeats that have shaped writing instruction in American institutions of higher education. In combination

with the work other rhetoric and composition historians are doing, it has much to tell us about where we came from and where we might think about going.

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APPENDIX A

REMEDIAL ENGLISH, 1918-2011

<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	<b>Course/ Program Title</b>	<b>Catalog/Official Description</b>	<b>Context</b>
1918-1926	<b>English 6:</b> Special English	“[F]or students who are deficient in English in any of the advanced grades”	Offered for students who have completed English 1-5 (or equivalent) but need additional instruction.
1926-1934	<b>English 103,104:</b> Special First Year English	Similar to English 101, 102, but adapted to the needs of students who require more practice in the technique of written composition. Attention to spelling, punctuation, and sentence formation is made the first essential of the course. Required of freshmen whose ratings in the preliminary standard test indicate need of intensive drill in the mechanics of the language.	English 103,104 meets the same requirements as 101,102 for many years, but is changed to “differentiate” levels in the early 1930s to meet accreditation requirements. See Chapter 5
1934-1935	<b>English A:</b> Special First Year English	For freshmen whose ratings in the preliminary standard test indicate a need in the mechanics of language.	
1941-1953	<b>English 101:</b> First-year English, A&B sections		A revival of sorts of <b>English A</b> . Students needing additional work in mechanics are placed in A sections; all other students in B sections. Both versions fulfill the same requirement.
1945-?	<b>Reading clinic</b>	Primarily designed to provide help in reading skills and study methods	This is the first auxiliary literacy center established at the institution. Writing Clinics/ centers would follow in later years.

1953-1957	<b>English X: Remedial English</b>	A sub-collegiate course for students who fail to pass the college placement examination in English. Clinical facilities for discovering and attempting to eliminate causes of individual difficulties. Counts on course load, but carries no credit.	This course was introduced to demonstrate the school was “raising standards.” It was abandoned for the same reason. See Chapter 5.
1957-1958	<b>English 01: Remedial English</b>	Same description as <b>English X</b> .	The Coordinating Committee for Curriculum Development voted to discontinue remedial English in 1958. The Arizona Board of Regents prohibited offering remedial English courses for credit beginning in 1958 as well.
1958-present	<b>English 111/112</b>	English 111,112: English for Foreign Students. A course for foreign students who have studied English in their native countries, but who require practice in the idioms of English. Intensive reading, writing, and discussion to acquaint students with the colloquial flavor of English. Satisfies the graduation requirement of EN 101,102.	In 1983, the number was changed to English 107/108. The official description for these courses has been updated regularly, but in many ways the same goals and expectations are recognizable in the contemporary course as existed in the original offering.
1969-?	<b>Writing Clinic</b>	A service “to which teachers of English 101 are encouraged to refer students with writing problems which seem insurmountable in the regular sixteen-week course.”	The Writing Clinic was the precursor to the contemporary Writing Center.

?-present	<b>Writing Center</b>		In 1984, the Writing Center was moved out of the administrative oversight of the English department and relocated in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
1986-1993(?)	<b>English 071: Remedial English</b>		This was not an ASU course. It was a required course for students who scored between 200-380 on their SAT verbal section or between 1-16 on their ACT. The curriculum was controlled and the course was conducted by faculty at area community colleges. ASU faculty had no input into the course assignments, goals, assessment, etc. (See Schwalm "Teaching")
1992-present	<b>Stretch</b>	The Stretch Program is a two-semester, six-credit-hour sequence of classes that "stretches" English 101 or English 107 over two semesters. In effect, these connected Stretch Program classes (WAC 101 followed by English 101 or, for international students, WAC 107 followed by English 107) provide students the opportunity for extended experience at working with many and various ways of both reading and writing.	Stretch has become a national model for basic writing instruction.

APPENDIX B

ASU'S DIRECTORS OF FRESHMAN ENGLISH

Leslie Bigelow	1957-1959
Richard Welsh	1959-1960
Wilfred A. Ferrell	1960-1967
George Herman	1967-1968
Delmar Kehl	1968-1971
Frank D'Angelo	1971-1978
William T. Ojala	1978-1982
Dorothy M. Guinn	1982-1984
Wilfred A. Ferrell	1984-1986 (Interim co-chair)
Mary Clare Sweeney	1984-1986 (Interim co-chair)
John Mateja	1984-1986 (Interim co-chair)
Alice Roberts	1984-1986 (Interim co-chair)
David Schwalm	1986-1992
John Ramage	1992-1993
Keith Miller	1993-1995
Duane Roen	1995-1999
Maureen Daly Goggin	1999-2000
Greg Glau	2000-2008
Paul Kei Matsuda	2008-2009
Shirley K. Rose	2009-present