TOWARD LABOR EQUITY: OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION PRACTICES IN AN INDEPENDENT WRITING DEPARTMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation shares the results of an institutional ethnography conducted in a large, Midwestern research and doctoral granting institution. The researcher tells a story of a department's relationship with course observation as an aspect of faculty evaluation and governance by considering these practices through the lens of labor equity. Through surveys, both ethnographic and object-based reflective interviews, and genre-tracing analyses of department documents, the study maps locations for change based in labor equity. The results demonstrate how observation and evaluation are implicated in departmental labor conditions and how academic rank—when constellated with those activities—influences faculty perceptions of professional value, agency, and long-term career trajectory.

Faculty off the tenure line experience observation and evaluation as a feature of "long-term precarity" or a limited career trajectory over time. This work contributes to an area of limited scholarship in writing studies on faculty evaluation and shared governance as it intersects with labor equity concerns. The dissertation offers heuristic approaches to faculty evaluation that reimagine current hierarchies of departmental rank and highlight avenues for departments to engage observation and evaluation in more agentive ways. The dissertation additionally makes recommendations for graduate professional training in the context of an ever-shrinking tenure-stream model in higher education.

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We never write alone, and this work is no exception. This dissertation was especially made possible by the generosity of the faculty in the department I studied, all of whom were curious alongside me and willing to be vulnerable with their stories, their experiences, and their visions for better shared futures. Through the sharing of documents and time spent on interviews and reflection, these colleagues helped me ensure I "got it right." I was skeptical about studying my own workplace *and* graduate program, as institutional ethnography (IE) naturally seeks to uncover some of the dynamic tensions experienced by participants in institutional spaces. I wasn't seeking to merely produce a critique, but I understood some of the things I wrote about could make some relationships uncomfortable. Yet, I was met with encouragement and support. Many I shared drafts with saw my work as an opportunity as well as a tool, and for that I am forever grateful. This "usefulness" signaled success to me, as it was a way to offer something back to my colleagues, mentors, and departmental community.

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guided this process. Dawn stood up for me, fought for me, and kept me going when I was pretty ready to walk by reminding me to laugh and by advocating for me always. There are few humans as good as Dawn in this world. Rhodes spent months in deep work with me as I considered feminism in writing studies and feminism more broadly and where I stand in those conversations. Some of my readers saw that work as less readily apparent in the dissertation itself but for me, the work of an activist, materialist feminism supports everything I do. I couldn't have done that learning without her help.

Additionally, I'd like to acknowledge my broader community. Michelle LaFrance has been my mentor and friend for 10 years and this dissertation is a direct result of her work and our work together. Seth Kahn, Amy Lynch-Biniek, and Tim Dougherty have also been influential and instrumental to my thinking about labor, justice, and how to do the long game work of making institutional change. Thank you to my dragons for giving me a home in this discipline as I am. Thank you to my best friend and love, Jake. In addition, I'd like to thank Dr. Kate Firestone and Jerrice Donelson for the years of helpful commiserating, support, and making sense of our department. I also owe Alyssa Harben a debt of gratitude for helping me navigate so many details and sharing her millennial tips and tricks with me. Thanks to her and the rest of our graduate writing group, Drs. Kathy Min Hye and Chris Fowler, I was able to be more precise in my thinking at a number of points. They kept me steady. The writing of a dissertation was a joy and a privilege, and I am grateful.

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One might consider how (1) the university is an assemblage. It is a giant machine composed of myriad working parts, multiple systems. Each part can still be thought of as a discreet organism to be unplugged and replugged somewhere else. (2) The university is in *assemblage. It is imbricated with other assemblages. The university assemblage is connected to the military-industrial complex, itself another assemblage.*
-la paperson, A Third University is Possible

All knowledge is local, is partial. No truth can make another truth untrue. All knowledge is a part of the whole knowledge. Once you have seen the larger pattern, you cannot go back to seeing the part as the whole.
-Ursula K. Le Guin

Telling Stories: Observation, Evaluation, and Labor Equity

This dissertation is an institutional ethnography (IE) rooted in materialist feminism and feminist standpoint theory. As such, it begins with a part of my own disciplinary story. Successful engagement with ethnographic methodologies specifically encompasses the positionality and experience of the researcher as part of its ethical structure (Chiseri-Strater, 1996; Lindquist, 2002) and produces a story as its result through an analytical practice of inquiry. Therefore, in framing this project, and interspersed throughout, I access the narratives of my own working life that gave rise to the inquiry guiding this study. I do so to better tell the story of the research site and my orientation to it. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate my embodied experience as well as my intellectual positionality and standpoint. I also do so to reveal the exigency of the primary question guiding my research here: how can writing departments and programs center labor equity when it comes to faculty evaluation, observation, and shared governance? Further, why should they? Building from the work of scholars in this area (LaFrance, 2019; LaFrance & Nicolas, 2012; Miley, 2017; Naples, 2003; Smith, 2005; 2004; 1997) I use IE to assemble an account of the workings of an independent writing department in a large, Midwestern research institution. Drawing on feminist standpoint theory, a

supporting theory for IE (Harding, 2004), I specifically focus on the standpoints of those working off the tenure line and construct a narrative of departmental and institutional realities through interview, survey, the analysis of primary documents and observation, as well as participation in the department as a graduate student.

The first five chapters lay out the primary context and theoretical orientation of the project (Chapter One), my methodology (Chapter Two), and my analyses that first examine departmental texts (Chapter Three) and then interview analysis, evincing primary themes from the data (Chapters Four and Five). Chapter Six presents a heuristic framework from which any department might center evaluation and shared governance procedures around labor equity. Chapter Seven closes the dissertation with a discussion of models for faculty evaluation from higher education studies. Structurally, each data analysis chapter concludes with a summary of potential "remedies" or recommendations for change to further highlight potential agency and moves toward labor equity for both the department and those wanting to do this work at their own institutions.

More concretely, this first chapter introduces my researcher positionality and the correlation of my own lived experience to broader, important questions in writing studies about labor, the materialist feminism that undergirds my research methodology, the specific object of course observation I studied, the history and present configuration of the department, and an overview of IE and chapter summaries. The work of this chapter is to outline the purpose of the study, my own orientation to it, and the conversations I hope to enter as a scholar.

Writ large, this project is meant to speak to the discipline of writing studies at the location of faculty evaluation and shared governance, particularly as it grapples with changes in higher education, the loss of tenure, its own institutional citizenship, and graduate training

practices. Ultimately, this study argues that centering labor equity can help us successfully navigate the aforementioned shifts and fulfil our disciplinary desires for democratic, agentive practice.

Arriving in the Work of Observation and Faculty Evaluation

In my first week as an assistant WPA at a small, regional, state university in New England that I'll call "Small State U," I was getting oriented to my new position, when my director took a seat across from me and explained that a large part of my work would be to conduct teacher observations of the program's instructors. At the time, this included somewhere between 20-28 "part-time lecturers" or PTLs, our version of adjunct or non-tenure track faculty. Though more stable than some labor arrangements—these instructors had year-long contracts, were typically renewed, had access to union membership, health care, benefits, and incremental pay increases—they were, nonetheless, precarious in number of ways. Changing enrollments or shifting departmental leadership, as well as any curricular changes, were almost always cause for worry and stress. My director proceeded to show me the template I was to use in my observations, as well as a set of post-observation discussion questions for myself and the instructor[1].

Although I had almost no experience with such a task—I was newly out of my MA—I set myself up to follow her instructions (which were minimal). She mainly cautioned me to not give advice on teaching but rather to note what I saw in the classroom and allow instructors to respond or ask questions as they saw fit. She also mentioned the central problematic we were dealing with in our program: while we told instructors our observation practice was meant to be formative, it was ultimately summative. In other words, observations were directly tied to annual

[1] The template included sections like "description of course format," "course content," "organization of activities and materials," "presentation skills," "media and resources," and "student participation."

evaluations, raises, and renewals. Operating inside this structural "bait and switch," she told me, would be difficult and I should be gentle when possible. However, she additionally explained there were many instructors who were teaching in outdated modalities that did not align with the discipline's discourses or the department's goals, and that part of my observation work was to assist her in changing the program culture via observation. The hidden assumption here was that, when necessary, we were using observation to build a case against someone's renewal if need be.

It is no wonder my director had difficulty giving me specific, pragmatic advice on how to conduct observations of faculty classes. As a key part of faculty evaluation, observation is a topic our discipline has spent relatively little time on, even as we have a wealth of literature associated with assessing student writing (Inoue, 2015) and writing programs themselves (Kimme Hea, 2015). In fact, as Kimme Hea notes, there have only been two volumes specifically devoted to faculty evaluation in our field (p. 155). Of those, few chapters are devoted to course observations, which are sometimes called "supervisory visits" but also broadly referred to as "peer evaluation" (Hult, 1994; Dayton, 2015). The bulk of the literature in these two volumes theorizes faculty evaluation and frames best practices. Though Hult's (1994) introduction names labor arrangements as *features* of evaluation, little of the volume is specifically concerned with the material and social impacts of faculty evaluation in the labor hierarchies that are so prevalent in writing studies.

I was also unaware of these complexities when I began that work. Part professional development, part programmatic assessment, observation can be a method fraught with the power systems inscribed by managerialism and precarious labor arrangements. For example, many instructors in our program had been in the department for 10 years or more. Their degrees were commonly in literature or creative writing and they usually taught at multiple institutions to

make ends meet. They had little incentive, let alone time, to make changes to their teaching. These observations, my director told me, were an opportunity for us to have meaningful discussions with teachers and encourage them to adapt their practices effectively to updated curriculum. Yet, I felt they were rarely able to accomplish that goal.

Despite good faith efforts to support instructors and protect students, I found out over time how course observation can work as a disciplining tool of the administrative class over a group of precarious and resistant teachers. Responses like, "I won't take teaching advice from someone who hasn't been teaching as long as I have," to "you just don't understand my teaching," were common. One particularly notable moment occurred when an instructor openly laughed at me in our post-observation discussion, explaining there was no chance he'd stop lecturing to his students, particularly on grammar and style, because he enjoyed it and the way it engendered particular dynamics that positioned him as expert over his students. He was, he explained, building what professorial ethos was available to him in an otherwise low-status position. After all, he reminded me, he had attended Oxford University.

Over the course of the next five years, this work continued to be a critical part of my job. Some years I observed nearly 25 of our instructors. I hope my practice has improved since then, but I remain unsure. What I do know is that I not only came to intimately know how our teachers were approaching curriculum, students, and meeting program goals, but also just how summative these experiences were for people in precarious positions working off the tenure-line. It was never not uncomfortable. The work left me with persistent questions about the nature of institutions, WPA work, and labor equity at the site of evaluation. My work was part surveillance, part advocacy, as I was frequently the only visitor to their classes. In addition, our institution had an opaque student rating system and, although the literature on faculty evaluation

advocates for the use of multiple measures of evaluation (Austin & Trice, 2016), my observation reports held more power simply because they were more legible to administration.

I tell this story in part because it is a familiar one in WPA work. The complexities of working in English departments that may be hostile to composition are well storied in writing studies (O'Neill et al., 2002). Also familiar is the notion that tenure-stream faculty rarely teach first-year writing, as was the case in our department. The symbolic and social rift that gets created in a class-based hierarchy of teaching was pervasive in our department as it is in many. Further, our program was designed to be run by a WPA in a top-down managerial manner with little involvement from other tenure-stream faculty, even as they felt they deserved a say in our work, another trend in the WPA experience (George, 1999). For us, this meant it was the sole job of the WPA and me, her assistant director, to conduct yearly evaluations of First-Year English (FYE) faculty and the program itself. Though we consistently tried to get departmental buy-in and engagement, these efforts typically resulted in more armchair administering of our program and tensions between our colleagues and ourselves.

Under my first director and mentor, evaluation for annual merit increases and continuance followed a fairly generative process that included teachers sharing narratives of their work, a selection of teaching materials and a CV, as well as a place they might want to note any professional development they had done, extra service to students or the department, and any curricular innovations they had made in their courses. We also included their student evaluations. Rarely did yearly evaluation result in dismissal, though in some cases we would have preferred that.

By the time I left my job, a second director had come in and significantly shifted the evaluation materials such that the only things required were a syllabus and one assignment,

student ratings, and my teacher observations. As she had simultaneously designed a scripted curriculum and encouraged instructors to learn to *deliver* it appropriately instead of learning to build, adapt and personalize it, their teaching materials were mostly identical to her own. The result of such standardization at the moment of faculty evaluation was an even heavier weight placed on my observation work, which was supposed to be formative but clearly was not.

Writing Studies and Materialist Feminism

As mentioned, I tell my own administrative story here to contextualize the work of this study. I believe my experience calls into question the efforts we make in writing programs to engage our yearly practices of evaluation and shared governance using tools like course observation across faculty hierarchies of rank. When intersected by managerialism and marginalization, material conditions can and frequently do produce conditions of inequity, resistance, and dissent.

My work in this dissertation is thus rooted in materialist feminisms, both methodologically through my use of institutional ethnography and theoretically. Materialist feminisms argue that structural and systematic change are necessary components of collective liberation and that such work can be done by taking an activist stance (Naples, 2003). In writing programs, this means making changes at the systems and structure level in ways that view labor as a concern that is constellated with other forms of institutional and structural marginalization. Materialist feminisms frequently emerge as an iteration or expansion of Marxist theory that requires practitioners to consider groups' social locations of as they are taken up in systems and structures like economies or institutions. Within this framework, scholars like Christine Delphy (1997) have argued that class struggle is intertwined with gender and social oppressions, and that a materialist approach view will liberate not only women, but all those crushed by structural

oppression. Teresa Ebert (1996) has additionally asserted that people's lived conditions in capitalist societies and their terms of survival shape their understandings and knowing of said locations. That particular premise is also central to Dorothy E. Smith's work in IE, my chosen methodology, and shapes its mode of inquiry such that informant or participant standpoints are meant to illuminate how power is coordinated and managed. Specifically, IE engages materialist concerns to better understand the everyday lived experiences and working conditions of people in institutional spaces to speak *up* power gradients and make change.

My work in this dissertation is meant to speak to WPA scholarship, an area rife with explorations of how intractable conditions or "wicked problems" often circumvent the best efforts of a well-meaning WPA (Ratcliffe & Rickly, 2010; George, 1999). I believe in the adage that our working conditions *are* our teaching conditions and that no program can be truly effective if it does not first care for, support, and advocate for its teachers. Thus, the work of examining how to best make structural, departmental, and/or institutional changes in faculty teaching conditions from a labor-equity standpoint becomes critical to our successes with curriculum and teaching.

Disciplinary scholarship on labor in writing studies, conversations on our professional Listservs, the public coverage of adjunct teachers' conditions, the shrinking tenure class, and an ever-more precarious academy all demonstrate that this is difficult work. I write this dissertation believing we can shift our thinking and responses to these conditions within institutions and make our work and material conditions more sustainable and equitable. I believe it is incumbent upon departments to do this by enacting a measure of agency within their institution's landscape whenever possible and by reconceptualizing the function and role of faculty with labor equity at the center.

For me, this means we must engage our change making efforts collaboratively, from community-oriented approaches that value the voices of those in precarious positions. In writing programs, these are historically and most frequently women teachers of writing working off the tenure-line and, increasingly, other multiply marginalized groups of faculty at all ranks. Yet too, much of my faith in our ability to enact collectivist approaches emerges from this study and the departmental histories in which changes have been enacted to effect labor improvements over time. Though imperfect, these changes represent significant potential.

This dissertation thus seeks to add to the literature surrounding faculty evaluation and shared governance by examining teacher observation in context, specifically by working to understand how observation functions as a key part of the labor conditions in writing departments. In considering labor equity in our faculty evaluation practices in writing studies, I offer a flexible, generative approach to change and hope to fulfil some of the charges materialist feminism offers us. I argue, as materialist feminist approaches do, that we must center labor equity in response to the changing landscapes of institutions under the pressure of late-stage capitalism. The results of these changes are the continued disappearances of tenure-line appointments that leave more faculty teaching in long-term, non-tenure-stream arrangements and perpetuates a continued dissonance in the labor hierarchies we work in.

Why Teacher Observations

My experience in the role of assistant WPA led me to questions about what role faculty evaluation plays in the landscape of labor equity in writing programs and, more specifically, what role course observation might play in that ecology. I began with the premise that, when someone comes to observe your class, it is never and can never be wholly about teaching. It will instead always contain a performative component on the part of the observed and a summative

one on the part of the observer. Yet, I also wanted to understand how a largely formative approach, such as the one the department I study here employs, can then move into those summative structures of evaluation for annual merit and promotions.

I began my investigation with the knowledge that observation is but one measure of evaluation and is often accompanied by student evaluations, instructor narratives and portfolios, and professional development work. Yet, I also acknowledge our consideration of observation has been smaller than that of other measures. For example, much is known about the fraught nature of student evaluations. They can be shot through with bias, particularly along lines of race and gender (Chavez & Mitchell, 2020) but continue to be used as a measure of faculty effectiveness. Given this, I wondered, what do we know about how course observations work, another object that frequently factors into annual review and/or promotion processes? In contrast to student evaluations, observation is tied up in structures of shared governance and service that position them as integral to department procedures. So, might a course observation practice indicate aspects of departmental hierarchies or feminist ethics of care at work? I also wanted to discover for myself whether there was a "typical" approach to this work and if my own experience was congruent with practices elsewhere. Perhaps a more obvious question I initially considered was, can observations be truly formative as our disciplinary orientations suggest? If so, how? In contrast, when they are most summative, how do they shape our working lives? Ultimately, what purpose(s) does an observation serve and for whom?

As mentioned, there is a dearth of literature on faculty evaluation in writing studies. Yet, the two primary volumes that devote themselves to it, *Evaluating Teachers of Writing* (Hult, 1994) and *Assessing the Teaching of Writing: Twenty-first Century Trends and Technologies* (Dayton, 2015), surface useful considerations of the issues inherent to teacher evaluation in our

field. Broadly, these volumes consider conflicting notions of good pedagogy or pedagogical theories, changing institutional landscapes, the uses of formative and summative approaches, the risk of punitive approaches to evaluation practices, and more. A few chapters consider how to make course observation a generative part of faculty work to demonstrate sustained best practices in peer-to-peer observation (Strenski, 1994; Jackson, 2015).

It is clear in these volumes that those who regularly engage faculty evaluation as part of their administrative or service roles seek to adhere to our disciplinary standards and describe a nuanced, responsive, capacious, teacher-centered, formative approach to them rooted in an ethic of care for students, teachers, and curriculum. Nonetheless, these practices are arguably not codified at a disciplinary level, let alone at department or institutional levels, with a great degree of regularity. In addition, faculty evaluation is and must be context specific. This area of disciplinary scholarship is partly a response to the rise of assessment-based approaches in higher education that emerged in the 1990s, which, as Cindy Moore (2015) notes, shifted our institutions from "a focus on *instruction* (and the resources needed to support instruction) to a focus on actual *learning*, or the 'product' of instruction" (Barr & Tagg, as cited in Moore, p. 144). This paradigm shift was caught up in calls for accountability from higher education and accreditation agencies and the need for institutions to justify their work beyond research.

As such, more focused and sustained work on contextualized, relevant, and equitable teacher observation is needed in writing studies as a part of a "multiple methods" approach to faculty evaluation. As "experts" in teaching, we have an opportunity to consider our positionalities, subjectivities, power dynamics, notions of pedagogy, and the value of good teaching when we engage course observation. I believe writing studies has not yet fully defined

the value of the tool of course observation and that we would be well served in doing so. I therefore attempt to do as much with this study.

Finally, in searching for conversations related to the usefulness of course or teacher observation, I found many are located in higher education scholarship by those who propose models of peer-centered, departmentally and disciplinarily sensitive approaches to observation that serve larger institutional missions of improved teaching across the curriculum (Ann Austin, personal communication; TEval). As our own disciplinary literature on faculty evaluation does, this work specifically responds to changes in higher education.

However, in addition, those like Ann Austin and others explicitly acknowledge that the tenured class is evermore disappearing, while the accountability models of the last 25 years demand measurements of more effective teaching. In this context, such work asserts that programs are best suited to develop their own measures of effectiveness rather than having them imposed from the outside (personal communication, 2019). Austin noted in a conversation we had that this also shifts the very conceptions of what we believe the role of faculty to be. Simultaneously, much of this work is aimed at disciplinary spaces wherein pedagogy has not been traditionally valued. How, then, might our own discipline, one centered in pedagogy, meaningfully contribute to these conversations in our institutions?

Austin et al.'s (TeVal, n.d.) approach advocates for observation as a tool for improving student success and pedagogical training. Writing studies practitioners would likely view this as obvious but it is also something we may take for granted and assume we are doing effectively. Yet, if our disciplinary literature is any indication, we may have failed to critically analyze it in meaningful, sustained ways. Further, we might definitionally consider what kind of tool observation is and what purpose is serves to better align to our programmatic missions and

values. We might also consider how observation is inculcated in shared governance structures—i.e., who performs them, why, how, and for what purposes?

As my work here is meant to focus on labor equity and the role course observation plays in teachers' material conditions, a second part to my initial questions (what role course observation plays in faculty evaluation and labor) is: what distinctions in experience might be seen at differing institutional ranks regarding how course observation appears in faculty evaluations? Though organized around principles of autonomy and expertise of faculty-as-entity, institutional class systems might nonetheless also be designed around rigid hierarchies of appointment type that can overdetermine what work people do or have access to. These divisions, I argue, are as present at the site of evaluation as they are in other locations.

Therefore, as I began this project, I believed examining the lived experiences of faculty in a single department at every rank (i.e., tenure-stream, non-tenure, academic specialist, graduate student) as well as examining the guiding documents and processes shaping observation protocols and their institutional paradigms might reveal the deeper functions of course observation and faculty evaluation. Further, I hoped I would begin to understand what goals, values, and relationships supported the evaluation and observation culture in the department in addition to what tensions and/or elisions might be occurring or going unspoken.

Research Location and History

While I have told the story of a former institution overwrought with "wicked problems" that is so familiar to WPA scholarship, my site of investigation in this dissertation is markedly different in a number of critical ways, mostly positive. Initially hesitant to observe the "ideal" as my test case, I came to find a number of potential affordances to locating the work of an institutional ethnography, the primary methodology of this dissertation, in such a site. The

department I studied, henceforth "Department X," might be said to be doing many things "right" and further, might even be pointed to as a department from which we could consider a set of model practices surrounding a number of activities germane to writing programs, including faculty evaluation, democratic decision-making, and labor equity.

Some of the affordances of this site were intentionally put in place by original faculty, while others resulted from institutional conditions and locations as well, namely that the department I examined exists within a large, well-funded land grant university whose mission encompasses research, teaching, and engagement with and service to the surrounding communities and state. Broadly described, the department I studied here was also well-funded, was not staffed with part-time labor, and its decision-making and governance structures were intentionally and contextually made to be more egalitarian, dispersed, and democratic than most. Many of the elements that make this department unique were laid out in its departmental Bylaws, analyzed in Chapter Three, as well as its history of becoming an independent writing department, which is also discussed in the following sections.

Exploring the Problematic, Institutional Ethnography and Department X Today

In spite of the affordances outlined above, Department X is far from perfect. Through an exploration of some of the dynamic tensions it faces (discussed in depth in the following section), the key problematic of this study emerged: *When Department X set out to function more equitably for teachers and students alike, several affordances became available, including increased participation, professionalization, and innovation; however, due to their location in institutional hierarchies, Department X continues to reproduce uneven distributions of reward across the material conditions, professional status, and advancement of some faculty.*

Much of the problematic was evident in the activity of faculty evaluation, of which course observation plays an important role. This study then sought to build an account of the "wicked problems" located in faculty evaluation—course observation specifically—to trace and map where the problematic exists, as well as how it is experienced and navigated. I did so to ultimately identify what forms of agency a department with many resources at its disposal might take up to mitigate conditions of inequity from a labor-centered lens. I believe these challenges are worth examining beyond this particular department and may be useful for those in writing studies who are concerned with equity in labor practices, particularly at the site of faculty evaluation. Put simply, my central question became: what happens when a department sets out to do everything "right" and achieves many of its goals, and yet, problems persist? Where are those challenges located? What might we do to solve them?

Department Histories

I began by first asking how this department came to be. Unlike many independent writing programs and departments, this one did not emerge out of or "split" from an English department. Rather, it was a department formed with faculty across the university and primarily emerged out of the "American Thought and Language Department" (ATL). Much of the history available to me came in the form of an alumna dissertation by Michele R. Fero (2009), whose study focused on curriculum and literacies in writing courses and recorded much of the department's history in-depth by conducting interviews and locating institutional documents dating back several decades.

Fero describes that the proto-Department X of ATL was charged with teaching writing to incoming freshman alongside what we might call a kind of cultural literacy approach by way of themed courses (p. 69). Fero further notes that, due to this focus on American cultures, the department drew a number of faculty from across disciplines like history and literature, and that

this interdisciplinary orientation remains in the department's ethos today (p. 79). The present-day department certainly continues to reflect that makeup, even as it has moved solidly into a focus on writing and rhetoric as well as technical and professional communication, digital humanities, and UX/XA. Fero tracked curricular and department changes through the late 90s by way of interviews and a university report, and marks some of the tensions that arose then around what writing instruction should be and is.

Following the department's creation, a complex series of bureaucratic and departmental events ensued, including hires from within writing studies, official reports, task forces, university-level reviews, dean and provost input, newly named courses, a move toward the inclusion of rhetoric as a feature of the department's mission, and a contested (perhaps heavy-handed) intervention by the dean. The department was then asked to rename itself in 2003 and move toward a fully-fledged writing department with undergraduate and graduate majors. Since then, it has continued to develop and innovate itself at each of those iterations.

A noteworthy facet of Fero's work is that she comprehensively describes the contested spaces and concerns over labor, curriculum, expertise, and departmental and institutional mission as they relate to a writing department. Ultimately, Department X claimed the territory of writing instruction in the university, in part by aligning explicitly with the university's strategic vision and mission plan in the early 2000s. It thereby ultimately succeeded in building a thriving first-year writing program, undergraduate professional and public writing undergraduate major, and a cultural rhetorics focused graduate program (pp. 69-92).

While Fero does not specifically connect to the body of scholarship around independent writing departments, it recalls much of what we know about why those in writing studies might seek to become independent and the persistent challenges of making that a viable enterprise. The

body of work related to these issues demonstrates that moves away from (usually) English departments toward independence frequently includes the exigency of elevation of the value of disciplinary knowledge in rhetoric and composition, so often subordinated to English Studies, coupled with a need to seek more labor equity in the form of hiring full-time faculty over adjunct writing instructors (O'Neill, Crow, & Burton, 2002). In an earlier research project, I surveyed this literature in some depth with two colleagues and identified the following affordances and limitations of independence. I share them here in Table 1.

Table 1: Landscape of Independent Writing Departments

Affordances of independence	**Limitations/persistent challenges**
• Ability to focus on labor equity, training, and professional development. • Allows development of majors and graduate programs. • Ability to work more collaboratively across campus, to expand notions of what writing is, to move beyond FYC, to do WAC/WID, PW, and other forms of writing cross- and interdisciplinary-wise, to develop an identity for what writing studies is in its own right. Focus on professional skills for students. • Affords recognition and leadership status in the field itself, often. • Allows flexibility and experimentation in organizational structures from pedagogy, to administration, to assessment. It often remains flexible, as programs are developing. Many have changed over time in terms of governance and teachers' roles. • Allows a new/different/privileged role for research but also centers teaching and curriculum.	• Ongoing labor issues carried from former departments—i.e., because of labor issues, we carry a two-tier system with us inherently. • Struggle over what FYC is or should be, who teaches it, where it gets taught, and how—i.e., we are still bound to FYC in most cases. • Heavy administrative burden as a field that frequently organizes, designs, and assesses. • Ongoing hierarchies, disciplinary conflicts, sometimes composition vs. rhetoric, etc.

When considering limitations, this body of scholarship reveals the utopic imaginary in forays into independence and the realities of what persists once independent of English departments, including the same issues around labor, service, and subordination (Everett & Hanganu-Bresch, 2017).

Department X demonstrates both successes and challenges within these kinds of affordances and constraints. Nonetheless, by most measures, it is highly successful. The undergraduate program in Department X is guided by many nationally known scholars in professional, technical, multimodal, and digital studies. Similarly, the graduate program in Department X is well known for its focus on justice and equity centered scholarship via cultural rhetorics and frequently overlaps with professional, technical, and digital communication. Its first-year writing program (FYW) is managed by WPAs whose areas of scholarship are devoted to the program itself and whose work is broadly cited and respected in writing studies. In addition, the department is attached to a supportive and renowned writing center.

As a whole, Department X is made up of faculty who might be said to quite literally "shape the field" of writing studies in many ways, from editing several high-impact and new cutting edge journals to running professional organizations as board members and conference chairs in the discipline. In addition, the department has founded, hosts, or has hosted a number of national disciplinary conferences. Faculty in the department also engage often with public spaces, working across public and academic spheres by successfully garnering large grants to coalesce their work with social, cultural, and medical initiatives that allow them to regionally and nationally contribute to improved communication work in via partnerships. Moreover, several faculty members serve as university-level administrators working to harness disciplinary awareness of social justice and remove obstacles to equity across the institution. In other words,

on a whole, this department is enormously successful by all measures of engagement, scholarship, teaching, and service, both inside and outside the university. What's more, their work is well aligned to both institutional and disciplinary missions.

In terms of labor distribution, Department X is large, with a wide range of teaching and professionalizing opportunities for faculty. Its FYW program teaches upwards of 8,000 incoming students a year and necessitates a large faculty to serve those needs (around 50). That program is largely staffed by one faculty designation, "non-tenure-track" (NT) sometimes called "fixed-term" faculty, though the department employs two other designations as well, "tenure-stream" or "tenure-track" (TT) and an institution-specific faculty role called "Academic Specialist" (AS). Mostly, NT teach FYW courses and TT teach in the undergraduate writing major and graduate program, while AS instructors typically teach across those curriculums. However, there is some porosity to these appointments, with several faculty teaching in all three areas of the department regardless of rank. Opportunities for shared governance and input from all levels of departmental membership are available and encouraged. Importantly, Department X is frequently able to retain faculty over the long-term, lending to a strong sense of continuity and an ability to foster programmatic coherence across the three areas of the department's mission and vision. Finally, a number of writing courses are staffed by graduate teaching assistants (TAs).

In many ways, Department X is a proverbial writing studies "fairy land," flexing itself in many innovative and thoughtful directions. Yet, through the course of my study, I discovered some persistent challenges familiar to many a writing department and program. These tensions arose around social concerns but also around perennial concerns of labor, perceived value of faculty across rank, and a dearth of career trajectories for those working off the tenure line.

Present Day Department X, Moving toward Cultural Change

It is also important to note that, at the moment of this dissertation study, the department was in the midst of a set of changes connected to deeply felt schisms in the matrix of its culture, both social and organizational. Though I devote some time to this topic in Chapter Two, I briefly sketch my speculative understanding of this conflict here. Internal tensions between long-time tenure-stream faculty and newer faculty around issues of race, power, and expertise had resulted in what some deemed a toxic working environment. This precipitated the loss of more than one faculty member as well as the failure to hire new faculty to continue to develop the department's foundational curriculums, which left the department precarious in a number of ways.

In the midst of this, non-tenured faculty dealt with persistent issues of pay equity and the lack of professional advancement. The graduate program also appeared to be in a state of turmoil, particularly in aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, and representation that fomented a set of resentments on the part of students toward faculty and one another. In addition, though the graduate program was built as a cultural rhetorics program, several of the scholars in the department whose expertise resided in that area had left and gone unreplaced. When I first entered the department, much of the graduate faculty's research was located in other areas like pedagogy, community-literacies, medical humanities, digital humanities, technical and professional writing, and multimodal composing, even if much of that work intersected with cultural rhetorics. This placed an undue burden on cultural rhetorics focused faculty members.

Put simply, the department was in a moment of reorientation, reevaluation and, frankly, grief. To remedy some of these particularities, the department chair had hired an outside consulting group to support a cultural change approach to the department in response to these complex and nested sets of problems. The process included several surveys, a set of workshops

and discussions and a preliminary report meant to identify areas of challenge to be further addressed. Some of the issues were reflective of larger, institutional challenges the institution faced in the wake of several scandals related to a lack of transparency, accountability, and justice. Others were specific to the ways Department X was reconsidering its foundational design and its ability to productively move forward. In some sense, this kairotic moment lent itself to the work I set out to do in this dissertation to discover the foundations of the department's challenges and how they might appear in moments of observation and evaluation.

Methodological Considerations

Using institutional ethnography (IE) as a method, I set out to observe the department's practices and see what might be revealed about the structural and relational aspects of faculty evaluation and observation. IE is based in materialist feminist research practices and assumes that the everyday practices of people in workplaces are indicative of the power dynamics at work in those spaces (Smith, 1987).

Emerging from feminist sociological research and the work of Dorothy E. Smith, Institutional ethnography (IE) takes up workplaces as a research site and is animated by seven core concepts: "*ruling relations, standpoint, social coordination, problematic, work and work processes, and institutional circuits."*[2] Smith's work was a response to sociological practice that favored dominant, white, male researcher standpoints and instead sought to construct "a sociology for people" rooted in feminist principles of engaging marginalized standpoints places from which to understand systems of power and social relations. It has recently been adopted by several writing studies researchers (LaFrance, 2019; LaFrance & Nicolas, 2012; Miley, 2017) to

[2] Table 2 offers working definitions of these key terms, all of which appear throughout the dissertation, as they are major elements of my analytic approach. All definitions come from Laura Bisaillon's "An Analytic Glossary to Social Inquiry Using Institutional and Political Activist Ethnography" (2012).

examine writing programs. Writing programs may present ideal spaces for such scholarship because we are a feminized field that is textually and mission-driven, and we are frequently positioned as a service discipline to other disciplinary nodes in university settings. In other words, we are well suited to adopt methodologies that move up the power gradient as opposed to looking from the top down. IE calls this "looking up" and argues this approach can reveal otherwise unseen aspects of workplace culture, as well as illuminate opportunities for institutional change.

Table 2: Definition of Key IE Terms

Ruling Relations: "Ruling relations enable [an] organization that 'generates specialized systems of concepts, theories, categories, [and] technical languages' that shape what is known and said about the world (Smith, 1996, p. 47). Ruling relations operate by replacing people's social experience with textual accounts of experience, which obscures and transforms what is known" (p. 618) (e.g., disciplinary knowledges).	**Work and Work Processes:** "work is used as a metaphor to direct attention to everyday practices in which people engage and that their labour produces. This includes formal participation in the labour market and activities that people do that they might not normally think of as work" (p. 620).
Standpoint: "Standpoint is a social position from which most institutional and political activist ethnography work begins. It is informed by the bodily experience, relevancies, and problems of a designated group of people. This particular stance explicitly informs the research design of projects drawing from these approaches. Such a starting place for inquiry establishes a subject position, and it also offers an alternative starting point to 'the objectified subject of knowledge of social scientific discourse'" (Smith, 2005, p. 228).	**Social Coordination (organization):** "The interaction of social relations is central to social organization, which builds from the assumption that people's lives are socially organized to happen as they do. The material and reflexive coordination of people's actions, as observable, and reproduced over time and place, constitutes the social organization of people's experiences" (p. 618).
Institutional Circuits: "this term refers to a text or set of texts that supplies the context for what we can see, hear, and know [they] are authorized through institutional procedures through which specific people are instructed to carry out specific practices" (p. 610).	**Problematic:** "This is a methodological term that embodies and points to problems, tensions, and contradictions that arise in the relations between people and how society is organized.

Table 2 (cont'd)

This term provides an organizing frame and gives direction to projects that start from within the activities and relevancies of standpoint informants. A problematic in this usage is grounded in social experiences that people encounter as troubling or difficult" (pp. 617-18).

In order to "uncover" relations of power and the seven core concepts of IE as articulated by LaFrance (2019), IE uses methods ranging from textual analysis to talk aloud protocols, interviews, focus groups, and primary observation to present a qualitative, descriptive analysis that specifically highlights locations from which changes might be made in the working lives of a work site's participants. Ethnographically speaking, it creates small case-study-like datasets via its focuse on a particular workplace and collects many forms of information about the site according to a framing "problematic" that guides inquiry like the one articulated in the previous section. IE thus seeks to understand both the social and material, how each is co-constitutive of the other, and how together they produce institutional power relations (LaFrance, 2019).

Frameworks for Change

Though this study examines a single independent writing program in a research institution at a large, Midwestern university, my ultimate hope was to trace how the affordances of the research site might provide a set of heuristics for practitioners in writing studies to analyze in the contexts of their relationships to course observation and faculty evaluation. To develop this set of heuristics, I relied on the primary data generated in this study and later looked to scholarship from higher education to understand how it considers institutions' larger ecologies, something disciplinary literature is sometimes unable to fully encompass. In addition, higher education literature has more directly considered the realities of the disappearance of tenure, a

difficult subject to consider but one that asks us to examine how we might reengage conversations around the value of *all* faculty in more appropriate and effective ways.

Finally, higher education studies has approached teacher evaluation and course observation broadly and cross-disciplinarily and, as such, may provide some models for designing relevant protocols at the departmental and disciplinary levels. I believe writing studies is an ideal location from which to develop such models given our dual concerns of pedagogy and disciplinary legitimacy. This sort of work may help us better understand what aspects of our own relationship to faculty evaluation reside in the interstices of our own disciplinary practices and those located in the structures of institutions themselves.

My goal, then, is not to suggest there is a perfect set of best practices for teacher observation nor that there is any way to certify "good" teaching. In fact, pedagogy is of marginal concern in this work and I resist such positivist notions about it. I instead use this literature to triangulate something I believe is very important: that the nature of faculty life is changing and that it in fact, has changed. In response to such changes, we would do well to center labor equity, consider how we evaluate the teaching of faculty, understand the role evaluation plays in labor, and how we distribute labor across ranks.

I argue that, although labor concerns are central to the teaching of composition, we have done little to solve the mystery of the changing institution and how we might equitably and effectively respond from a labor-equity standpoint. Ultimately, we continue to function under the premise of tenure, despite growing evidence that it is an ever-shrinking academic rank and despite the reality that writing/English studies typically employs the most non-tenured faculty in most universities. Department X is no exception. In the last 10 years, the numbers of faculty designated as TT have gone from 25.5 to 20. While this is not an enormous shift, fixed-term

(NT) faculty have increased from 22.1 in 2010 to 47.9 in 2020 and AS faculty have gone from 0 to 7.3 in that same time (Office of Planning and Budgets, 2020). These changes are significant and have shifted much of the burden of service and governance to an ever-shrinking class of tenure-stream faculty and has disproportionately shifted the teaching work to those working off the tenure line. I believe there are ways to respond to these challenges to shared governance and that course observation and faculty evaluation plays a critical role in this conversation.

Dissertation Structure

The dissertation begins here, with this extended introduction (Chapter One) and proceeds into Chapter Two, which more closely examines the methodology and articulation of that methodology in each of the methods by which I've chosen to collect data in the department. This chapter also further contextualizes the research site itself, supported by survey and institutional data. Furthermore, it frames the materialist feminist underpinnings of IE and highlights how it works differently or extends more traditional forms of ethnography, the role reflexive practices in data collection, and the methods by which I analyzed interview and textual data.

In each of the next three data/results chapters, I examine a specific aspect of the department's relationship to observation and faculty evaluation more broadly. Chapter Three, "Uncovering Tensions Between Values, Agency, & Participation in Departmental Texts," asks what role departmental texts, or what IE calls "institutional circuits" play, and how they function relative to faculty observation and evaluation. I do so by looking at departmental and institutional documents, primarily departmental bylaws and the Faculty Activity Information System (FAIS) supplement the department chair sends out each year. This chapter is meant to reveal how the department's values, as expressed in the documents, may not always align with the faculty's experiences of the department. It specifically looks at aspects of agency and

participation and suggests potential textual interventions that might improve these processes and better align them to the department's value structures.

Chapter Four, "Defining Observation as a Tool of Evaluation in the Department," begins by asking simply, "what kind of a thing is course observation?" The chapter then works to define how observation is perceived as a tool of evaluation and advancement across all faculty ranks, specifically focusing on how those working off the tenure line interact with and experience observation as well as what type of value they ascribe to it. Using interview data, it seeks to work definitionally and to examine how observation practices are operationalized in both annual reviews and promotions. In general, the chapter highlights the tensions faculty encountered that contrast with official departmental narratives of its merits.

Chapter Five, "Locating the Effects of Long-Term Precarity in Department X," approaches a key finding of the dissertation, a concept I have come to call "long-term precarity." Much disciplinary literature has been devoted to academic precarity, but such work has frequently focused on only the worst conditions of adjunct labor, which are usually related to short-term employment arrangements, which do not exist in Department X. Further, that literature sometimes positions appointment types like our own NT and AS faculty as a kind of solution to that problem.

This chapter instead uses narrative analysis of interviews with faculty to reveal the pernicious aspects that persist in long-term, non-tenured appointments and highlights the effects of that precarity in the career trajectories of those working in NT and AS ranks in our department. Based on the results of my study, it appears that the overall effect of long-term precarity results in a perception that evaluation and promotion are largely symbolic and that

evaluation does not result in meaningful career advancement over time. I specifically highlight the following three aspects from these findings that later inform the final implications chapter:

1. Long-term precarity appears when processes and protocols for evaluation are "opaque" in that they are unclear, uneven, or diverge from official processes and resulting advancement is low impact.
2. Long-term precarity appears in evaluation/promotion interactions not only within the department, but also in the college and institution itself, wherein the labor of those off the tenure line is frequently perceived as unworthy of significant attention and/or when evaluation processes themselves do not align with appointment type.
3. Long-term precarity appears in material conditions/pay and thereby has an effect of creating devalued labor and dissonance between faculty conceptions of their own professional status/identity and their ability to care for their needs and the needs of their families.

Given the above, Chapter Six, "Centering Labor Equity: Developing Faculty Evaluation Heuristics for a Changing Academy," explores some of the implications of this study by presenting a set of heuristics in key areas (i.e, graduate education and training, practices, and structures) for considering labor equity and provides a model for others. Chapter Seven, "Higher Education Models for Reimagining Faculty Lives," locates models for change in higher education scholarship and maps the already shifting roles of those off the tenure line in the department to argue for a labor equity based approach to governance and evaluation.

Conclusion

This dissertation began with two broad research questions: What role does course observation play in faculty evaluation in one independent writing department? Does course

observation function differently or for different purposes across departmental rank? By examining departmental texts, disciplinary discourses and institutional ones, and by following the methodology of IE through interview and self-reflexive memo work, I surfaced some of the persistent tensions that differ across ranks and appointment types in faculty observation and evaluation and accordingly point to the effects of the power hierarchies at work in writing studies. The findings from this study suggest a few remedies, but more importantly, suggest key questions departments might ask in their observation and evaluation procedures to build toward or preserve the cultures of care, equity, democratism, and egalitarianism that are so valued in our disciplinary imaginaries. In particular, this work surfaces the importance of supporting ALL faculty in their long-term career trajectories by engaging evaluation and advancement practices centered in labor equity.

My hope for this work is to provide a deeper understanding of the relationships we have with one another and ourselves in workplaces, particularly institutional workplaces that are highly ideological in nature, but which so often fall short of the promises they make for expansive, autonomous, uplifting achievements. It was in my own shared grief with the department that I sought to understand better how the ruptures, slippages, and disruptions in an ideal department culture were occurring in the lives of participants there. I thus sought to offer a way to understand how those experiences might inform new ways of thinking about the work of teaching writing, administering, and existing in an already highly successful department.

CHAPTER TWO: INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY AS METHODOLOGY

The study design and research methods for this project were meant to illuminate some of the practices, experiences, and knowledge(s) around teacher evaluation at the particular site of teacher/course observation in a single writing department. As such, the design was qualitative and interpretivist in nature, done by using ethnographic methods—institutional ethnography (IE) in particular, a methodology adapted from sociological research (Smith, 2005) and applied to researching writing, teachers of writers, and writing programs (LaFrance, 2019). IE is ultimately meant to be an activist research approach for mapping power relations in workplace settings to uncover pathways by which equitable practices might be enacted. This chapter serves to describe the details of the methodological framework for this study's design, data collection methods, participant selection, and the methods by which data was analyzed. In addition, this chapter connects these choices in method to the larger epistemological grounding of the dissertation.

Guiding Framework

This dissertation study took up IE as a guiding framework for examining an academic workplace, in this case a stand-alone writing program at a doctoral granting "Research 1" designated institution (*carnegieclassifications.iu.edu*) in a large, Midwestern university. Here, IE was used to discover the role teacher evaluation and teacher/course observation played in the material and lived conditions of writing teachers in the department across rank and when relevant, other social position markers.

The IE study design is a methodology emerging from sociological research, specifically the materialist feminist frameworks developed by Dorothy E. Smith that take up cultural materialism and gender. Adapting feminist standpoint theory, Smith argues for an "unlocking" of some of the nodes of gendered oppression in research modalities. Initially labeling her approach

as a "sociology for women" and later as "a sociology for people," she explains that she came to understand that the methodology needed to go beyond simply a gendered binary to be successful. For Smith (2004), what results from this work is "less a shift in the subject matter than a different conception of how it is or might become relevant as a means to understand our experience and the conditions of our experience (both women's and men's) in a corporate capitalist society" (p. 22).

Importantly, Smith's work was informed by more intersectional approaches to feminism and the understanding that research practices in the academy too often stem from white, middle-class epistemologies. IE thus seeks to look from the "bottom up" rather than from the top down and thereby accesses and centers perspectives that may typically be elided in hierarchical work environments and research on those environments.

In the department I studied, faculty are categorized into three ranks: Tenure-Stream or Tenure-Track (TT), Fixed-Term or Non-Tenure Track (NT) and Academic Specialist (AS). Additionally, graduate students work by teaching courses and are classified as Teaching Assistants (TA). The IE framework allowed me to classify those ranks as representative of potential standpoints in the department and informed my operationalization of the survey instrument and interview protocols.

For example, interview protocols were focused on locating and listening for the "problematic" in the stories told from these standpoints; specifically, those most easily told by those with less institutional power. This framework helped me, the researcher, to "recognize[s] and account[s] for the situated, complex and interconnected relations among people, their experiences and their practices related to that problematic" (LaFrance, 2019, p. 39). By using both a survey and interview protocol alongside textual analysis and researcher reflection,

methods consistent with IE methodology, I was able to begin to understand the experiences of those working in the department who encountered frequent tensions in their sense of value and agency regarding teaching practices, labor, and departmental standing at the moment of professional evaluation.

Smith conceptualized a feminist methodology that is not limited to one gender. This methodology is instead expansive and can therefore be used to examine the social and structural positions of all marginalized people institutions. Though this study describes a whole department, faculty who form the anchor standpoint of this study are those existing at the AS and NT rank; in other words, those working without the protections of tenure. The methodological framework I used caused me to select their stories as the most salient, as they were the participants who expressed identification with the least sense of traditional faculty agency within departmental and institutional hierarchies, as constrained by their rank.

While this methodology stems from sociological contexts, this study was additionally modeled on the scholarship of Michelle LaFrance and others (LaFrance & Nicolas, 2012; Miley, 2017), who have begun adapting IE for writing studies to examine the labor structures of writing programs and the broader structures that support and house writing instruction.

Arguably, IE is particularly useful in understanding writing programs because it aligns with our disciplinary values: we typically seek to make work structures more egalitarian and democratic; we seek to represent diverse viewpoints; we apply student-centered pedagogical principles to administrative and evaluative work in regard to faculty evaluation; and we are often leaders in campus administration who advocate for those at the bottom of the institutional structure. Further, labor inequity, particularly for women writing teachers, is baked into the history of our discipline as well as its current structure. This history frequently underlies a felt

sense of a lack of legitimacy in wider institutional domains (Crowley, 1998; Brannon, 1993; Ritter, 2012; Schell, 1998) but it also presents us with a wealth of disciplinary discourse on our disciplinary identities, motives, histories, positionings, and practices we've used to build that legitimacy (Enos et al., 1997).

Moreover, the praxis of our field has frequently taken up justice-oriented issues, from language equity and inclusion in our classrooms starting with open admissions policies (Students Rights, 1974; Shaughnessey, 1979), to more contemporary concerns of anti-racist pedagogies (Baker-Bell, 2020; Kynard, 2013) and other forms of social equity, including labor (Ianetta, 2010). Department X is no exception, and in fact, might be considered a model of departmental design that encompasses broader disciplinary values and enacts a large amount of collective agency within its institutional structure. The work of this department has, in many ways, been an effort of imagining new futures for writing studies within academe and of carrying that work out into the field in highly visible ways across national platforms via scholarship, governance, service, graduate student training (Powell et al., 2014). Thus, this particular study and my methodology allowed me to frame the dissertation's larger concerns in justice- and activist-oriented approaches and an understanding of the research site as one already doing many things successfully in terms of the values of our discipline. It further allowed me to then ask questions about how existing practices can be reconsidered and potentially improved, and ultimately helped me consider the role of departmental agency in labor equity centered frameworks.

Smith has noted IE isn't necessarily concerned with illuminating reliable, regularized, replicable patterns in data. Rather, it is "post positivist" in that "IE aligns with ethnographic projects concerned with context, noting that how people are positioned within a site will often dramatically impact not only what people do but how they do it (Smith, 2006, p.5, as cited in

LaFrance, 2019). Who people are, their resulting experiences, and how they respond to and adapt to situations is both highly personal and shaped by the material conditions of which they are a part (LaFrance, 2019). Rooted in feminist principles, Smith's conception of this methodology meant to make visible the dynamics of the social and material, sought to uncover the standpoints of those marginalized in workplaces, and to uncover some of the ways they adapt to, subvert, or make changes based on their everyday, lived experience (Smith, 2005).

When I began this dissertation, I hypothesized that, even within a democratically designed department with systems built to disperse authority and decision-making as well as structures around labor set up to do less damage than the adjunct system, there would be fissures and fractures, misalignments and subversions of the dominant department rhetoric. Given this, I was interested in what stories might then be told in our department about labor, faculty evaluation, and departmental citizenship from the bottom up.

Study Design

I designed this study in the Fall semester of 2019 in collaboration with my advisory committee. After IRB approval (MSU Study # 00003667), I collected and analyzed data in the Spring of 2020. Initially, the design involved a department-wide survey that aided in understanding the departmental landscape and in the selection of interview participants. This led to a series of semi-structured interviews—one artifact-based and reflective, one more traditional—to access a range of faculty experiences and to analyze texts utilized by faculty in connection with their observations and evaluations. Survey data was analyzed numerically to determine respondent numbers at each rank, frequency of observation experiences, and demographic information. Interviews were analyzed in a three-cycle coding process to primarily elicit naturalized data and to secondarily align the data with the framework of IE's seven core

concepts (see Chapter One) (LaFrance, 2019). It was then used to look at discursive "chunks" as units of analysis. Textual analysis in this study employed Clay Spinuzzi's (2002) notions of genre tracing and was meant to triangulate first person accounts with textual instantiations of departmental practices and protocols around faculty evaluation.

The data collection and analysis methods assisted in an understanding of various orientations to faculty evaluation in our department and the role teacher/course observation played in departmental knowledge of instructor and administrative roles, practices, and positionings within the department and university. In utilizing some ethnographic methods, this study did not seek to create broadly replicable procedures and processes as in positivist scientific and social science frameworks (Kuhn, 1970). Rather, the methodology here implies a highly localized and contextualized mode of inquiry that provides a depiction of a department in a particular moment in time. The modes of inquiry themselves, however, are applicable to multiple institutional sites and configurations and can be, as LaFrance (2019) notes, "radically reorienting" (p. 135). She continues, "As we uncover perspectives that diverge from, counter or resist our own, we are positioned to make more thoughtful decisions...to identify difficult but important next steps in our curricular and professional agendas" (p. 135). Systematic modes of studying our work prepare us to more thoughtfully engage such changes.

Accordingly, the study design was meant to value the multiple subjectivities present in the department as shaped by a set of features primarily focused at rank but including and not limited to gender, race and ethnicity, time in the department, and teaching and administrative philosophies. As such, primary data collection via interviews employed a generative, inquiry driven approach to making space for a multiplicity of perspectives around the shared practice of teacher observation.

This approach was meant to provide a "site through which to begin inquiry" (Naples, 2003, p. 8; Smith, 1987) and has been theorized as a methodological approach by several standpoint theorists beyond Smith, from Nancy Hartsock to Patricia Hill-Collins and bell hooks (2004), as a way of valuing marginalized subjectivities as a space for radical potentials (hooks, p. 153). Building on Smith's adaptation of standpoint theory, IE provides a set of seven core concepts, described by LaFrance (2019) as: *ruling relations, standpoint, social coordination, problematic, work and work processes and institutional circuits* (p. 31), all of which can be seen in Table 1 in Chapter One. This dissertation study took these up as analytic concepts for data collection and analysis.

To animate the seven core concepts of an IE study design, the design was additionally meant to encompass knowledge as expressed across a set of artifacts to more comprehensively understand both the particulars of experience as well as the ways processes and documents moved through institutional and departmental spaces. This process can, as Naples (2003) notes, help explain "the material consequences of local discourses and institutional practices for social, cultural, political and economic processes" (p. 45). Below, I list the data I collected or co-created in order to achieve a multidimensional analysis. These artifacts included the following:

- Survey data
- Interview data, enhanced member reflection
- Textual analysis and collection
- Researcher standpoint reflexive writing, Memos

In the subsequent sections, I map the particulars of data collection and analysis for the above set of artifacts to illuminate what each artifact contributed to the study and how I selected

from this data the key narratives that appear in the three analytical chapters of this study (i.e., Chapter Three, Chapter Four, and Chapter Five).

Survey Data and Departmental Demographics

Data collection took place in a phased approach that began with the deployment of a 19-question department-wide survey using the Qualtrics platform (survey can be found in Appendix A). The survey was conducted via mail merge and solicited individualized requests in the hopes of receiving a higher response rate. Through the survey, I sought to understand the demographic and practical field of the department related to teacher/course observation. Survey questions ranged from identifying whether respondents had experienced or conducted observation in the department to demographic data on race/ethnicity, rank, and sexual/gender orientation.

While meant to achieve a census sample[3], a few factors interfered with this particular goal. For instance, in a department size of roughly 115 members, nearly 40 of those were graduate students (MA and PhD) and a significant number of graduate students work primarily in the university's large and well-supported writing center. Of those who work in the writing center and/or whose funding comes through the writing center, many are not or have not yet been instructors in the writing program. This designation and separation within the graduate TA population is partially due to departmental opportunities and partially by a university ranking system of "TA" vs. "TE" (teaching assistant/teaching exempt), which may have reduced the available graduate student responses (personal communication).

As indicated by some personal communications, another constraint was that many people had not received *or* conducted any teacher observation for a lengthy time period, or not in the

[3] Census sampling refers to achieving a full sample of every participant or unit in an area of study. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census

department at all. Generally, this was because observation only happens in Department X if (1) you are new, (2) you are a graduate student, or (3) you are seeking promotion. A further discussion of the pattern of observation appears in the following chapter, Chapter Three, on institutional circuits/boss texts.

Nonetheless, the survey yielded useful information as the number of people engaged in observation and in addition, response numbers and breakdowns, roughly approximated department makeup. Table 3 below shows department makeup by rank compared to survey responses.

Table 3: Department Demographics by Rank

Rank	Number in Department	Number of Survey Respondents by Rank
Fixed-Term	50	30
Tenure-Stream	18	11
Academic Specialist	8	8
Graduate Student (MA & PhD)	39	22
Unspecified rank		5*
Totals	115	76

*Not all respondents answered the question identifying their rank, hence numerical differentiation in the last column and row.

The final survey responses totaled 76. Some questions remained incomplete based on the survey's optional answer structure. For example, accurate rank representation was imperfect due to five respondents not completing the question (see above). To triangulate department makeup with survey responses, demographic data of department makeup by rank was collected through the university office of institutional data (Office of Planning and Budgets). More detailed demographic data than the chart above can be seen in Appendix B. Use of this institutionally generated data was meant to elucidate and confirm general demographic trends from the survey to better support an accurate context for the responses received.

The character of the department is, in general overwhelmingly white, mostly female, and mostly those working off the tenure line. These demographics are congruent with the field of writing studies more broadly (Enos, 1996).

Mirroring department makeup (see table above) by rank, my responses showed the heaviest representation of respondents at the NT rank (n=30), with the next concentration being TA (n=22), then TT (11), then AS (n=8). A few significant areas of over-representation appeared in TA and AS designations. Potential reasons for the over-representation of the graduate student population (TA) are that I was a graduate student at the time, so the likelihood of affinity-based responses was higher. Yet, as a graduate student, on the social level, my experience of the department was one of stratification with limited opportunities for engagement across rank and this may have also contributed to unevenness in response rates. Remarkably, however, all AS in the department answered the survey and several indicated a willingness to speak to me. I could find no clear causal indicator for that response level.

Like most departments, faculty activities are not necessarily cleanly divided by rank or the work circumscribed at those ranks. This department is diverse in its programming and includes a large, robust first-year writing program, an undergraduate major in professional and public writing (P2W), a UX/XA track, and a large graduate program including both MA and PhD programs with multiple tracks. Thus, there are multiple nodes of teaching, service, and administrative work to be done across rank, building some of the complexity and nuance of this study and the multiple roles and experiences within it.

Yet, it is not without certain asymmetries. In terms of teaching, the bulk of the first-year writing program as well as some of the P2W program is staffed by non-tenure track “fixed-term” faculty (NT) who teach a 3/3 load. Many of these faculty have terminal degrees, are salaried,

receive benefits, and have long-term renewable contracts. Graduate students also teach in both undergraduate programs depending on area of interest and experience. The courses in the graduate program are generally taught by tenure-stream faculty, though that is shifting, arguably in direct relationship to labor conditions. Service, outreach, engagement, evaluation and curriculum development are also performed by members across all ranks in multiple, complex configurations of engagement. Accordingly, interview participants spoke to the layers of work that intersected at moments of teacher observation and faculty evaluation, in general.

Interview Data and Participant Selection

As mentioned, in addition to helping understand departmental trends related to course observation, the survey also functioned as a participant selection tool. The final question of the survey asked respondents to identify whether they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher and participant selection was made from that self-selected group, based on a focused set of criteria related to the study's research questions and the core principles of IE as initial heuristics.

The selection criteria delineated two interview groups that were then matched to two separate interview protocols, one semi-structured and one an "artifact-based" reflective interview protocol.[4]

Protocol 1: For the first set of participants and first interview protocol, the criteria for selection included the following four features:

- participants indicated they were willing to do a follow-up interview,

[4] Artifact-based reflective protocols have been frequently used in qualitative work. This one included asking participants to bring in an artifact related to their course observation and answering a series of materially based, inquiry driven, and exploratory interview questions. See Appendix C for protocol.

- participants indicated they had had an observation in the department within the last two years,
- participants indicated they had some kind of text either received or produced in relation to the observation,
- participants identified the observation as playing a role in their employment somehow—renewal, promotion, tenure, job opportunities, advancement, continuing status, etc.

The selection criteria were closely linked to the methodological framework in that it sought to understand participants' everyday experiences. This in turn shaped my considerations for participation in the following ways: making participation voluntary and equitably distributed, seeking those who had direct and easily recallable experiences with course observation, seeking an understanding of how people's experiences are shaped by or apparent in textual circuits that move through institutional spaces, and surveying those who indicated an awareness of how course observation worked as a function of their material conditions and not solely their pedagogical practices.

This last consideration is important to note as the relative dearth of literature on faculty evaluation in writing studies frequently centers improving pedagogy and best practices frameworks (Hult, 1994; Dayton, 2015), while this study sought specifically to understand observation as an artifact of employment and evaluation. This assumption caused me to design interview protocols to elicit information on material labor conditions rather than pedagogical practices in the classroom.

Protocol 1 was a semi-structured, artifact-based, reflective interview protocol that asked participants to share an artifact they believed had a relationship to their teaching observation in some way. The interview questions asked for descriptive, experience-based information as well

as subjective and speculative understandings related to the artifact. This work was meant to achieve the goal of helping to primarily trace how texts came to be created and circulated through institutional circuits. In particular, it sought to unearth texts related to the observation in the context of faculty evaluation practices in the department. This goal shaped questions related to how the text was produced, who else might read or see it, and how it might be used in their annual merit reviews or promotions.

The strategy for Protocol 1 also relieved participants of the need to agree to share documents related to their employment, though some chose to do so anyway. They could instead describe and make meaning of the artifacts themselves, based on a set of interview questions that acted as prompts for reflective discussion during the interview.

Finally, this first set of interview participants were chosen to provide insight on embodied, personalized experiences with observation and program processes while the second interview group were selected because they could provide insight into larger scale programmatic practices and patterns, thereby illuminating the *ruling relations, social coordination, and work and work processes* aspects of the IE study.

Protocol 2: For the second group and protocol, all administrators of undergraduate programs were solicited for an interview and all affirmed their willingness to participate in the survey. This group consisted of four faculty members, one the current WPA (TT), one the former WPA (TT), one program coordinator (AS), and one assistant director of FYW (NT). My methodology allowed me to understand this selection and some of the official narratives around observation and evaluation in the department and caused the interview protocol to center on policies, texts, and practices.

Using inquiry driven approaches, Protocol 2 was devised as a semi-structured qualitative interview (Halbritter & Lindquist, 2018). It was developed in part because administrators would not easily be able to share documents related to observations without sharing the private employment documents of others. However, their insights into departmental practices—particularly notions of research—guided/supported/based observation work and were valuable in helping determine how they operationalized departmental values in their own behaviors and practices based on the protocols set forth in the bylaws.

Unlike Protocol 1, the participant selection for Protocol 2 did not use focused selection criteria and was not based on the survey data in the same way, although each did take the survey and indicate a willingness to speak with me. Instead, it was based on individual requests for participants to share their experiences related to conducting or managing teacher observations in the department.

Unlike those *being* observed, administrators universally reported positive associations with observation and faculty evaluation work as a part of their jobs. Protocol 2 was therefore, helpful in illuminating the powerful departmental focus on pedagogically oriented, goal-driven, research-based, formative observation practices and provided an articulation for the rationale for such practices or, *ruling relations*. I later came to identify this as both a shared value in the department and a dominant narrative of practice that, although not all teachers universally experienced, most were aware of its presence in the process itself.

To conclude, of the 76 survey respondents, 35 indicated they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. In the end, 13 participants were chosen and invited for a follow-up interview via email (See Appendix D for email templates). This group included four TT faculty, four NT faculty, two Graduate TAs, and three AS rank faculty members. Selection

size was based on feasibility of data management for a dissertation project as balanced by a desire to gain a broad understanding of experiences across multiple ranks in the department and locate an "anchor standpoint" (Devault & McCoy, 2001) from which themes in the data would be focused. The numbers of participants at each rank were selected to mirror departmental numerical demographics at each rank, with the largest concentration being NT faculty. Numerical overrepresentation of academic specialists occurred because one acted as an administrator and was selected as such.

Additional Considerations in Participant Selection and Study Design

Beyond the initial criteria, considerations of diversity of representation in race/ethnicity and gender were included, though these criteria did not necessarily align with the primary criteria (see above). Constraints to producing a diverse sample across all categories of selection were not entirely attainable given the sample size and department make-up. Specifically, the widest range of diversity in identity markers exists in the graduate program and includes members of Asian/Asian-American, African American, Latinx/Chicanx, Indigenous/Native American, and gender non-binary groups. The graduate program has an intentional strategy for recruiting members from a broad range of underrepresented and marginalized identities and has been successful in doing so.

However, there is no parity of this diversity at any faculty rank, particularly for race and ethnicity. As far as I was able to ascertain, there is no intentional strategy for recruiting more diverse identity categories at the faculty level or, if so, it is not widely known, mentioned, nor successful in the department. In my survey responses, faculty members overwhelmingly identified as white/European with a few exceptions from Indigenous, Latinx/Chicanx, and Asian/Asian American respondents. In addition, faculty ranks have become even more white-

representing in past years, with several faculty of color leaving the department (See Appendix B for demographic data over time).

Unfortunately, when the survey data was re-considered in terms of participant selection with an eye specifically toward diversity of representation in racial/ethnic/gender makeup, few gains were apparent when ignoring primary criteria. At most, racial diversity and/or gender representation would have increased by 1 participant. Therefore, the initial criteria were maintained and the final demographic data of interview participants across both Protocol 1 and Protocol 2, was then, as follows:

- 3 Latinx/Chicanx identified participants
- 6 White identified participants
- 5 female identified participants
- 4 male identified participants

There was, to my knowledge, no representation of trans, gender non-binary, nor gender non-conforming participants.

In the second group for Protocol 2, it is also worth noting that all program administrators (two females and two males) were white. Their rank had fairly even distribution across gender, meaning one TT and one NT were white and female, and one TT and one NT were white and male. Again, this is fairly consistent with disciplinary distributions writ large where very few non-white faculty are in writing program administration positions and where faculty of color face barriers to inclusion (Harris & González, 2012; Kynard, 2019; Masse & Hogan, 2010; Strickland, 2011).

This set of conditions may appear unsurprising given the overall whiteness of academic spaces and the fact that the university where this study was conducted is a “predominantly white

institution" (PWI). Yet, the demographic makeup of the department itself is a site of considerable tension for faculty members and graduate students, particularly for students and faculty of color. In fact, the overwhelming whiteness of the departmental makeup is at odds with the axiological values of most who work in it. Therefore, much consideration, dialogue, and departmental lore has been devoted to concerns of identity-based parity and/or addressing inequity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppressive or anti-racist concerns, particularly regarding TA and TT ranks. Unfortunately, the typical result of such efforts has been more distrust and miscommunication as well as a pervasive "lore" culture of varying versions of events based on an individual's location within the departmental structure. This set of conditions was noted by interview participants as well.

Finally, though this dissertation sought a systems/structural approach by considering labor equity as its primary focus, in contrast to a purely social and relational or cultural approach, it is worth noting again that concerns of power, discrimination, and epistemic violence related to identity were very much at the forefront of departmental struggles and had been for some time. This is not to suggest that these tensions were unique to this site, merely that the department had made some efforts to explicitly acknowledge them and so they were regularly a part of department-wide conversations in both official and unofficial channels.

Interview Analysis

Interview work was central to my dissertation study. Interviews with participants were meant to elicit the stories, subjectivities, and felt senses of members of the department and in turn, "locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of institutional complexes of activity" (Devault & McCoy, as cited in Naples, 2003, p. 45). As such, the interviews were made to gain an understanding of how participants came to understand their

work, the value of their positions and labor in the department, and how those concerns were instantiated through official documents or processes, as well as by intuited departmental values. This meant engaging discussions of participants' experiences with observations in the department and their prior institutional experiences, service loads, engagement, and instances in which participants identified navigating a sort of 'shadow' curriculum related to status and opportunity in the department. Exploring such experiences aligns well with IE as it enables researchers to look from the bottom up and directly engage experiences beyond the typical channels of institutional communication.

To analyze the interview data, I followed processes of qualitative methodologies via transcription and a series of levels of coding practices for interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2016) that ultimately focused on discourse markers related to agency, belonging, and understandings of departmental conditions. This enabled me to begin to understand both particularities and patterns in the conversations I had with interview participants.

The first cycle of coding occurred during transcription, where I began listening for interesting points of meaning in the recordings and began to note patterns I saw emerge in the data. This is consistent with interpretivist and descriptive approaches familiar to ethnographers and is meant to allow for a naturalistic set of impressions regarding data. Because my methodology is grounded in standpoint theory which values the subjectivities and embodied experiences relevant to larger social and structural contexts, in initial coding, I also used the "insert comment" function in Microsoft Word to be able to link impressions to particular affective moments in the interview and to make notes of any voice shifts taking place that would not otherwise be later recognizable in the transcripts. Such moments indicated a set of emotional and embodied responses that were valuable to understanding participant standpoints.

The second cycle of coding was an effort to more closely and carefully understand repeating patterns across interviews by looking at language use. These patterns were later grouped into categories and then assembled into thematic understandings. Second cycle coding allowed me to begin to see these patterns across accounts of experience as most relevant to the problematic itself. In this phase of coding, I identified discursive markers for the following: use of metaphors, passive/active voice, causal statements of location or blame, and idealizing statements of change and potential. In addition, I coded for outlier or edge cases for later consideration. Though this methodology doesn't explicitly seek validity, replicability, or reliability from its data sets, it does provide a space for critical consideration of contradiction, nuance, and context within participant experiences.

In the interim, I began collecting notes in a series of columns to identify evolving understandings of the data by tracking claims I felt I could reasonably make about my data and by identifying particular places in the data where I could link those assertions.

Finally, I worked to again align first and second cycle codes, categories, and themes to the framework of IE and its seven core concepts in order to identify and select the narratives I would later explicate in analysis. This involved considering how interview participants articulated experiences of their working lives in the department at the site of course observation and faculty evaluation more broadly. It also involved identifying dominant narratives across the department related to the purposes and practices of course observation and teacher evaluation and the ways faculty told stories about these narratives in their work. This cycle prompted moments of deselection of stories heavily related to pedagogy, which is frequently immaterial in and of itself. Instead, I traced how understandings of pedagogy might be translated into summative, evaluative notions about self or others.

From this analytical work I selected two areas of focus that became the basis for Chapters Four and Five, which stem directly from interview data. Chapter Four definitionally conceptualizes the function of observation as a tool of evaluation in the department and Chapter Five brings into focus the central theme of "long-term precarity" for those working off the tenure line.

These selected themes were meant to center the department's faculty evaluation practices from the standpoint of those working off the tenure line. I consider both NT and AS ranks here. Both are grouped under the category of those working off the tenure line, but they also represent two academic classes that were created in direct response to the labor conditions of universities more broadly and this department specifically. Further theorization of these patterns in disciplinary and institutional spaces appears in Chapter Six.

More immediately, the faculty's experiences of these two ranks indicated a particular set of standpoints at the interstices of disciplinary knowledge, institutional constraints, and agency. In telling the stories of these two ranks, I came to understand how the core concepts of IE were at work in this departmental site and began to imagine how they might present locations from which changes could be made via a labor equity lens. The selection process allowed me to bound the data in ways that followed institutional circuitry as experienced by participants at the level of departmental policy and the material conditions of their working lives.

Enhanced Member Reflection/Checking

Finally, I engaged a series of extended member reflections or "enhanced member-checking" (Chase, 2017) in line with participatory action research frameworks to remain in what I felt was ethically appropriate territory with my participants, and to provide a space in which they could freely contribute to the analysis itself. To conduct this aspect of data analysis, I

developed a one-page summary document of the study for each participant, noting where their narrative appeared and for what purposes. I then sent them an edited transcript in which I asked key questions about their perspectives, comfort level and accuracy of the analysis. Each of the participants and I then conducted online video meetings to discuss, annotate, and extend the analysis in each draft. The subsequent changes were then used to guide further drafting and revision work.

Analyzing Institutional Circuits

A large part of this study was to trace institutional circuits through textual instantiations of departmental and institutional processes. Institutional circuits are texts that produce regularized action inside institutional ecologies, such as annual reviews. A primary text consistently mentioned in interview, was the departmental bylaws (See Appendix E). I also examined what I call the "FAIS supplement," another salient text that marked correlations with survey and interview data. This generated understandings of the common or sometimes "official" narratives circulating in the department related to observation, as well as the views of those operating under the surface of those narratives. The FAIS supplement is a document sent by the chair each year that triggers annual review activities. This analysis served in effect to triangulate the data gathered by listening to departmental participants and revealed some of the ways participants acted outside of, within, or beyond the officially sanctioned narratives of these "boss texts" (LaFrance, 2019, p. 20).

IE methodology in writing studies argues that "organizations coordinate any number of individuals over time and space and use written and visual texts in many forms to do so" (LaFrance, 2019, p. 42). In this methodological frame, written texts helped coordinate and enact "ruling relations," which "draw upon and influence institutional patterns, such as hierarchies,

allocations of resources and work processes" (32). To understand what texts mediate the "work and work processes, ruling relations and social coordination," both official documents and unofficial ones written by participants were collected and analyzed. See Table 4 for the complete list of texts.

Table 4: Document Analysis, Categories

Departmental Documents	Institutional Documents	Participant Provided Texts
• Departmental Bylaws • WPA observation protocols • FAIS Supplement • Template for teaching letters via UG director, designed by Grad Chair	• University Faculty Handbook • Academic Specialist Handbook • Forms B, C, D (renewal and promotion for NTT, TT, and AS)	• Teaching statement/philosophy • Book on pedagogy • Email sent Assoc. WPA* • Notes/file from observation by WPA on Dropbox • Personal reflection after observation • Notes from GTA for WPA on observation • Des B[5]/an email • Review materials for continuing status • Annual review merit packet*

* Indicates documents that were physically or electronically shared with me; all others were discussed in Protocol 1.

Document selection and analysis focused on those that coordinated repeated, regularized interactions and processes in the labor of the department. Though the bylaws and FAIS supplement were primary in my analysis, several other documents worked extra-locally to the department, such as the standardized forms faculty had to complete at the institutional level to achieve promotion. When viewed as connected to larger organizational structures and processes,

[5] "Des B" or "Designation B" indicates the forms attendant to NTT faculty promotion processes that result in "continuing" status.

these documents also demonstrated how institutional circuitry differed across rank and how those hierarchies coordinated activities inside the department as well. For instance, NT, TT, and AS all fill out slightly different promotion forms, designated by the letters "B," "C" or "D." Frequently, those forms were negatively perceived as a primary site of disjuncture in moments of faculty evaluation, even as more dominant departmental narratives and document structures imposed a kind of superficial (albeit altruistically motivated) equity.

While workplace texts are typically highly valued, even if not explicitly considered as writing (Opel & Hart-Davidson, 2019), it is worth noting that, on its own, this department is an unusually heavily text-driven space. Such texts include handbooks, forms, extensive use of email, etc. Primary among these texts is the department bylaws. Evidence of the department's attention to textual instantiations of praxis had arisen earlier in my degree work, when I conducted a collaborative study on independent writing departments with a faculty advisor. Through this study, we found our bylaws were the longest and most extensively detailed of any others we were able to locate for other independent writing departments across the nation. In addition to their notable level of detail and attention to shared governance, the bylaws regularly undergo revisions and contain a wide range of provisions for the distribution of evaluation work and decision-making processes. This document therefore contains traces of past departmental designs and was universally referred to as a guide for practice by participants, as well as a location from which to understand departmental values. This knowledge then caused me to view the bylaws as both a map of departmental practice and a discursive site.

To slightly extend the work of my methodology, which doesn't elucidate particular methods of textual analysis, I employed a genre-tracing approach as developed by Spinuzzi

(2002) to provide myself with a measurable analytical framework. Spinuzzi describes genres inside of activity as:

> At the level of activity, genre is recognized as shaping and being shaped by its sociocultural milieu: As Charles Bazerman has argued (Shaping), genres spring from a given activity and evolve as the activity evolves, but they also guide and shape the activity. Thus, genre analysis has often been approached as a way to gain insight into the recurring organizational activities in which genres are used (Yates) and the social import of developing genres (Bakhtin, Problems, Speech; Miller). (p. 17).

In this context, documents like the bylaws and FAIS supplement can work to coordinate and initiate the "cyclical" work processes of a site; in this case, a writing and rhetoric department (Spinuzzi, 2002, p. 8). The departmental bylaws were intentionally shaped according to the department's values of egalitarian, dispersed, and democratic decision-making, and those values are most frequently enacted by committee or other community-driven processes and responses. The FAIS supplement, for example, exists in the department but is directly connected to an extra-departmental process and set of values related to annual merit review. Accordingly, these key texts were marked for their interactions in Spinuzzi's three levels of genre within activity theory: activity, action, and operation (p. 17).

Such marking as an analytical practice allowed me to consider correlations among the multiple narratives told to me by department administrators and tenure and non-tenure stream faculty, and to map differences among those positionalities and their standpoints in relation to the documents. This helped uncover understandings of the *ruling relations* at work in the department that were consistent with the larger IE framework.

Researcher Reflexive Writing and Standpoint, Reflective Memos

As a methodology rooted in standpoint and materialist frameworks and one akin to the more politically progressive, institutional ethnography (IE) enlists reflexive forms of ethnography (Lindquist, 2001; Cushman, 1996) that highlight researcher reflection and positionality as a key component of study design (Naples, 2003). Accordingly, in this dissertation, my own orientation as a researcher—complete with its own particular subjectivities and desires—was an important consideration that shaped all aspects of the work. For example, as I wrote in the introduction to this dissertation, my own knowledge from previous experience with teacher observation in the role of an assistant WPA gave rise to my need to envision possibilities for more labor-equity centered approaches to faculty evaluation. Reflective writing throughout the research process specifically enabled me to make explicit some of those knowledges and concerns as they arose.

The persistent tensions and inequities in teachers' labor of at various levels of institutional and departmental hierarchies in writing studies is a central question of my work and this project was no exception. This dissertation was an opportunity to examine the problem at a particular departmental location and to begin imagining what affordances and agency the department took up in order to consider labor equity.

Thus, to reflexively and materially operationalize my own positionality, I practiced writing reflective memos for each interview I conducted. These memos moved beyond the conversations in the interviews and provided me a textual space for questioning my own narratives, motivations, and understandings of the departmental landscape. They also became a location from which I began to make sense of the stories repeating across texts and primary data. These memos-as-method became part of the data set of the project and were a location from

which narrative understandings could arise in the work. Rather than use them as mere spaces to record initial impressions, they began to take shape as analytical and reflective understandings of the complexities of individual experience within the department as they intersected with my own understandings of evaluation and labor hierarchies.

Reflexive practice as an operationalized method in this dissertation was therefore an important tool for aligning me with the methodological principles of feminist research from which this dissertation emerged. As Naples offers in *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis and Activist Research* (2003), "the specific methods we choose and how we employ those methods are profoundly shaped by our epistemological stance" (p. 3). She goes on to describe how those choices are made in close relationship with the ethical stances of our work, arguing that "what counts as data and how these data are interpreted will vary significantly depending on the specific epistemological stand undergirding the research process" (p. 3).

These reflexive writing practices served as measures for ensuring I was in line with my own principles of research—i.e, to uncover often marginalized perspectives, to identify ethical sensitivities, and to make space for change—by protecting my participants and by identifying ways to respectfully represent people's perspectives and honor the knowledge they so generously shared with me. In addition, that stance encompasses my distinct desire to push back on systems of power inherent in institutions and map strategies for change. My researcher stance itself was both privileged and precarious. As a graduate student studying my own place of education and employment, I was free from the political economy in Department X in some ways and highly constrained by it in others, all while the department was experiencing moments of deep structural and interpersonal tension.

Not only did this work require gentleness with some of the interpersonal relationships surrounding the structural realities of department life, but it also required an acknowledgment of the information people would or would *not* share with me. The reflective writing of the memos helped me sort out some of these tensions and locate instances of fracture, disjuncture, contradictions, and limitations in the data itself.

LaFrance (2019) notes that, when listening to talk aloud protocols—a primary method in her work—participants would often pause, laugh, or remain silent. She argues that these affective responses are deeply indicative of the tensions individual may be experiencing in their workplace. Accordingly, the work of the reflective memos alongside initial coding prompted me as the researcher to pause, make sense of, and note such affective moments with my participants. For instance, though no words were spoken, one participant's response was noted in a memo as: "when I asked him the question about 'five years hence', he got this incredibly wistful and sad look on his face? Anger? Sorrow? His entire face changed." Given that I know this participant in multiple other departmental contexts, I was able to perceive an affect in his performance I had never witnessed before.

From there, I used the memo writing to make sense of this moment as an indication of the tension he was experiencing as well as the impact a research context can have on interactions between colleagues. Specifically, my own role as researcher and his as participant took us outside of the traditional hierarchy I and this individual typically operate within. The work of the memos ultimately assisted me in marking these standpoints and mapping them onto larger narratives and textual departmental contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals how IE began to work in particular ways in this study across the methods which guided my data collection and it begins my own accounting for specific institutional context as well as my own location in it. The following thematic chapters flesh out some of the results of this study, taken directly from the data and analysis methods described in this chapter. They highlight key moments in the work of the department with particular focus on moments of agency, institutional circuitry, and standpoint in two ranks of non-tenure stream faculty (NT and AS). The thematic analysis that comprises them contains both critique and identification of moments wherein a re-orientation would be useful for achieving more labor-centered equity. As the goal of IE is ultimately a kind of "activist research" (Naples, 2003), I hope the stories I continue to tell from Department X (i.e., the site of inquiry) might point to larger tensions in academic spaces, as well as in writing studies specifically. I contend that these tensions may need to be addressed as both our discipline and the universities we work in continue to undergo changes wrought by late-stage capitalism and ever widening social disparities.

CHAPTER THREE: UNCOVERING TENSIONS BETWEEN VALUES, AGENCY, & PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENTAL "BOSS TEXTS"

Introduction

At the time of writing, Department X was in a moment of change and reflection precipitated by a variety of institutional factors ranging from corruption and abuse at higher levels of the university to internal, departmental conflict and subsequently, the loss of several, high-profile faculty members. Our department was, by my estimation, working to discern and revisit—or indeed redefine—its own values and to ascertain how to effectively move forward in operationalized capacities more in line with those values. In other words, it was a moment of re-orienting. This exigency was, unfortunately, the result of a kind of breakdown in positive departmental culture across ranks. The departmental climate had bearing on my study as it became the impetus for some departmental changes, including some to observation, evaluation, and promotion processes. The climate also gave rise to explicit conversations about pay and labor equity in the department alongside other concerns. In other words, labor concerns intersected with several aspects of departmental workings and cultural climate.

Transient as I was in my grad student placement, as a citizen of the department, these ripples of discord became part of my own lived experience and work in Department X. In many ways, it gave rise to this dissertation project—how, I wondered, could a department with so much intentional, equitable design, fall prey to such a depth of interpersonal and structural conflict? It was certainly not due to failure of the department's deeply held values of democratic function and equity; rather, I suspected it may be because of a breakdown in faculty and administration's ability to put those values into practice in the systems of departmental life. I thus sought to locate the feature(s) of institutional life and what constituents in the department

might have agency over. I specifically wanted to understand how teacher observation and faculty evaluation structures worked with or in conflict with faculty's goals and values.

As my instinct was to look at the structural workings that might give rise to certain social conditions, I began to ask a series of questions that came to guide my investigation:

- What, I wondered, could be explicitly traced back to the labor conditions there and, more specifically, to the hierarchy of academic class structures?
- In addition, with so much agency conferred to the department by its status as "independent" coupled with its record of great success across research, administration, and teaching, what then might be available to enact positive changes between value and practice?
- In what way could a successful re-alignment of observation and evaluation practice and policy provide a model for others in writing studies facing similar challenges?

These questions also guided my approach to the structure of this chapter in that the first question speaks to methodological concerns, which I addressed earlier by employing an adapted genre tracing approach (Spinuzzi, 2000) to look at what IE calls "boss texts." These concerns are discussed in the following two sections. The second question speaks to some of the results of my analysis of the departmental texts; i.e., whether or not the department is able to manifest their goals and values by utilizing their agency and fostering participation from departmental members. These concerns are addressed in the sections discussing the bylaws and the FAIS supplement. The third question led me to imagine how the department might make changes to more routinely achieve its goals and live out its values. These concerns of "remedy" are lightly interspersed in my discussion of the bylaws and the FAIS Supplement but are more directly

addressed in the final section, “Systems of Remedy and Alignment,” following an organizational pattern the reader will recognize in each of the three analysis chapters.

Boss texts in Department X

For this study, I initially gathered all the texts I thought might be relevant to an understanding of institutional circuitry in the department in regard to course observation and faculty evaluation. I specifically used IE to look for “boss texts,” which LaFrance (2019) explains are texts that “act particularly as forms of ‘institutional circuits,’ which create ideals of accountability, professionalism, and disciplinarity, as they regularize—and often standardize—practice, mediating idiosyncrasies and variability in local settings” (p. 43). I used interview data to ascertain which documents were mentioned most regularly in connection with course observation and yearly evaluation processes. Two emerged: the department bylaws and the FAIS supplement. This chapter thus traces some of the ways these departmental and institutional boss texts were at work and in relationship with one another in Department X’s course observation/faculty evaluations.

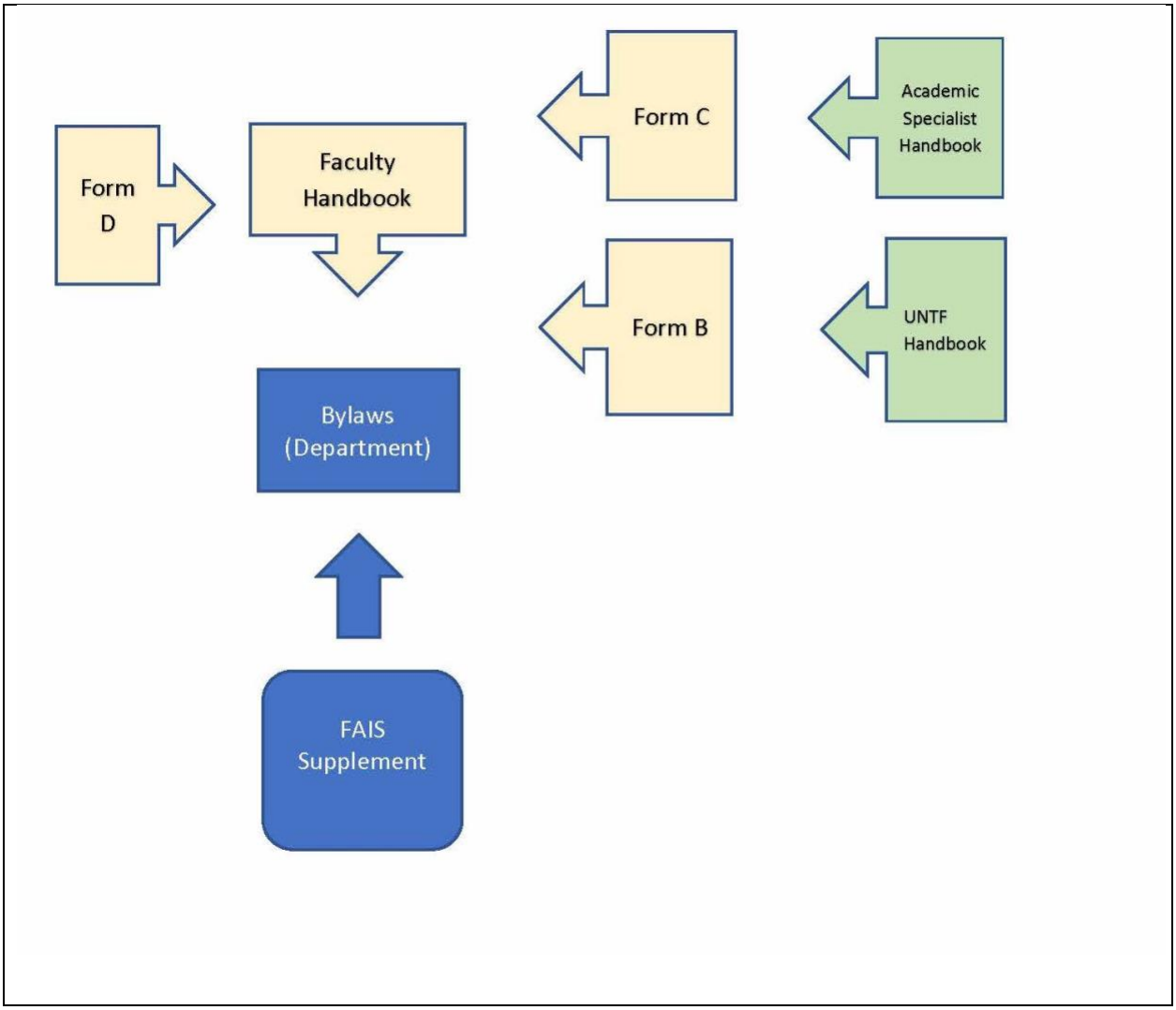
The first, the departmental bylaws (hereafter, Bylaws), was consistently referenced in interviews with faculty. In particular, they laid out participants’ understanding of departmental evaluation processes based on rank, especially those related to the evaluation of teaching. The Bylaws were the largest “stable for now” genre in the department, indicating both values and protocols/processes of faculty work. In many ways, they exhibit the real, rhetorical strengths of a value-guided document for departmental life, but additionally reinscribe the hierarchies and unevenness at each departmental rank.

The second text was what I’ll call the “FAIS Supplement” form. The FAIS (Faculty Activity Information System) supplement form is a single PDF document sent out annually by

the department chair. It triggers preparation and submission of annual merit review documents, a large portion of which relate to teaching and the evaluation of teaching for all faculty. In turn, faculty compose a single PDF of documentation based on their appointment type/rank. I refer to it as a supplement because it is referential to the actual FAIS, an electronically based reporting system used in the department (though it was not developed *by* or *for* them). The supplement guides faculty in compilation, composition, and submission to the online system and is a necessary form for ensuring they do so correctly and on time.

As a part of the analysis, I additionally acknowledge some of the texts that occur in relation to the primary ones because their use sometimes indicated the need for alignment to an extra-local process, individual interventions, or supplements. For example, the FAIS and FAIS Supplement described above is an example of a text linked to an extra-local faculty evaluation process but that tailors its activities to departmental needs, processes, and values, and thereby makes it possible for the work to be completed. The Bylaws are connected to forms "C, D, and the 'Des B'" process, which are university documents that codify promotion processes for the three departmental ranks of TT, NT, and AS, in which course observation plays a role. All departmental documents are connected to the faculty handbook and bylaws. Finally, academic specialists have their own handbook and NT or "fixed-term" faculty have a union contract that guides processes and articulates issues related to their employment and rank. Notably, each document exists in relation to one another and comprises the official processes inherent in department life. Figure 1 below uses Spinuzzi's (2000) "genre ecologies" frame to visualize some of these documents and their relationships to one another.

Figure 1: Genre Tracing Map Department X



Genre tracing: Genre ecologies as analytical frame

In my examination of the textual circuitry of Department X and intertextual relationships between their documents and other institutional processes and forms, I took up Spinuzzi's (2002) methodology of *genre tracing* as a heuristic frame for primarily understanding sites of what he calls "contradiction" and "discoordination." I adapted this methodology to the work of IE and the particular task of tracing boss texts/institutional circuits. I believe this adaptation is compatible with the goals of IE and that it can speak back to genre tracing practices, as well. Technical

communication theories like Spinuzzi's can be oriented to interventions in workplace communication and, as such, naturally align with identifying how processes and people interact in activity systems. As Herndl and Nahrwold (2000) assert about a research methodology in technical and professional communication, it can "examine the consequences of communication practices for members of organizations, for clients of organizations and for social relations at large and [to] suggest possibilities for change" (p. 279).

Scholarship from professional and technical communication (TPC) is not frequently put into conversation with IE, though IE also engages understandings of workplaces wherein interventions might be made by identifying how communication practices in texts coordinate actions across time and place. In both IE and TPC such work typically occurs by looking at how participants behave in their work and how they understand those moments of coordination. Smith (2001) has explained that, "from a particular text it is possible to trace sequences of action through institutional paths, identifying where and how the institutional texts produce the standardized controls of everyday work activities" (p. 160). Smith deems the various bureaucratic and institutional discourses present in the texts that coordinate them as "ruling relations." She also notes the dynamic nature of these discourses over time, arguing that, "organizations and institutions exist only in actual people's doings and that these are necessarily particular, local and ephemeral." In this way, texts can provide a way to trace the social relations at work in what Schreyer (2000) calls "stable for now" genres across time and ephemerality (Smith, 2001, p. 163).

Similar to Spinuzzi, Smith (2001) further suggests that, "revising the textual technology of management from the forms within which the relationships [are] described…changes the relationships" (p. 171). Arguably, organizational documents are one of the sites of available

change making in work sites, particularly in institutional workplaces where documents persist in stable generic forms for decades, seemingly impervious to cultural or technological shifts as so many other workplace documents are.[6] So, by identifying contradiction and discoordination, we can ostensibly trace echoes of people's experiences and identify locations from which textual changes might be made that (re)shape the everyday activities of faculty observation and evaluation in Department X. To be clear, I do not suggest a specific set of interventions; rather, I describe locations wherein contradiction and discoordination arose.

As defined by Spinuzzi, contradiction exists at the "macroscopic level" of organizational genres. Macroscopic concerns specifically appear at what he calls the level of "cultural-historical activity" and can understood as how a community coordinates activity around shared understandings of its work at the broadest level. "Such activities," Spinuzzi argues, "are undertaken to fulfill certain motives around which relatively stable activities have developed" (p. 5). When disruptions happen at this macroscopic level, we might say participants feel a sense of contradiction related to organizational values and the actions that accompany them. This sense of contradiction was a notable feature of my interview data from Department X.

Goal-directed actions themselves, however, exist at what Spinuzzi calls the "mesoscopic level" of activity, which encompasses the "specific tasks in which people are consciously engaged at a given point" (p. 9) and refers to the text-as-tool in organizational life. These distinctions are echoed in IE's social coordination and ruling relations. In Department X, for example, the departmental bylaws act both macroscopically and mesoscopically because they: (1) articulate values that might be said to offer a high level of agency, participation and,

[6] One example at the site studied is the university's policy on student instructional rating system (SIRS) which has remained stable in the university handbook since the late 1960s.

autonomy, and a broad notion of shared work at all ranks, as relevant to the shared mission of the department and institution; and (2) instantiate processes and protocols that are directed and codified for governance and evaluation, which faculty are required to use as a tool for renewal, promotion, service, and other department functionalities.

The activities undertaken by members of Department X are goal-directed actions that adhere to stabilized, cyclical processes year-to-year. Further, as structured in Department X, the mesoscopic-level activity of faculty evaluation works in a self-directed, goal driven mode of reflection and articulation of practice attuned to the macroscopic landscape. This landscape is not only of the department but moves extra-locally within the institution where language around self-identified goals appears in the university faculty handbook as a means for evaluating faculty at all ranks (Faculty Handbook, n.d., p. 101).

In this study, both contradiction and discoordination occurred across texts and ranks for a number of possible reasons. Consistent with larger institutional frames, ranks in the Bylaws are inscribed descriptively and instrumentally. Their appointment types, though somewhat variable, are categorized into TT, NT, and AS. Some disruptions related to perceived value across these ranks (contradiction) occur textually. For example, the Bylaws call for broad participation in decision-making processes and service but tracks advancement as tied to those activities in ways more closely linked to rank categories and therefore, in unevenly attainable schemas. Other disruptions appear in the tools faculty must employ to participate in annual evaluation processes. For example, the FAIS form operates mesoscopically where it suggests all faculty members should report yearly research yet, appointment type contradicts these textual assumptions.

Spinuzzi's method of genre tracing specifically helped me understand where boss texts contributed to felt contradictions and discoordinations, as faculty encountered disruptions in their

agency when engaging yearly evaluation and at times perceived their work to be differently valued than others in the department or larger institution (interview data).

I hoped employing the elements of contradiction and discoordination would reveal locations of dynamic tensions as well as the times or locations of positive agentive actions in the participatory culture of the department. I also hoped this would provide a deeper understanding and potential heuristic for the resolution of the problematic of this study (Chapter One), which asserts that although the department is based in admirable values, its articulation of those values in department life can be uneven.

Given this, I worked to uncover textual locations where possible realignments could be made to better integrate cultural-historical departmental values and goal-directed actions. For instance, in what ways do faculty intervene in or rhetorically adapt their composing practices relative to their perceived value or working conditions? Where do faculty feel included or excluded by language in department documents and how do they respond? How could a participatory department culture value or evaluate faculty more evenly across rank?

Methodologically, Spinuzzi notes that genre tracing is aimed at achieving understanding of work and work processes with an "integrated scope" as opposed to a "single scope" analysis (5). Too frequently, he argues, a single-scope analysis assumes there is one, underlying system from which actions and values are generated. In Department X, an integrated scope is particularly useful because, in the case of this study, values were strong and well-articulated in documents and were shared by faculty with a high degree of consistency. In addition, there was no single actor or set of actors from which social action flowed, but rather, as with all academic workplaces, activities were shared and collectively constructed.

Yet, genre tracing indicated in my data that implementation at the mesoscopic level in Department X was troubled. DeVoss et al. (2005) are helpful in understanding the significance of this finding, particularly in terms of locating constraints to goal-directed action (in their case, digital composing) in the notion of infrastructure. They argue that "an infrastructural framework helps not only to reveal these dynamics and their consequences, but also to identify access points for discursive agency and change making within institutions" (p. 19). In other words, constraints to alignment between values and action often happen at the infrastructural level of institutional workings. Thus, mapping these infrastructures as they appear in textual and material forms may reveal sites of agency and potential inroads to improving our working lives. DeVoss et al. also argue that infrastructures dictate not just the places but the *times* when actions and changes might be made. They assert that infrastructures are time bound in the sense that they are "more than material, never static and always emerging" (p. 22). Hence, a prescriptive set of changes is not suitable, so I used genre tracing to think heuristically about the department and gain a better foothold from which to trace institutional circuitry through the boss texts of Department X.

To be clear, I adapted genre tracing outside of its full articulation, which Spinuzzi notes is time consuming and labor intensive and best served in longitudinal research settings. Limitations to my own use of genre tracing particularly appear at the microscopic level, which requires direct observation by the researcher to see the embodied composing practices of research subjects in workplaces. For instance, a "talk-aloud-protocol" would have been an ideal method for observing faculty composing processes in response to the genre of the FAIS Supplement. Yet, I was only partially able to trace those moves through the texts participants shared with me and through the ways they narrated those composing practices to me in our interviews.

Nonetheless, to the extent I was able to employ it as an analytical framework, genre tracing supplemented my IE methodology in significant ways. Primarily, genre tracing helped me investigate where and when departmental values and practices were codified in text form and enabled me to use those texts to investigate the problematic. Coding these documents for contradiction and discoordination helped me better understand the limits to and disruption of official narratives of agency and participation inherent in the boss texts and the work cycles they codify.

At the most basic level, genre tracing allowed me to identify locations in departmental documents where macroscopic and mesoscopic values and protocols were aligned *or* at odds with one another. Further, I was able to triangulate the interview data found in the next two chapters with faculty's everyday practices related to teacher observation and evaluation. Overall, the work of genre tracing assisted me in problematizing department life around teacher observation and evaluation where guided by the boss texts.

The Bylaws, Agency, and Participation in Teacher Evaluation Processes

In order to address the second question of this chapter regarding how/when the department lives up to its values and is able to achieve its goals, I applied elements of genre tracing as an analytical heuristic to the selected boss texts within the institutional circuitry of Department X. Fortunately, Department X provided a rich site for textual analysis in part because of its extensive documentation of its own processes and protocols. The Bylaws were chief among those texts, both articulating values and driving practices. As previously mentioned, the Bylaws appeared as the primary boss text in terms of department values and procedures in that interviewees often tracked their knowledge of departmental processes directly to this document and located contradictions in their own experiences within the document itself. For example,

though the Bylaws describe the circuits by which faculty teaching is evaluated, several faculty described a feeling of "opacity" in regard to who reads these documents and their impact in their careers and labor.

The Bylaws are 32 pages long and cover a range of topics from academic governance to student grievance procedures. Germane to this discussion are the sections for "unit academic governance," "composition of faculty and voting procedures," "department organization," "committees of the department faculty," and the longest section, "personnel procedures." Using genre tracing, the following sections analyze the particular aspects of departmental agency and participation regarding teacher observation and faculty evaluation in general and look for apparent contradictions and discoordination in the Bylaws of Department X. This analysis seeks to imagine moments when official textual narratives in the department aligned with a labor-equity lens and faculty experience, as well as where there might be ruptures in those alignments.

Departmental Agency, Participatory Culture, and Evaluation Processes

In many ways, Department X can be presented as a model writing department. As described in the previous chapters, there are many equitable structures at work in the labor configuration there, all of which are clearly articulated at several places in the bylaws. Historically, a former department chair shared that changes were made to NT appointment types based on, for example, the knowledge that good teachers need room in their contracts for professional development. Chapter Four discusses another part of how the department functions in line with its values by encouraging a high level of participation from faculty at all levels. Notably, the Bylaws are used in some ways to enfranchise that participation through structures like shared governance. For instance, in section 2.1, the Bylaws state, "the composition of the voting faculty in the Department shall be as follows: all tenure-system faculty and all nontenure-

track faculty who have full-time appointments of at least (1) one year in length" (p. 2). The sections on voting are limited for conflicts of interest, but nonetheless, Department X provides a wide porosity across the hierarchies at work at the location of shared governance. This is important to note because this shared governance and participation across ranks is situated at the site of teacher evaluation and observation via the "merit" and "renewal, promotion and tenure" committees where members of the department review the work of their peers and make recommendations to the department chair.

Conversations around the casualization of teaching labor in writing studies often include calls for engagement in such shared governance and curriculum work across rank (Babb & Wooten, 2017). In this way, Department X serves as an example of how faculty ranks might work together across a broad range of issues, some related to voting and others occurring in committee structures. Committee structures are a key location from which I came to understand the values of egalitarian, collectivist, and participatory structures in the department. For example, faculty across all ranks are eligible to participate in the major committees of the department and in many cases, representation of all ranks is required by the Bylaws: "membership of standing committees shall be drawn from all voting faculty as well as undergraduate students who have declared a major in the Department and graduate students in Rhetoric and Writing" (p. 7). From these structures, it is easy to support the claim that the department values participation, service, egalitarian decision-making, and multiple points of input.

The committees in Department X are often large and representative of all stakeholders. The structures set forth in the Bylaws—especially those regarding decision-making about department activities, hiring, annual merit review, and promotion—directly evince those values. The department configures its decision-making processes through these highly developed series

of committee arrangements alongside the department chair whose role is, more often than not, to also participate in or simply certify committee decisions and to report and advocate departmental needs up the larger institutional hierarchy.

It is important to note here that this work, these structures, processes, and values are *by design*—a fact confirmed by some faculty who had built the department. Consistently, early faculty members indicated a need to build a different kind of writing program than the ones they emerged from. They specifically sought to do so through community-oriented approaches meant to flatten hierarchies and in the interest of collective decision-making principles (personal communication). In this way, Department X provides a model for how a writing studies department might put some of its progressive theoretical, social, and pedagogical imperatives into practice.

Conversely, this participatory set of structures requires an enormous amount of labor beyond teaching, research, and mentoring that must be taken up collectively. Given that the department's tenured ranks are shrinking, much of the burden of leadership falls to those on the tenure line, creating a significant imbalance. The department has worked to engage others in service and administrative work from the AS and NT ranks as a result, but without the ability to offer significant pay or advancement equity for these services.

Tracing Teacher Observation and Evaluation

The personnel section of the Bylaws is the most significant part of the text, totaling 13 pages of the overall 32 pages of the document (pp. 10-23). Here, teacher observation is nested within two evaluation processes: annual merit review and renewal, promotion, and tenure (RPT). In the annual review section, teacher observation is not explicitly mentioned and is captured only by language referring to the submission of "course materials." However, the Bylaws state, "The

annual review will address the activities undertaken per each faculty member's contractual obligations as tenure-system faculty, nontenure-track faculty, or academic specialist." (p. 11) This rank breakdown and appointment type, is, as mentioned, consistent across documents from departmental to university.

Language specific to the role of course observation mostly appears in reference to RPT processes. In particular, it appears in the following sections, in the following ways:

Sections 5.4.8 through 5.4.8.6 refer to tenure-stream promotion processes. This section and its subsections outline how a teaching review committee is formed, the necessary members of the committee, and the protocols it should follow. These protocols include collecting a teaching portfolio of materials from the faculty member, meeting for a pre-observation discussion, the scheduling of two visits with at least two members of the teaching review committee present, a follow-up discussion, and the writing and sharing of a teaching report with the faculty member before it is submitted to the department, at which time the faculty member under review can respond to the report. Finally, the report is sent to both the department chair and chair of the RPT committee. The criteria by which these faculty are evaluated in this report include:

- Organization and presentation of concepts, skills, and reading and discussion materials;
- Interaction with students; and
- Effective and productive use of class period in relation to instructional objectives (p. 15).

Further, teaching committee members are reminded to:

> [R]estrict their reports to the substance of the teaching and instruction according to the areas identified above and to the course instructional materials made available to them. Committee members shall recognize a diversity of instructional methodologies and strategies that can be used to reach common curricular goals Teaching review committees shall not make recommendations of the individual's overall worthiness for reappointment, promotion or tenure. (p. 15)

Here, we see a strong instantiation of departmental agency over the types and value of pedagogical approaches. This process also inscribes a high level of participation from both peer faculty and the faculty member seeking the promotion in a dialectical, processual cycle. Further building faculty agency over the basis of their evaluation is the wide range of materials submitted as part of the teaching portfolio, which includes a teaching statement, syllabi, all relevant instructional materials, "SIRS" (student instructional rating system), and evidence of mentorship and advising of graduate students. Finally, sections 5.4.12.2 and subsections 5.4.12.2.1-5.4.12.2.11 include a list of 11 additional items that may be included in the teaching portfolio and create space for a broad understanding of instruction and curricular involvement.

Teaching review for NT faculty closely mirrors that of TT faculty, with fewer descriptors even though it mirrors the substance of the TT process. Teaching review for the AS rank is not as clear and the Bylaws do not present a protocol for teaching evaluation. Part of this is due to the variable appointment types that AS faculty may hold, wherein some cases they do not teach. Interview work revealed that, when an AS appointment type does include teaching, they are subjected to the same processes. However, without a specific outline for the process, there were elements of uncertainty in this regard for both those conducting the teaching review and those

undergoing it. This indicated moments of discoordination where further textual explanation might serve faculty and support their work.

Levels of contradiction also appeared here at the macroscopic level in the contradiction between department values and the nature of academic hierarchies. Primarily, as with all other documents in the institution, faculty are divided by rank with TT at the top, NT at the bottom, and AS occupying an interstitial and somewhat unknown place in the scheme of things. At the level of textual arrangement in the Bylaws, this is demonstrated in the way TT processes are always described first and at greater length, a feature that can be witnessed in the section on teaching review excerpted above. Even though NT and AS teaching review works inside of the same system and their teaching is evaluated similarly, less time is devoted to the ways they are organizationally evaluated in this document.

A familiar rationale in the department is that different faculty simply serve different functions and, at the levels of research, we might consider giving more space to that notion. Yet, we must also acknowledge that *appointment type* dictates that work, not inherent ability or value. However, when it comes to the evaluation of teaching work, that is very much a shared activity that all faculty engage in. Yet, faculty are only evaluated on their teaching at the time of promotion and fewer promotion opportunities are granted to those off the tenure line, so it stands to reason that those off the tenure line have less opportunity and time than their peers in terms of teaching practice. This was evident in my interview data, as one participant off the tenure line had gone without course observation for eight years. This further leaves power to the SIRS for the cyclical, annual review moments of teaching evaluation.

A shift in design of the Bylaws in a more concentric schema fitting of disciplinary and departmental values would require a shift away from alignment with university structures.

However, it is one place the department might consider shaping their own activities with teaching as a central, valued, and shared activity across ranks. The department has already begun this work by inscribing a co-equivalent process for faculty at each rank, so it seems creating a category by which all faculty share teaching evaluation regardless of rank may better serve the values of Department X in ways that acknowledge the work they share as colleagues and disciplinary participants in writing studies. Indeed, teaching is central and shared, and teaching evaluation happens regardless of rank. It could thus logically be recognized as such in our document structures rather than housed under categories of differentiation based on one's place in the hierarchy.

Yet, here, we see instantiated in a departmental document one of the persistent, unsolved "wicked problems" of a changing academy where work is, in many ways, shared but our conceptual understanding of the roles faculty play is built across varying degrees of agency, participation, and autonomy dictated by rank itself. This leads to a larger set of questions revealed in the Bylaws: that of the function of faculty at each rank. In our current system, the autonomy, agency, and labor of some is enabled by the labor of others (Ahmed, 2017, p. 86) and further, the Bylaws constrain others' labor through designations of their work and their material conditions.

Textual data here revealed that NT and AS faculty are what I'd call instrumental, in that they serve a particular functional purpose and their work appears as interchangeable with others of their rank. For example, the AS Handbook describes that "academic specialists are assigned to duties and responsibilities performed by faculty members but with a more narrow [sic] scope and focus" (p. 5). Though all faculty levels are described as part of the institutional mission, TT faculty descriptors more elaborately identify research, teaching, and professional development,

as tied to the autonomous function of the individual. In contrast, NT and AS ranks are meant to directly serve the institution, its mission, and curriculum delivery. Tenure-stream faculty don't have as highly fixed sets of roles. Their appointment types are sometimes flexible, as their research is wide ranging and their scholarly and teaching activities are extensively described in official documents to allow the broadest possible range of activities in their work. Meanwhile, in many ways, AS and NT work is contained and rewarded within institutional boundaries. TT faculty also serve in and are rewarded in other spheres like knowledge production, national engagement and leadership, and subject matter expertise. The Bylaws inscribe this set of functions clearly as do the AS and faculty handbooks. This is where the opportunity for career trajectories exists and the current system thus arguably engenders limits to that trajectory for all ranks off the tenure line.

Yet, work like service must be done and with an ever-shrinking tenure class, as the work of service and administration, along with teaching, is now additionally more broadly shared by those in the department working off the tenure line. These faculty are also actively engaged in research and curricular innovation and development. Yet, as with all those working off the tenure line in universities, the link between that work and career advancement is markedly unclear. For example, one research participant for this study noted that, though she may achieve "assistant professor" status as NT faculty, it is not a designation that is portable outside the institution (personal communication). This reality and the everyday work of those grappling with these issues appeared at length throughout my interview work for this dissertation. As such, the following two chapters are devoted to a much more robust discussion of these complexities, which I briefly outline here as a contradiction given that they appear in the texts and, therefore, the ruling relations of Department X.

Bridging Disciplinary Values, Institutional Citizenship, and Hierarchy: The FAIS Supplement

The FAIS Supplement is a four-page PDF document distributed by the department chair each year. As previously explained, it prompts faculty to compile their annual review work. The document is meant to support faculty in the submission of their materials for review through the university system as well as to be a way for generating materials the departmental merit review committee will use for evaluation and determining annual merit raises.

As one of the few explicitly summative evaluation moments in Department X, it is the subject of department meetings each year, lore of early semester stress, a departmental list-serv thread, and an annual review "write-in" hosted by the WPAs. It is worth noting here that teacher observation itself is positioned in the department as highly formative, especially for NTT faculty, and often is explained as something to be completed to be free from any summative components (renewal, promotion, advancement). Consequently, it rarely appears as an explicit element of the annual review. It may appear, however, in the narrative faculty offer about their teaching; but again, it is limited because only new faculty or those going up for promotion receive an observation. If a person is receiving a promotion, the observation will appear as a letter submitted by the observer and does not reside with the faculty member under review. It is thus not likely to be used directly for annual review purposes. Though reported as highly valued in Department X, questions arose here about the role classroom observation actually plays in faculty evaluation beyond the formative concerns of whether or not it is consistently linked to the yearly evaluation of teaching practices. This lack of a "closed loop" is discussed further in the following chapter where faculty exhibited confusion regarding the value and role of classroom observation in their labor.

In addition, the FAIS Supplement does not explicitly address course observation. It is instead made up of screenshots and visuals as well as textual explanations of the documents faculty must submit and explicit instructions for what kinds of activities to submit in what location in the larger form. It is a highly procedural document and operates mesoscopically with sentences like, "Under the 'report' menu, be sure to upload your most recent copy of your CV" or "At the 'load' menu, enter your percentage of effort for the past calendar year (use your contract for precise numbers)" (p. 1).

Using genre tracing, I located discoordination in the FAIS supplement in two primary areas. The first is in how teaching is positioned in the form. Specifically, the FAIS supplement offers this instruction on page 2:

> 'Teaching comments' is the place for you to include your teaching narrative. You may wish to include discussion that contextualizes your courses and evaluations. Consider addressing instructional goals and approaches; innovative methods or curricular development; or significant effects of instruction. If you have received instructional awards and peer recognition, mention them here.

Teaching narratives are central to departmental evaluation yet, the form itself must be adapted to meet those goals. The context of the FAIS is important; it was developed by engineering faculty and because the university recognized it as an official way to submit reporting on faculty activities, the department adopted and then supplemented it. Moments like the one above wherein teaching portions are entered as a separate and additional "comment" for faculty contradicts department and disciplinary values around teaching as a critical part of what our faculty do. The discoordination here in the goal-oriented mesoscopic level appears when faculty

must move a central part of what they do into a supplemental "comment box," which is a further misalignment between departmental and institutional values.

In fact, though the FAIS is a university-sanctioned document, it does not reflect other institutional documents like the Faculty Handbook, which clearly locates teaching as a central part of the institutional mission to provide "outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students in order to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders" (p. 5). This document, which requires cyclical and repeated action and serves the goal-oriented purpose of yearly renewal and merit evaluation, therefore appears as discoordinated with the practice of faculty, the department, and the institution itself.

Further, though classroom observation as a practice is a teacher evaluation tool composed by fellow expert teachers, it is rarely mentioned explicitly in any institutional document and the FAIS is no exception. However, the student evaluation forms, or "SIRS," are very much required for submission. As mentioned, much study has been devoted to the unreliability, bias, and fraught nature of student course evaluations yet they consistently appear as a quantitative measure of teaching effectiveness nationally, institutionally and departmentally. In fact, the university handbook's policy on SIRS has not been updated since 1979. This presents yet another opportunity for change and for the development of more teacher-centered modes of faculty evaluation that might take place at the department level.

The second moment of discoordination occurs in how the FAIS document attempts to flatten hierarchies and fails to recognize the differing instrumental roles of varying ranks in faculty. This is a central concern and question throughout this study and is also discussed in reference to the Bylaws. For instance, what types of collective work do we engage in as members

of a university? Is it more equitable to apply congruent systems of evaluation for faculty of different ranks in an effort to suggest equal value or does this further create misalignment given the different activities they engage in and result only in superficial recognition of value across those ranks? Nearly every other institutional document revolves around the descriptive separation of faculty by rank, with TT faculty given the most discussion and engagement in the broadest range of activities. Yet, the FAIS does not mention rank and instead only captures the broad range of work *TT faculty* regularly perform as nodes of reporting and evaluation.

In this case, perhaps the simple answer may be the most obvious one, as the FAIS was developed in a different discipline with different values. However, these underlying questions persist in relation to value, work, career advancement, and reward given that interview data confirmed those off the tenure line have an uneasy relationship with the FAIS in regard to their work.

Disciplinary articulations of teaching aside, the discoordination here additionally appears as a lack of recognition of different faculty appointment types. For instance, the FAIS document asks for documentation across the categories of research, teaching, and service but continues to give primacy to research activities, and secondarily, for chairing graduate committees, both of which are typically the purview of those in the tenure system. It therefore inscribes a particular model of the university led by research faculty, suggesting the primary currency of the institution when, in fact, teaching might be said to be the most common activity for most faculty. This is particularly true in Department X, a writing department wherein nearly every incoming student in the university takes at least one course. Those off the tenure line are then effectively given a taxing choice in composing. They must either participate in research and service—both tasks for which they are not being paid to fulfill the areas of the yearly evaluation—or they must assume

they are being evaluated on a set of activities that their appointment type does not encompass, or that their materials will always be insufficient. Either way, it is clear in the FAIS supplement that formally at least, the structure of evaluation best supports that of tenure-stream work types. For the largest numerical sector in Department X, which is made up of some 50 faculty working off the tenure line, contracts are 90/10. As such, the FAIS supplement does not accurately reflect the shared work of most of the department's members.

Rather than simply arguing for bifurcated systems of faculty evaluation, it is worth asking whether such a move would be suitable in this particular context. Would it further inscribe hierarchies *or* allow for contextualized evaluation across appointment type? Is there a flexible, responsive evaluation measure for recognizing a wide range of faculty activities that doesn't assume the primacy of research alone and does better to recognize service and teaching? What would a yearly evaluation measure that isn't tied so closely to rank even look like? Feminist scholarship is a useful frame here for considering *why* to make changes to this set of documents. Sara Ahmed argues that "descriptive work is conceptual work," (p. 13) and reminds us that feminism helps us "make sense of what persists" (p. 12). In institutions, hierarchies are the most persistent features despite the many economic and ideological changes our departments, disciplines, and universities face. Yet, as I have argued throughout, Department X is a powerfully agentive space. It may thus be an ideal place from which to take up feminist labor-equity oriented approaches for mutual support, aid, and collective imaginings of evaluation and observation, especially in ways that act on that most basic feminist principle of resisting structures that reinscribe white, patriarchal, capitalist, and normative systems of value.

Systems of Remedy and Alignment

To answer the third question that guided this chapter, that of "what is to be done," I turn again to a heuristic approach over a prescriptive one. In locating some real strengths at work in Department X, my hope is that this inquiry driven approach to systems of alignment will reveal changes that could be made in the department's institutional circuitry to achieve a more functional relationship between goals and actions. As with most institutional bodies, Department X is mission driven and values autonomy in its evaluative structures—these are its strengths. Additionally, Department X works in a paradigm that enacts significant agency over its own function in the larger institution in values-based and action-oriented ways, and it also works to align to larger institutional discourses. For instance, after examining institutional documents at a variety of locations, it became clear that, to them, alignment also appears in departmental genres and that some features of departmental functioning were echoed in larger institutional discourses or resulted from them. One example is clear language that appeared in three documents at the programmatic, departmental, and institutional levels. In the WPA's teacher observation protocol, as well as in the departmental bylaws and the university faculty handbook, the texts articulate a key part of faculty evaluation as self-identified goals and strategies for future growth. This is but one example among many that illustrates how alignment between departmental "macro" and "meso" (Spinuzzi, 2002) practices aligned with institutional mission.

However, it was also evident in department documentation that the department exerted disciplinary and community values over their yearly and day-to-day practices in ways that were far more progressive and capacious than large-scale institutional textual discourses. As such, this is a location from which further changes might be built. For example, the FAIS Supplement supports some level of departmental autonomy. As another example, the Bylaws outline a

notably wide-ranging and broad conception of scholarly research than does the language available in official university documents. They specifically state "collaborative work is to be valued as a legitimate form of inquiry and production and as co-equal with single authorship" (p. 18). The university's conception of scholarship continues to remain more focused on single or lead authorship, even as disciplinary practices across units demand more and more collaboration and resource sharing. Moreover, the description of what encompasses pedagogical activity is capacious and well-articulated in the Bylaws of Department X.

Further, Department X behaves rhetorically in its documents in sophisticated ways by reflecting both disciplinary values and those of its local community. In other words, a felt sense of concern with equity, fairness, and flexibility is evident across its documents from graduate application materials to tenure and promotion processes. LaFrance (2019) argues that "texts mediate institutional discourse, regulating and authorizing the practices that are taken up by individuals." Echoing Smith (2001), LaFrance also notes that "the power of texts particularly arises out of their replicability—they persist over time and space—and exhibit a seemingly fixed nature" (p. 43). And yet, texts are not ever completely fixed, and our interactions with them are still less fixed. With this knowledge, Department X might shape a set of questions to address the grammars of hierarchy that persist in the moments of course observation and faculty evaluation. The following types of inquiry arose as especially salient:

- In what ways might departmental institutional circuits/boss texts be re-developed to consider both agency and participation and align faculty evaluation to those values?
- What potential does the department have to develop evaluation documents that move extra-locally in ways that better align with their shared vision?

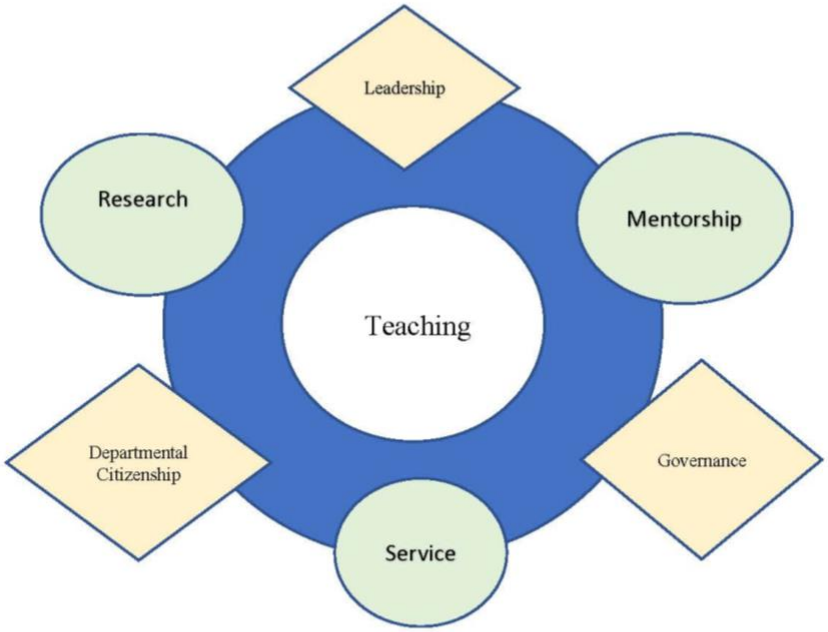
- How can Department X reorient to the central concerns of its shared work and adapt evaluation structures toward that end?

Thinking along these lines, two primary sites of change *might* be considered that correspond with the above questions and that would easily move across both macro and mesoscopic levels of activity.

The first is a reconceptualization of the Bylaws to center shared activities over categories of rank as the primary locations from which faculty work takes place and is evaluated. Chief among those shared activities is the work of teaching. Imagine a set of Bylaws that centers the elements of its shared work as the nexus of activity and that differentiates rank in somewhat intentionally marginalized ways that flatten hierarchies and provide spaces for more participatory and equitable work across a diverse body of faculty. Such a change could build on Department X's already progressive values and further support the collective aspects of the work and work processes of its members. For example, how might AS faculty be better integrated into evaluation systems? Figure 2 below provides one possible activity-based schema. This schema is based on Frietzche, Hart-Davidson, and Long's (2017) visual model for "Values, outcomes and activities of intellectual leadership," which imagines university activity as shared across rank, college, appointment type, staff, and administration. Though I have re-contextualized it to evaluation processes, their model is capacious and builds on both the university's mission and echoes some of the values in the department's boss texts. I have specifically included "Values… leadership" in full in Appendix F and it can also be located here: http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/y9cb-6b22

Figure 2: Schema for New Evaluation Model

Faculty Evaluation Schema, By Activity



Current, by rank evaluation categories:

Tenure Stream	Non-Tenure Track	Academic Specialist
Research Teaching Service	Teaching Professional Development	Teaching Administration/Service

The second node of change that could occur would be the development of a humanities or writing studies based FAIS-type system that better reflects values, practices, and differences across rank. This system would speak more clearly to the institution and allow multiple forms of work to be valued in evaluation. It would present opportunities on multiple levels for collaboration and articulation of the values of humanities-based approaches to fulfilling the larger institutional mission. Course observation could and likely should play a bigger role in this system. Rebuilding or revising the text by making a university sanctioned FAIS system that

reflects values of the humanities and writing studies would making obsolete the extensive supplement. This move would enact a level of agency in and resistance to the hierarchical evaluative practices in which this boss text is imbricated.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken up how textual instantiations of departmental discourse are both authoritative and permeable. In doing so, I have sought to discover how these texts resided within and across faculty work and work processes, as well as how they have acted on, interacted with, or pushed back against related texts. The following chapter features primary interview data and works to further explain how the boss texts in this chapter were perceived and taken up in faculty members' practices. In accordance with my primary methodology, I have used this chapter to examine these factors in an effort to broadly understand institutional circuitry and the ruling relations of Department X. I found the two centrally identified features of action in the department, *agency* and *participation*, were enacted by "boss texts." I additionally found that faculty's everyday work choices and how they were interpellated into shared concerns were also dynamic, which further complicates our notions of how we put our goals into action toward more equitable labor practices.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEFINING OBSERVATION AS ATOOL OF EVALUATION IN THE DEPARTMENT

Introduction

This chapter, the second of three analytical chapters in this dissertation, builds on the work of the previous one by analyzing primary interviews with 13 members of Department X across the ranks of graduate student (TA), non-tenure-track faculty (NT), academic specialists (AS), and tenure-track faculty (TT). The previous chapter's discussion explored moments of discoordination and contradiction in the mission driven, values-oriented stance of department boss texts (i.e., the department Bylaws and FAIS supplement) and the everyday practices associated with them. This chapter and the one following triangulates that textual data to provide a more direct understanding of faculty members' standpoints, primarily for those working off the tenure line. As institutional ethnography (IE) research looks for dynamic tensions across an institutional "problematic," this chapter continues that analysis by accounting for the everyday experiences of faculty work in the department based on their own empirical descriptions.

While not meant to be included as complete representations or as objective perceptions of Department X, the interview data illustrates a key feature of the central problematic of this study that speaks to the broader ruling relations present in the site. I came to informally call this the "means well" paradigm. The paradigm appeared to lead to a set of practices meant to support equity and quality in the department through the exertion of agency over its processes and structures and to further accomplish its goals by interpolating a high degree of faculty participation in the department's everyday activities. Seemingly, however, the department was unable to fully attend to persistent structural problems around labor, many of which arose at locations that simultaneously acted as agentive and participatory. Interview data and analysis revealed this the most clearly.

According to my interviews, much of this tension was present at the moment of evaluation for promotion and annual merit increases, even as all participants consistently noted an awareness of equitable values and structures in the department. None who participated as the subject of course observation noted dissatisfaction with the motives of their colleagues or even with the department itself, yet they all noted navigating difficulties related to the evaluation of their teaching and other sites of their work. Specifically, participants located tensions in their work around the *value* and *impact* of the assessments regarding long-term work trajectories and contradictions in the well-meaning departmental culture.

To briefly reiterate, the interviews illuminated the problematic as: *Department X seeks to build equitable structures that include shared governance, teaching support, and faculty evaluation, but its members continue to struggle with hierarchical structures in which labor, reward, and career trajectories are unevenly distributed across rank*. It should be noted, however, that there are many qualifiers to this statement, and, like any interview work, the process was full of complexity, thick description, nuance, and multiple standpoints. I contend that Department X provided a rich site for uncovering the more granular tensions related to labor equity and faculty evaluation *because* of this complexity and the department's awareness of how to successfully observe and evaluate faculty.

Accordingly, this chapter takes up the first part of two discussions of the interview data. While interviewing as a method presents data in subjective, reflective, and personal modes, it also presents knowledge of participants' lived experiences. Together, they represent standpoints from varying structural and social locations in an institution. Based in these stories, this chapter more closely maps the practices related to course observation from a central question: what kind of an evaluation tool is observation in Department X and how is it experienced as such? Though

there is a body of scholarship on the multiple measures of faculty evaluation in institutions (Dayton, 2017), I present a more empirical, descriptive data set from faculty experiencing the process themselves to determine what kind of tool observation might be in the larger landscape of their work trajectories. Given this, I examined moments when participants described the tool of observation as they came to understand and use it in Department X.

Part of the impetus for this was to work definitionally before analyzing narratives more critically. The following chapter is grounded in the many observations and evaluations I experienced as a WPA and in how I came to this work and these questions through my own implications in structures of labor (in)equity. In that previous work, I found observations to be both an occasion for conversation *and* a disciplining tool. Over the years of acting as WPA, my relationships surrounding observation became increasingly complex. I became friends with a number of my colleagues, sharing time with them and their families and advocating for students. Yet, none of this could prevent a screaming phone call or personal, irate message on social media when they felt they had been "wronged" by my observation report or how it then appeared in their yearly evaluation. The boundaries were both fixed and permeable—collective and personal—and navigating them became increasingly difficult even as it grew more familiar from year to year. I sought a clear purpose for my work and to understand how it functioned within the department and institution, as do the participants whose stories I represent here.

Anchoring Standpoints

In many cases, participants implicitly defined observation by mapping its impact or value in their work and work processes. Collectively, participants' understandings portray a nuanced picture that evinces the social coordination and ruling relations of the department. This picture is very much tied to participants' standpoints from experiencing the process of course observation

and evaluation and was significantly located in their departmental ranks. These thick descriptions speak particularly to the value faculty participants ascribed to that experience and how they saw evaluation playing out in the complex landscape of their working lives. The discussion that follows first engages interview analysis with those of the anchor standpoint, NT and AS. I then contrast this discussion with an outline of the official processes of evaluation and observation and interview data from both administrators and graduate students. By discussing the official process of observation in Department X as well as administrative and graduate perspectives, the ruling relations of course observation emerged. In addition, centering the social coordination of observation revealed the values and views of those experiencing or making sense of their course observations.

While standpoint has been previously discussed in this dissertation in terms of its roots in materialist feminist theory and its value as a grounding for feminist research, I return to it here in the specific context of IE. Janet Rankin (2017) rationalizes the researcher exigency of taking up standpoint in IE as:

> Standpoint informants will know about their work both "ideologically" (the theories and explanations that circle discursively that they use to name and explain their problems) and "materially" (the empirical data critical to an IE analysis—what people know about what goes on, knowledge gained from doing the work). Most often, these "two modes of knowing" (Smith, 1987, p. 82) are incongruent. The IE researcher probes into the knowledge of the standpoint informants and positions it analytically. The standpoint informants' knowledge is not valorized, made special, or even accepted as "true." Standpoint informants are positioned as "expert knowers" about what happens in their daily work; however, their knowledge is examined for its social construction and its embedded

> contradictions. What is regarded as "true" is the material description of things that happen—that loosely agreed upon "world in common." (p. 2)

Thus, the interview work both developed out of and investigated the central problematic of this study and led to several questions worth considering in the context of Department X: What might faculty standpoints at differing ranks tell us about the nature of faculty observation and evaluation? What slippages, disjunctures, or adaptations might particular academic ranks experience or engage in the process of course observation and evaluation? What role do those tensions play in yearly evaluations and long-term promotion activities?

Ultimately, this chapter begins the task of accounting for how course observation and evaluation as a practice plays a role in the lives of those in Department X working off the tenure line as revealed by *their* stories, choices, and conceptions of their work. As with all IE, it works "to find traces of ruling relations within the descriptions of everyday work—those occasions when the work being done at the standpoint location does not seem to be supporting the interests of the people *there*" (Rankin, 3). Therefore, the hope is to reveal otherwise unseen locations of power and agency surrounding the processes of renewal and promotion in Department X.

Observation for NT and AS: Tools of Advancement and Employment

As mentioned in Chapter Two, a major part of the work of this dissertation was composing self-reflexive memos in which to ground my perceptions and positions as a researcher. I guessed from the outset that observation plays a role in Department X's faculty evaluation practices from a labor equity standpoint and that there were likely to be slippages across ranks, narratives, privileges, and boss texts. Yet, due to the positive nature of the overall narrative surrounding observation in the department, this analysis needed to resist what Smith

(2005) calls "institutional capture[7]." As such, researcher reflection helped me more fully explore the problematic beyond a simple binary.

Rather than refute that positive narrative, the following section investigates the more dynamic tensions associated with the tool of observation in Department X. It moves beyond those (still important) positive stories to flesh out the standpoints of teachers who are *not* directly tasked with carrying out observation or upholding ruling relations of the space. I focus on these constituents as those who are "hooked" into the social relations structured by the experience of *being* observed.

Working with a somewhat taxonomic approach, I examined interview transcripts from those working off the tenure line for moments where they specifically defined the experience or value of observation. Though there was variance across accounts, the particular object of the observation practice itself appeared in fairly consistent terms, which I characterized as: (1) "benign requirements of employment" and (2) "tools for advancement." As categories, these were permeable in some ways and overlapped, and intersected with each other. Much of the definitional sense-making appeared in moments when participants inferred value or pointed to what they had hoped an observation would or could do. I detail these perspectives through selected moments of our conversations that defined the nature of observation as a tool experienced and characterized by participants off the tenure line. They will be discussed as such in the following excerpts from interviews with five faculty members working in NT and AS roles in Department X. This was done in the hopes of providing a more nuanced picture of "the world

[7] Rankin (2017) paraphrases this term and describes Smith's conception as being when a researcher "begins converting informants' accounts of their experience into the terms of an institutional discourse that constitutes people and their activities as the objects of professional or managerial knowledge. In all of these cases, institutional relations and the social organization of experience slips from view. (p. 110)"

in common" instead of simply reading official texts from the institution or speaking to administrators, whose standpoints hold certain institutional power and investments.

It is also worth reiterating that those who offered to speak with me were most frequently those who were visible in the department when engaging what some called "stealth requirements" of institutional citizenship. Specifically, they were active in professional development activities in the department above the minimum requirements, contributed to discussions on department culture, participated in working groups or on committees, took on administrative and curriculum development work, and were frequently active as scholars. Though their voices are not necessarily broadly representative of all approaches to work off the tenure line in Department X, they are reflective of those who are actively engaged in the social coordination of the space, particularly in regard to the departmental value of participatory culture discussed in the previous chapter.

Benign Requirement of Employment

As all interview work was conducted using an artifact-based reflective protocol, interviewees were asked to bring something related to their observation evaluations. Many thus produced the notes from their observer or, as is the case with the first participant I discuss here, an email communication with an observer. Many noted that they found what they could or weren't sure where to locate texts that might relate to the observation directly. None mentioned referring back to observer notes on a regular basis or using them in their promotion materials or teaching reflections. Instead, these were items they had to search their files for and dig up.

I came to see this phenomenon in two ways. One is that, as a formative experience, the observation itself isn't visibly portable in any particular object and that therefore its value may be more subtle. The other potential cause is that observation is not highly valued by those who

are being observed. I do not think either of these potential causes are exactly right and that they perhaps oversimplify the role of observation in faculty life in Department X. Yet nonetheless, it was consistently difficult for NT and AS participants to explicitly mark how a formative observation event either improved their teaching *or* directly contributed to their advancement. Hence, my conceptualization of observation here is based on thick descriptions from the interviews that generally deemed it to be a "benign requirement" when it acted *only* as a formative activity. However, even when conducted as a summative observation event, participants noted a lack of clarity on the impacts of those events, as they are not privy to final letters and were uncertain what role the letters play for those reading them.

The first participant response is from a faculty member who had *not yet* been observed for promotion. Instead, they were observed as a new hire. In spite of this, consistent themes emerged among other NT and AS participants who were observed for advancement. This participant noted their observation had followed the protocols outlined in official documents in that they sent a few sentences about the class session to the observer, were observed, and had a follow up discussion. They characterized the observation in this way: "well, I had to be observed, that was like, part of the 'gig' (laughs) so I knew that it was coming." They went on to explain how they spent 15 minutes constructing the email to the observer and to discuss, as others did, how one observation doesn't say much about their overall teaching and that the feedback they received did not necessarily impact their teaching. They explained they relied more heavily on peer interaction for improving pedagogy.

When I asked if they could link the observation to their career trajectory in the department, they described that the relationship between the observation and "merit" increase was "indirect." Their voice took on a sarcastic, somewhat confounded tone when they explained

that their merit letter, "by the way, had a single line about my classroom instruction. Right." Participant 1 assigned no blame to any individual or entity, however, and instead expressed that building a robust culture of observation in the department to support pedagogy would be difficult given faculty time constraints. Nonetheless, acknowledging an appointment type that is 90 percent teaching, this lack of feedback appeared troubling for the participant.

Though the other participants I interviewed off the tenure line spoke to the role of observation in their promotion work, several provided similar descriptions of the observation-as-tool that evinced the feeling of it as simply benign and necessary. For instance, one participant said, "My observations have always been good," but went on to describe their experience as, "So, like, so-and-so and so-and-so would have to come to the same class and then talk about it and then write about it and then share a report with me. At which point I am allowed to "respond" (starts laughing). The whole thing, it just reminds me of some weird religious ritual from the 16th century, it's so bizarre."

Another reported that they felt no nervousness about the observation because they have, "really generous and wonderful colleagues who also recognize that you know, I do bring a certain set of knowledges and practices and experience [to the work]." Yet another imagined the possible potentials for observation and what kind of tool it *could* be: "I guess if I reflected on it, in theory, if I go back and look at my syllabus in the fall, I could reflect on the ways my experience in this moment created something for me. But the reality is that I changed my syllabus in the fall based on the *teaching* I did in the classroom…it came more out of the act of teaching this class than the specifics of the observation."

As with this last excerpt, all participants noted the rich *potential* they hoped for in observation practices as a tool for improving pedagogy and opportunities for advancement. None

characterized it as punitive or disciplinary, yet simultaneously, none directly tracked changes in their pedagogical practices based on observation in the department, unless they were the ones performing them, which I discuss later in this chapter.

Tools for Advancement

Tracking the role of observation in professional advancement through faculty perceptions in Department X and how faculty defined that advancement was the most puzzling part of this dissertation study. However, making sense of this practice with participants was some of the richest conversation I shared with them. These conversations allowed for a deeper understanding of how participants see themselves positioned in a hierarchy and the roles they play in the department's mission and culture. In turn, our conversations helped surface one of the study's central ideas, what I call "long-term precarity," which I further discuss in the following chapter. Participants' responses built the groundwork for developing this idea, particularly as I attempted to illuminate how they struggled to make sense of the tool of observation in their work, even if they were sometimes better able to define it ideologically. For example, one participant, who identified as a scholar of teaching, characterized evaluation as a professional assessment activity grounded in disciplinary ruling relations. He found rich meaning in that work, such that he positioned evaluation as highly positive. Yet, he immediately noted he hadn't been observed for the better part of a decade, so it remained, it seemed, an ideological stance, albeit a well-developed and important one.

The other four participants who had been more regularly observed characterized the experience differently. Two of the four participants generally referred to observation and their evaluations for promotion as a "rubber stamp" process. One described it this way:

> My experience of both the observation and this entire process has been that it's *rubber stamping.* And I am simultaneously thankful that I am, within our department at least, valued enough that it's like, yes, just push [them] through, and very frustrated that this moment that is supposed to, in some way, offer useful feedback is actually not at all that, but is still all the stress of that, right?

Another participant used the same metaphor somewhat differently and characterized observation and its role in their evaluation as:

> To me, it's like, just write the…report and *rubber stamp* it through, and then maybe I will have a tiny little sliver more power with which to effect change. And I'm not certain how common that is. I mean, it's just pro forma and yet we all act like we're curing cancer. We're not doing that.

So, while some saw observation as symbolic as with the above participant's notions, conversely, two other NT participants linked observation to "stealth requirements," or what we might call the *hidden curriculum* of advancement in the department. They hoped being visible, participating in extra activities and so forth *might* give them access to opportunities in the department beyond their appointment types. They also hoped being observed by a WPA and doing well in the observation would increase confidence in their work and open new doors to them. A participant who had been asked to pick up extra teaching work on short notice explained:

> The position I am currently in, in which I am operating on the bench, I don't think this is a permanent situation but I think it is a direct result of this observation. I think [it] maybe [is] not direct, maybe indirect, but I think it is a result of this observation… [In] the conversation we had afterwards, the referencing of like, "I noticed you know your

> students' names," he noticed I knew them despite the fact that I had *just* jumped in the classroom. He noticed I had sort of created confidence in the class that had been lost. He noticed a series of things, that I wasn't the only person who was covering classes. But I noticed in regard to that, I mean, that combined with the fact that I had very directly expressed interest in other kinds of work beyond just teaching and researching. I think it has had the result of, my guess is that the observation led towards this being a part of my job.

This sentiment referred to administrative interviews in which a teacher was selected to plan a professional development activity for others based on their classroom teaching during observation. Thus, this participant's guess was an apt one. Yet, the clear line of advancement was more elusive for this participant, as they did not seem to be able to locate a formal structure accompanying it.

Finally, the interviews surfaced the persistent tension between formative and summative uses of observation for both my participants and me. Department X has a rich culture of best practices around formative observation. According to the administrative interviews and relevant department documents, this culture is guided by reflexive, goal-driven, teacher-centered, pedagogical, and research-based principles. It was therefore curious that, again and again, those being observed desired more summative feedback in *both* the summative and formative moments of observation.

Consistent with generalized understandings of observation in writing studies, the participants also noted a performative aspect to the activity and defined their roles as a "performance" in the moment of observation. This seemed to indicate that they weren't going to purposely perform badly in observation, which may have foreclosed the potential for feedback.

They instead noted that, when struggling with classroom issues, they turned to peers to solve them. In some cases, participants noted that the most generative conversations they had about teaching took place outside the department itself—i.e., outside of interpersonal contexts and departmental hierarchies of labor, status, and opportunity.

What Kind of Tool Is This?

Interview participants in this study worked to make sense of the purposes, impacts, potentials, and drawbacks of course observation as a tool in their working lives. Broadly, interviews revealed a continuum of responses including embodied discomfort from having another person in the room, a positive experience overall, a benign necessary component of employment, and for graduate students, a tool of professionalization. Though the standpoints of those working off the tenure line (NTT & AS) are the primary focus of this chapter, the following portion of my discussion below also describes the "typical" process of observation in the boss texts and aligns with ruling relations in the department. In addition, I present some administrative and graduate student perceptions to provide context to the range of experiences from interview data and to compile a composite, distributed understanding of the work and work processes taking place in Department X.

Social Coordination, Observation, and Promotion

According to the Bylaws and triangulation between surveys and interviews, formal course observation in Department X happens for: graduate students in their first semester as TAs; NT faculty in their first semester of teaching; and any faculty member going up for promotion of any kind. Furthermore, some participants noted that informal, ad hoc, peer-to-peer observation activities also happen in Department X. These are not the subject of this study as they have not, according to department boss texts, historically contributed in any formal way to faculty or

graduate students' material working conditions and were not codified in the ruling relations of the site. The formal process of observation outlined in the Bylaws, however, acts as socially coordinated, as it "hooks" participants into ways of knowing and doing through actions and texts generated in their work and work processes.

Additionally, formal course observation is coordinated by peers or supervisors. For example, TAs are observed by one of three writing program administrators in the FYW program, or in the P2W curriculum if they are teaching any of the professional, technical, or UX/XA courses. In these cases, observations are performed by either the director or associate director of the program. NT, AS, and TT faculty are observed when they "go up" for a promotion, whether they teach in FYW, P2W, the graduate program, or in affiliated departments. These observations are conducted by "peers" or supervisors. Such moments of promotion can include things like "Des B" status for NT, as well as "continuing" status and later "senior academic specialist" for AS. TT faculty move from "assistant" to "associate" to "full" professor, and the Bylaws of the department stipulate that every rank be observed for each promotion, as well as in what ways and how (see Chapter Two).

Unsurprisingly, interview work revealed a more complex picture of Department X's observation practices than the one outlined in the institutional circuits (texts). This perceptual difference perhaps speaks to the nuance and complexity of our working lives in writing programs and institutions. For example, interview data revealed both a consistency in practice across those observing other teachers for both formative and summative purposes *and* unique divergences in those processes. For non-promotion observations, the most consistent practices appeared as: the subject of the observation sending an email or materials (syllabus, lesson plan, etc.) to their observer; the observer attending one course session; the subject and observer conducting a

follow-up meeting to discuss the observation notes and to engage in a "goal setting" activity guided by the observation data. Interestingly, interviews revealed that some administrators were uncertain whether there were shared practices in the department, yet the data indicated that, though it may be loose and perhaps not guided by an official process in a boss text, the process itself is fairly consistent across the department and across programs.

For promotion purposes, the observation process is "officially" guided by the Bylaws, which stipulate the formation of a "teaching review committee" and multiple observations over a period of time. In addition, a teaching letter is to be drafted and the subject of the observation has an opportunity to respond to the draft. The final text is then sent upward through the departmental and college circuitry as an object of evaluation for promotion. Both interviews and the Bylaws triangulated this as an official, codified process. Yet, no one who reported conducting observations and writing promotion letters referred to the specific areas of teaching evaluation laid out in the Bylaws (i.e., organization and presentation of concepts, skills, reading, and discussion materials; interaction with students; effective and productive use of class period in relation to instructional objectives). Rather, those interviewed reflected focus on method, particularly an ethnographic, observational approach to observation in an effort to be "teacher centered" or "inquiry driven," or more so to have the opportunity to say good things about colleagues.

In terms of texts associated with observation for promotion, the teaching letter accompanies a larger set of documents the faculty member is supposed to compile. Depending on rank and appointment type, the promotion packet may include copies of a CV, SIRS, a teaching and/or scholarly narrative, evidence of scholarship, service, curriculum development, advising, administrative work, grants awarded, etc. The RPT committee, chair, dean, and provost

are eventually given access to these materials and later, if a promotion is awarded, the subject is notified by letter or, in some cases, email.

I describe this process in the most general terms with a few counterpoints, as an outline of the social coordination required by the department's observation and evaluation process refers to social coordination as: "the established ways of doing, knowing, and being co-constituted by people who participate in an established social order." As LaFrance (2019) also notes, "when our actions are 'coordinated,' we may find ourselves engaging in complex actions with others across time and space" (p. 38). In many cases, this involved coordinated process extracts that broadly distributed labor from a number of institutional participants required to conduct, review, evaluate, document, and engage the promotion process for peers, supervisors, department chairs, deans, and provosts. This may arguably demonstrate part of a "culture of care," which affirms the "means well" narrative that repeatedly appeared in interviews and that also appears in the larger institutional discourse.

Yet, the lived experiences and perceptions of observation and evaluation did not always match the official processes and could not, it seems, be overdetermined by them. Instead, the processes appeared as somewhat flexible in faculty's lived experience, frequently "opaque," and at times unclear in their impacts and purposes. For example, a number of responses emerged from participants about the process itself across rank. As one participant noted,

> I don't know what to make of my observation experience here. I was observed for reappointment. And it was very ad hoc. So, our Bylaws say one thing and what happens actually in practice was a whole other, *both times*. The Bylaws weren't followed for either one of my observations. So that has always been concerning to me, and I often

> reflect on how it didn't make me feel insecure but it also didn't give me a lot of confidence in the process in general.

Another participant described the process of their teaching review outside the codified process, explaining, "it is [also] worth noting that my teaching committee that just observed me never received any of the materials I created for them." This participant, like most interviewees, avoided ascribing any blame to colleagues in these processes. Instead, they simply located such instances and described them as a byproduct of everyone being "weighed down in service," which makes it difficult to meet all the Bylaws' regulations. This divergence speaks to IE's notion of ruling relations where they:

> Coordinate what people *know* about what is happening—even if that knowledge does not quite match what is known from *being there*. Often vested in people's work with texts, ruling relations are activities of governing that depend on selecting, categorizing, and/or objectifying aspects of the social world in order to develop facts and knowledge upon which to base decisions." (Rankin, 2017, p. 3)

Ruling relations can be both disciplinary and institutional and, in this case, appeared to inculcate both a culture of care and service in the promotion process but also resulted in the creation of heavy administrative and service burdens. These burdens were particularly felt by those on the tenure track and increasingly for those outside of it. The interview data here thus shows the limitations of positive disciplinary principles around equitable evaluation as instantiated in a service-heavy landscape with a shrinking tenured class. It also shows how said limitations manifest in the department's social coordination practices.

Observation-as-Evaluation Tool in Department X

As with most institutions, the university in which Department X resides uses multiple measures to evaluate faculty, many of which are common across rank or appointment type and some of which are tailored to appointment type. Across the institution, these measures usually include an evaluation of materials (scholarly, pedagogical etc.), a narrative constructed by the faculty member that details achievements (publication, funding etc.) and goals, course observation, and student evaluations (i.e., "SIRS").

Here, course observation is specifically meant to evaluate teaching but unlike the quantitative uses of SIRS[8] (Dayton, 2017), it presents a different kind of measure. Observation has been described in disciplinary literature as "usability testing—the usability of [a] program's assumptions about teaching and learning," and also as "macro-teaching" (Jackson, 2017, pp. 45-7). As previously asserted, most writing studies scholarship surrounding course observation specifically and faculty evaluation in general is aimed at understanding best practices and how to align the field's values with faculty evaluation practices (Hult, 1994). It is also frequently written from the standpoint of those conducting observations or other administrators (e.g., WPAs) and not from those being observed. Sometimes it seeks to reimagine evaluation as a tool for more broadly conceiving of university activities (DeCosta & Roen, 2015). Yet, few scholars have presented definitions made by faculty themselves about role of observation in their evaluations and how it appears or exists in their particular locations and embodied experiences, let alone in their long-term career trajectories.

[8] Dayton notes that student evaluations do not have to be used quantitatively but that this is the most frequent way they are taken up in faculty evaluation (p. 32).

Notably, a single article, Denise K. Comer's "Bending the Gaze: Transparency, Reciprocity and Supervisory Classroom Visits" (2011), has described a more "bottom up" view of observation. Comer differentiates between peer and supervisor visits and, focusing on the latter, gears her discussion toward building a model for approaching supervisory visits using "reflective and reciprocal" modalities. Additionally, she notes a difference in stakes based on social position (rank, specifically) (p. 518). As such, Comer's work is valuable to discussions on the complex dynamics of observation and the role of the WPA in these dynamics. However, rather than mapping these larger administrative concerns, my goal here is to uncover more of that "bottom-up" view observation to focus on the lived experiences of those most impacted by this type of faculty evaluation.

Based on interview data, I argue that, in Department X, observation is defined on a *continuum* in terms of its usefulness or value as a practice and process tied to larger evaluation processes *over time.* Again, in this very paradigm of use and value, there was a clear divide in perspectives between those performing observation and those receiving one. Even participants who both received and conducted observations noted far more usefulness and value when they were *conducting* an observation than when they were receiving one. I further explore this phenomenon in the following section.

Administrative Perspectives: Service and Pleasure

I interviewed four administrators of programs in the department. In addition, two of the people I was *not* interviewing specifically about their administrative roles spoke directly to performing observation as part of their service work. I present their experiences and views here as a contrast to the anchor standpoint and to locate their responses as indicative of the ruling relations in Department X.

In general, observation in Department X might appear to be most valuable for those *doing* the observation than for those receiving them. Administrators and those performing observation noted it as an opportunity to offer feedback (guided by the teacher) and to learn from their colleagues' teaching. Each expressed a great amount of enjoyment in the process and saw it as a pleasurable part of their jobs. They also described observation as an opportunity to help a colleague advance professionally, which speaks to a highly generous department culture. In addition, they sometimes saw it as contributing to their administrative or service labor because of the time-consuming process Department X employs but compared it favorably to some of the other duties included in this aspect of their work and spoke of devotion to doing it well, accurately, and ethically.

From those performing observations, I constructed a set of understandings about what kind of tool observation is, what it allows them to do, what it offers, and/or what they think is most valuable about it. Administrative responses are well suited to demonstrate aspects of official departmental narrative, or ruling relations. What's more, this set of understandings speaks to the well-intentioned component of my study's problematic's dyad. Specifically, in the ruling relations of the department, those conducting observations mostly viewed the tool of observation as formative (i.e., it is a tool of formative assessment).

One definition of observation and evaluation elicited from the social location of administrators is that its use as a formative tool emerges out of and demonstrates a community-oriented approach to both observation and evaluation in Department X. This piece of data deserves troubling to the extent that the bulk of course observation in the department is done in service of a promotion via a summative letter for career advancement. Yet, those performing observations were primarily focused on the best practices associated with formative assessment

such that, when composing summative letters, they focused on how to "dress" a formative evaluation in a summative text like teaching letters. In contrast, those receiving observations noted a lack of sense in the feedback they received and expressed hope for a more feedback rich experience, viewing it as one of the few opportunities to receive that kind of attention to their teaching. I further discuss these intricacies in the following chapter, but they are worth mentioning here to contextualize empirically based definitions of observation in the department. See below for the identified purposes/definitions shared by administrative interview participants:

Formative

1. To support teachers (macro-teaching)
2. To inform an understanding of the teaching in the department (assessment)
3. To build workshop or training opportunities in the program (professional development)

Summative

4. To support a promotion for a faculty member (teaching letter)

The following excerpts are a selection of responses from those conducting observation that evince these definitions or seek to explain what kind of a tool observation is in Department X from an administrative standpoint.

> It [is] formative and casual and we don't only stay on the subject of their teaching, one of the delights for me is that, with a new starting NT person, maybe we'll just say, maybe you could try this, or there's a really good research group, or there's this or there, it is just a part of it. There is just this great opportunity to find where the gaps are in their knowledge of the communities here and the different affordances and things, they could benefit from knowing. Sometimes It's just a sharing of knowledge and it ends up being,

> a, um, [I'm] trying to think of how to say it, a 'pep rally'?" (*support, macro-teaching, professional development*).

The administrator here demonstrates well, the culture of care and positive orientations to observation as well as the ways administrators think programmatically and harness the contributions of department members for program improvement.

Another described the micro-level act of observation and its purpose this way:

> The idea is that this is an occasion for conversation so it's almost like an artifact interview using the scene of teaching experience, as a method and a methodology because the idea is always to figure out, what should the learning moment be here. And that's kind of co-constructed. And of course, we have our own program values in mind, there are certain things we want to see happen and there are certain things we think are developmentally…happy, you know (laughter). (*macro-teaching, assessment*).

Also using observation as an assessment moment, the above quote/administrative perspective outlines their values around all administrative work as being engaged in teaching work, as well as research-grounded orientations to program design and evaluation practice.

And, yet another detailed how assessment integrates into the act of observation, as tied to the purpose and function of the program they were running:

> We have spent time trying to think about a culture of assessment…what is it really intended to do? And observation is an instance of that. It's not separate from it. It doesn't lead; it sort of follows. If we do it right, it can be, um, a model for what assessment is always trying to do and that is always, 'what is the frickin' point'? (*assessment*).

Again, the administrator here acts in good faith ways, seeing intersections across teaching, program design and assessment. And in a separate program, the administrator below sees his

observation work as less of a tool for intervention and more as a moment to learn the landscape of the program, in and of itself, an assessment move:

> It's a quick way to see how faculty are approaching different types of classes and teaching in those classes in topics that I am unfamiliar with so I can get a better idea, as the director of a program, to get an understanding of what is happening in these classes. (*assessment*).

Next, we see an administrator evincing notions of supporting colleagues in their advancement through observation:

> One of the things I always like to say with the formative goals there, is, this person has demonstrated these kinds of summative excellences, in this and that, and in all of these things, and even with all of (the teacher's) demonstrated strengths and wealth of experiences, they are doing all the kinds of things that I see, that are, that all of the truly outstanding teachers I've met in my 20 years of working with teachers do, and that is that they continue to set goals for themselves and the next reach, is that they say, here's the next thing I want to do in the vast horizon of never being done with learning how to do this job so well. (*teaching letter*).

As the above excerpts indicate, administrator responses connected back to the "means well" paradigm of the department and can be seen as a real strength of observation practice. Each consistently noted their orientations to it as grounded in research, effective pedagogy, and a holistic view of how best to support students, teachers, and colleagues, as well as the mission of the department itself. None noted it as a use of punitive surveillance over "problem" teachers, which is one of the dangers of course observation as a tool in many locations, including my former institution discussed in Chapter One. Here, all demonstrated a willingness and good will

toward the practice of observation as well as a commitment to making it as formative and as useful as possible to the goals and trajectories of those who they were observing.

Graduate TA Observation: Tool of Professionalization and Reflection

There is much literature in writing studies on "training" graduate students to teach writing. Course observation is a tool employed in that process in both the discipline and Department X. Though not the subject of this discussion, it is nonetheless interesting to note that, as a discipline, we so often assume observation is a tool best applied to graduate students to "teach them to teach." We have perhaps thus neglected to consider it as a tool in the labor or material conditions of faculty. Graduate students occupy a unique role in their apprentice-like status in Department X and their responses in my interview work reflected that. In this study, I interviewed two TAs in the department who had previous teaching experience and who had been observed in Department X in the FYW program. Their responses indicated two particular understandings of their observation experience, which might be said to define what kind of tool it was for them in their professional lives.

The first was that it appeared as a tool for reflection on their teaching in some way. The second was that it acted as an opportunity for them to "practice" for future professional evaluation situations. Both participants noted some value in the function but also marked how the observation wasn't necessarily the moment that helped them improve their teaching, as one would imagine formative assessment might do. This was consistent across interview subjects at all ranks. Nonetheless, the following excerpts characterize those two definitions of observation as a tool for the graduate. Even though graduate students were not central to the focus of my study, I include them here because their experiences point to the work institutions and departments might start to do not just in faculty labor, but also in graduate TA training. What if

we viewed a continuum of experience surrounding observation and evaluation and built labor-centered approaches to each moment in disciplinary participants' career trajectories? The stories below can help us begin to imagine where to begin that work for departments who train graduate students, as too much graduate education leaves out the institutional literacies graduates will need later to succeed.

Reflective Tool

The first participant brought in a reflective document they had written as part of the requirement for their TA position in the first semester of their program. This document was based on the observation and follow-up conversation. In the artifact-based interview, it became clear that it was the act of writing and reflection that was useful to this teacher's changed understanding of their teaching. They related:

> It kind of made me rethink my affect in the classroom, how the students, and how I 'performed' as an instructor. So really, writing through it and providing this narrative helped me keep the thought of the performance and all of that at the forefront of my teaching. So that became a big focus the next semester when I got to go at it again, and it became something I talked a lot about in the mentoring session, you know, performance affect and all that.

The second participant also noted some value in observation as a tool of reflection, though this instructor did not compose a reflective narrative about their teaching and instead brought in the informal notes the observer had taken and shared with them. This instructor noted an interest in how the observer had taken "time stamps" of the class session and the ways this move called them to reflect on sequencing and planning classroom activities. This instructor also noted a challenge with fostering student conversation and engagement and related that the

observation merely confirmed something they already knew: "it was helpful but it wasn't something that I hadn't heard before." Further, they related, "it's helpful in terms of reflecting on what I *did* but not necessarily helpful towards the next time I teach."

Professionalization Tool

Much of the definition of observation as a tool at the TA level appeared to me as an element of how they imagined they would encounter the experience in the future, as it had no immediately summative form and they marked the observation process for them *now* as an enculturation tool for a future career. One remarked that it began for them in their MA:

> I started to hear phrases like, 'observations are a part of academia' you know, like, your colleagues are always going to observer you. But it felt like more of a training to be a professional. Here, the stakes feel higher because I'm a PhD student, so everything I do feels like it's towards a future professionalizing end.

The other participant also noted it as a tool for a future goal, but additionally mentioned that they imagined it would appear differently in the future:

> I know what this artifact means to *me* but I don't know what that is going to mean to a tenure and promotion committee. You know, I think it's an aspect of it, but yeah, I think the scary kind of professionalization that we all go through five years from now, I'm going to need a bit more than just a narrative.

The graduate students' perspectives here are a powerful contrast to how those working off the tenure line defined observation. In many ways, this may be due to the very nature of their transient roles, which are geared toward an expected, long-term career goal. In interviews, that goal was a tenure-line position; neither graduate student mentioned the possibility of preparing for work off the tenure line. In addition, course observation for them has no role in pay increases

or rehiring as it does for those off the tenure line at this site. As non-tenure stream faculty (NT) must grapple with a different set of constraints, notions of futures and professionalization differed significantly for NT and AS faculty, even though reflective components of observation appeared in their definitions of the tool itself. Given this, I argue that statistically, many graduate students are likely to end up in non-tenure roles, yet we have little knowledge of what that might entail, require, or mean. For example, I write this at the time of a global pandemic, where the writing studies job market has quite literally disintegrated before our eyes. It is too late to prepare current graduate students for that reality but it is not too late to properly train future ones.

Systems of Remedy and Alignment

As in the last chapter, potential moments of alignment and remedy emerged from my discussions with faculty and graduate students in Department X. A central question here was: how might observation be made more meaningful? I argue that clarifying the formative and summative aspects of this departmental practice could increase the use value of observation as evaluation.

First, observation could be made more intentionally, particularly in regard to closing feedback loops. In this study, those who experienced observation consistently asked for more complete systems of feedback. This desire was tied to notions of these faculty members' value to the department, wherein their primary activity of teaching was so often invisible.

For example, observation as an evaluation measure is marginally positioned in annual review processes and many administrators resisted its appearance in the process. Yet, including observational texts in some way, shape, or form, could potentially contribute to more meaningful, summative evaluation practices, especially when a faculty member's appointment type is 90 percent teaching. Saying a thing is formative only disregards the fact of its summative

impact and is evident in that fact that faculty reported wanting more meaningful evaluation of their teaching. Given the labor and time constraints in Department X, these observations would have to be conducted by peers. Peer review models, as opposed to supervisory visits, are the most commonly endorsed kind in higher education and there is a wealth of case studies on them. In our own institution, the "TEval" program is being piloted and shared with other institutions and envisions disciplinary, contextualized review of teaching and faculty performance through a collaborative, bottom-up approach (TEval.org).

After considering my own study of Department X, it is easy to assert that the formative aspects of observation should and do lie with the observer as opposed to with the observed. Interview data clarified that being the observer is a deeply formative experience, one that all faculty should have access to. As such, the teaching faculty might engage more intentional discussions about teaching and resource sharing to enable the building of departmental community, something the entire department noted a lack of (Cultural Change Roundtable, 2019). In turn, faculty whose work rarely (if ever) gets observed because they are not moving upward for promotion could benefit from observing peers with more innovative pedagogies. An administrator noted in an interview there had been a past effort to create such a culture of assessment but it was short lived given that it was not tied to summative feedback.

Moreover, graduate students should be included in this work. They should have access to observation and training in observation practices as a part of their future professionalization *and* as a way to create relationships with NT faculty, i.e., those who do the bulk of the teaching in Department X. Such an approach may go a long way in disassembling some of the class-based gaps between graduate students and those working off the tenure line, providing opportunities for coalition that Department X currently lacks.

However, though helpful in making it a more meaningful experience, clearly defining observation may not materially alleviate concerns of advancement and long-term career success for those off the tenure line. In the following chapter, I *begin* to take up those long-term questions more carefully. Nonetheless, including observation in regular, ongoing professional evaluation more broadly in the department could, I believe, increase the sense of value faculty off the tenure line experience in regard to their primary activity of teaching. This is an important step in moving beyond the "means well" paradigm identified there.

Conclusion

At the risk of stating the obvious, observation as a tool is complex in Department X, much as it was in my former institution and WPA praxis. Observation was reported to me by interview participants as a somewhat elusive tool. Sometimes it appeared to them as a useful opportunity for reflection or a way to gain status, and other times it appeared to them as a benign and potentially meaningless necessity, or a tool of meeting the requirements of employment. Still other times, it appeared as rubber stamping for a group of faculty who, overall, seemed to feel secure in their renewal and employment but continued to feel undervalued.

The relative security of renewal as delinked from evaluation is also worth noting. In many writing programs and academia more broadly, those teaching writing off the tenure line are in far more precarious positions in the short term, and structures of supervisory visits risk embodying punitive, surveilling mechanisms to "check" on their work. As with my former institution mentioned in Chapter One, a supervisory visit may be directly tied to merit raises and standing. Observation can then, in a very real way, act as a policing tool. Another potential pitfall noted by a few participants in this study was the conducting of observation by someone without

knowledge of or expertise in teaching writing. Yet, in Department X, observation was not punitive or directly relevant to yearly review. Further, it was often conducted by someone with considerable expertise in the subject being taught. Part of this is the affordance of an independent writing department where many/most are writing specialists in some form.

In speaking to administrators in the department, it is clear they *intend* their observations to support their colleagues in both pedagogy and advancement and to support their programs and department mission. Yet, the constraints of the practice itself, the undue service burden in the department, and the power differentials across rank in the department seem to constrain how it is experienced and understood from those it is meant to support.

To briefly return to the previous chapter, and the argument I drew from that analysis, teaching is a shared, central activity in Department X. However, the way members of the department perceive the value of that activity for themselves in moments of evaluation *or* the way they perceive the value of their teaching in relation to others is tied up in the hierarchies of rank, complexities of service, and research. It is further tied to ideological conceptions of disciplinarity and notions of institutional citizenship.

The next chapter, as the final analytical chapter of this dissertation, builds on the first analysis (Chapter Three) that mapped boss texts in Department X, as well as the institutional circuits, ruling relations, and social coordination in the department. It also takes up the understandings presented in the interviews in this chapter, which map the practice of observation through the subjective definitions of those participating in it. The following chapter looks at the impacts of observation and evaluation in the career trajectories of faculty working off the tenure line and how long-term precarity persists in Department X. By some measures, it is the least hopeful, yet it may also contain the most potential for change.

CHAPTER FIVE: LOCATING THE EFFECTS OF LONG-TERM PRECARITY IN DEPARTMENT X

Me: can you tell me more about this chart?

Participant 1: And why I have it on my wall? Cause it reminds me that I have successfully made it through cynicism, sad math and rage. Sad math happens in year three, that's when you start doing math problems that show you [how] you are grossly underpaid for someone with a professional degree.

We have a fake committee called "GRIT—Global Rhetoric Something Something in Technology," and it's really just an excuse to get together. It's me and a few other NT people, and so this all grew out of that…and I have kind of developed this over time. In fact I just had a conversation with [a colleague] who's been here for 12 years and is still an instructor because they can't figure out how to promote people who have master's degrees.

I asked her, "does this repeat, or is it all just a blur?" And she said that, two years ago, she had another rage year and another cynicism year, so it seems like maybe the only thing that doesn't repeat is enthusiasm. Maybe we save that for the classroom. I'm very enthusiastic in my classroom.

I'm really looking forward to next year, which is acceptance, project optimism 2.0, which is then blur.

…
Participant 2: I think she [participant 1] showed you our timeline of emotions in connection with this job?

I don't know if she told you that we've been thinking that, at a certain point, you just kind of stall out at a certain experience? And now we don't think that is true because we're both currently experiencing apathy in a different way than we were before. And I think that tension has to do, for me, with moments where, one of two things happens:

Either (long pause) I or someone in a position similar to me wants to do a thing and is rejected. Not because they can't do the thing but because the institution has not created a way for them to do that thing. That happens in a variety of contexts, including [how] I want feedback on my teaching if someone is going to observe me but we don't actually, even though we have policies in place that say I should receive that feedback. We don't have the institutional structure to allow that to have happened in this particular context. But it happens in a bunch of ways. It happens with students too and that's really frustrating because it feels as if there is no way to change the system as an individual, so those things are just going to keep happening. And the kind of despair around a problem that can't be solved (long pause) is real.

…
Me: the sad math year.

Participant 2: Ah, the sad math. It's a real thing. . . . When we did our last three-year review, the three of us got an email that was forwarded to us from [a colleague], who was chair at the time. [It] said we'd all been granted another three years. That's it. A forwarded email that was like, "Congrats, you still have a job." Like, sent mid-June as an afterthought*. We got nothing on paper. We got a forwarded email—that was not actually intended for us—that affirmed we still had jobs in the fall.*

Introduction

I offer these extended excerpts in the epigraph as a starting point to this chapter, which seeks to ground an interpretation of faculty's experiences working off the tenure line in Department X in descriptions offered by the faculty themselves. Institutional ethnography (IE) relies on a triangulation between boss texts, ruling relations, and the social coordination inscribed in them with the standpoints of workers. Here, I explore how they make sense of their everyday work. For me, these moments of discussion in the interviews pointed directly to some of the tensions those working off the tenure line experienced in the department, particularly regarding their long-term trajectories. They further speak to the larger contexts of non-tenured labor in our discipline, in which I was formerly implicated as a managerial WPA. These contexts persist, even if the non-tenured labor in Department X is not highly precarious in the short term like it is with most adjunct labor.

My focus on narratives from interviews in this chapter comes from my primary methodology, IE, which seeks to uncover the dynamic tensions of those working in an institution. Not meant to be a withering critique, this methodology naturally produces a complicated picture of social relationships in workplaces *because* it looks for divergences and particularities in how people take up work in localized ways. Here, IE illuminates a tension between dominant narratives of cooperative, participatory shared governance in Department X, and a lack of a sense of value or forward movement from participants' subjective standpoints, which are indicative of the everyday features of their work inside said system. Put simply, while

interviews are necessarily subjective and not meant to represent objective fact, they reveal some of the lived experiences of those in particular standpoints within the department and as such, are valuable. Rather than simply report their stories as fact, they are treated as data and contextualized in relation to what I know about the department as a participant, as someone with administrative experience, and as a researcher who has analyzed multiple components of the departmental relations for this dissertation.

The excerpts that begin this chapter refer to a document that one NT faculty member has on their office wall that shows a trajectory over time of the cycles and experiences they share with some of their colleagues. This document is a strong counterpoint to top-down narratives in the department, particularly to the "means well" ethos and the selfsame disciplinary narratives related to progress, evaluation, and investment in faculty's careers. For tenure line faculty, the cyclical (year-to-year) and progress over time (renewal-promotion-tenure) are clearly delineated from annual reviews to third-year reviews, associate professor status, full professor status, and emeritus. The career trajectories of those off the tenure line are less codified, though the institution where this study took place also takes a growth over time approach. For instance, an NT faculty member might move from "instructor" to more permanent status, "Des B," associate, and full. Similarly, AS faculty might move from continuing status to "senior academic specialist." Yet, as the interview excerpts above suggest, perhaps some never move through these trajectories. For those that do, each step is accompanied by a process, a form, and engagement with colleagues and the department. The excerpts in the following sections are meant to point to how these workers make sense of the tensions they encounter in those cycles and trajectories in ways that contrast to the ruling relations/dominant narrative of the department and the institution.

This does not foreclose the good efforts of the institution or department, but it does, arguably, illuminate the counternarratives emerging from those inhabiting these processes and institutional spaces. As I have mapped in the previous two chapters, Department X has worked to codify ethical practices around evaluation and promotion at each rank grounded that are in departmental agency and built-in participatory structures (Chapter 3). They have also built habits and practices to support effective supervisory and peer visits in service of the departmental mission and professional advancement (Chapter 4). Taken together, my analysis again highlights the central tension of this study regarding well-designed and well-meaning structures for supporting faculty. This chapter, Chapter Five, is meant to further uncover granular divergences from those structures in the experiences, specifically those of faculty off the tenure line. Department X does so many things in innovative and ethical ways, yet barriers built by institutional and departmental hierarchies can hamstring those efforts as they are dispersed across rank.

This chapter relies primarily on analysis of interview data from those working off the tenure line and works to understand and introduce a concept I call "long-term precarity." Long-term precarity came directly out of interviews with faculty as I worked to understand their collective standpoint through their own descriptions of conceiving and experiencing their work and the evaluation of that work in the department over time. Long-term precarity is in contradistinction to short-term precarity, which has been discussed at length in both disciplinary and public literature (Brannon, 1993; Horner, 2010; Scott, 2009; Bousquet, 2004; Schell, 1998; Kahn et al., 2017).

Short-term precarity might best be characterized as the emblematic "free-way flier," or the adjunct professor who works at multiple institutions for low per course pay, whose

appointment is contingent on semester-to-semester enrollments. These professionals do not have access to office space, professional development, long-term contracts, or health and retirement benefits. There are many institutions where this is the case.

In contrast, long-term precarity is revealed when departments and institutions take steps to mitigate the most deleterious aspects of adjunct labor but must still contend with a set of pernicious tensions related to the career trajectories and potentials for engagement and advancement for those off the tenure line. Many universities and writing programs have taken steps to mitigate short-term precarity by offering longer-term appointments, sometimes called "lecturer" lines—here, "NT" faculty—and have set up structures by which teaching faculty have access to professional development and advancement, as well as benefits and stable employment. Department X is among those. However, there have been some investigations into the realities of permanent non-tenured labor and the benefits of these labor arrangements (Harris, 2006; Murphy, 2000; Cox, 2018; McBeth & McCormack, 2017; Colby & Colby, 2017).

Scholars like Harris (2006) and Murphy (2000) argue that, even if they are not on the tenure line, long-term arrangements are the most reasonable way to combat the worst ravages of contingent employment in direct response to a shrinking tenure class. McBeth and McCormack (2017) argue similarly that though these positions are not perfect, they are preferable to adjunct labor and their work shows it is possible to move from an adjunct model to a long-term model in a single department or program by mapping their own efforts. Others I included (Cox, 2018; Colby & Colby, 2017) do not debate the overall merits of the existence of these kinds of appointments but have instead illuminated points of persistent precarity within these positions. For example, my own study (Cox, 2018) revealed the perceived lack of academic freedom that a group of "full-time lecturers" experienced in a first-year writing program. I argued that long-term

contracts alone are not a viable solution to the full range of precarities those off the tenure line face.

Yet, so far as I know, no one has examined appointment types like our own NT and AS roles, specifically for evidence of career trajectories over the long-term or for how precarity might persist in those roles across years and decades of employment. How might that appear in the working lives of people in these appointment types? I explore this matter here, not by conducting a longitudinal study, which this issue deserves, but by working to uncover the collective standpoint of NT and AS workers in Department X, the primary site of my investigation.

This work revealed some of what interview participants in NT and AS faculty roles think, know, and feel about their work experiences in relation to evaluation activities and specifically in the context of how they view their career trajectories in the department over time. By telling these stories, I hope to map key nodes of experience that point to long-term precarity as a persistent, structural condition of labor off the tenure line.

Mapping an Anchor Standpoint

This chapter again uses a standpoint approach to engage the theme of long-term precarity. Working in an IE framework, Naples (2003) shows that the feminist scholarship in which standpoint methodology resides "has been particularly effective in identifying the processes by which power and the relations of ruling are inherent in disciplinary practices" (p. 51) In further pointing to Smith and Hill-Collins' conceptualizations of such from the late 80s to early 90s, Naples asserts that a goal of standpoint methodologies is to "decenter dominant discourse, and to continually displace and rework it to determine how power organizes social life and what forms

of resistance are generated from social locations outside the matrix of domination or relations of ruling" (p. 52-3).

Given this, the area of discussion here relates directly to that kind of primary standpoint: those working off the tenure line whose work trajectories are not easily captured in disciplinary narratives of tenure, promotion, and advancement, nor by discourses of adjunct labor and the adjunctification of the academy itself. As a tool, then, standpoint is meant not merely to illuminate individual perspectives, but to understand how those social positions are a part of a larger matrix of social coordination and ruling relations.

Again, I return to standpoint in the context of IE methodology. Janet Rankin (2017) rationalizes the researcher exigency of taking up standpoint this way:

> An IE researcher is advised to adopt a standpoint—a stance that has an empirical location, where a group of people are positioned, within a complex regime of institutions and governance (*the practices that construct the "regime" are the ultimate focus of the research*). The IE researcher must stay grounded in descriptions of things happening—and the observed tensions and contradictions that arise there for those people (who occupy the standpoint). Researchers must discover: *What do these people know about how things work? What do these people do?* This interest includes all the formal and informal things that contribute to the sum of something happening. The interest in the standpoint informants' knowledge is ultimately empirical—to build an account of how things that are happening are being organized and coordinated. (p. 2, emphasis added)

Accordingly, I choose to look at the experiences of those working off the tenure line (i.e., NT and AS faculty) because of the unique, interstitial roles they play in Department X. In these roles, they push back against what one participant called, "the grand narrative of tenure" and

offer rich perspectives from which we might reexamine faculty roles in the academy writ large. In this way, I seek to build an account of a collective standpoint rather than carving out one individual's experience alone (Naples, 2003). To do so, I examine interview responses that were coded to identify explanations of long-term precarity and, more specifically, how that precarity appears *over time* in the departmental cycles of annual merit and teaching reviews for promotion at all faculty ranks in Department X.

The complex phenomenon of long-term precarity in Department X is illuminated in the following interviews in a number of ways, sometimes related to confusion over the official or lived processes of evaluation and sometimes related to ideological notions of futility, futurity, and individual or collective agency. Similarly, these stories can help us understand how "what is happening" is "organized or coordinated" (Rankin, 2017, p. 2). The stories participants shared also speak to notions of the value of both sanctioned and unsanctioned participation in these processes.

To remain faithful to the thick descriptions in the interview data, an outside conceptual schema was imposed a priori on the data. Interviews were coded as mentioned in the methodology (Chapter Two) in three cycles and is taken up in the discussion in short chunks that were identified by the following coding units:

1. Metaphors: most if not all participants took up a series of metaphors in accounts of their experiences with observation and evaluation in the department. These metaphors were in direct relation to experiences of precarity, agency, and participation. As such, the appearance of metaphors indicated moments when participants accessed shared

understandings around particular topics. They were then interpreted for underlying meanings.[9]

2. Locations/Conditions; Potential Causes; Impacts/Actions: participants marked these three orientations surrounding the dynamic tensions they experienced in Department X and traced their experiences to a place (textual or processual), a cause (ruling relations or social coordination), or an impact/action (the result of an experience or what they did in response to the experience). Language was then coded to identify moments in conversations that spoke to those three markers.[10]

Faculty Futures: Perceived Impacts of Renewal and Promotion Activities

Interview participants off the tenure line shared some common perspectives, including the difficulties of low pay and perceptions of their status as different from their tenure-stream colleagues. All noted aspects of their work as they envisioned it over time, some more positively than others. I begin this section by describing some common experiences captured by the notion of long-term precarity and end with a more in-depth discussion of the experiences of three faculty particular members working off the tenure line via various moments of observation and evaluation in their work and how they tied that to visions of their career trajectories in Department X.

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[9] For example, NT faculty consistently used the metaphor of a "rubber stamp," as addressed in the previous chapter. It was interpreted as a reference to a bureaucratic process that stripped the experience of genuine meaning.

[10] For example, when working to determine potential causes for a particular aspect of the problematic, most participants were careful to not directly assign responsibility to any one individual and often used a passive sentence construction to deflect agency. At the same time, they identified potential locations of aspects of the problematic they were encountering.

"Who Reads This?"

An element that repeatedly emerged in interviews was a sense of confusion or difficulty with the process of evaluation itself. This confusion appeared in various ways and points in time for participants. A notable example was participants' expressed concern over how their yearly and promotional documents were *perceived* or if they were *even read* as they moved through the institutional circuitry, even if they were able to map said circuitry. In other words, the social coordination of the department was clearly articulated in institutional circuitry but faculty *experienced* those processes in ways that diverged from them. As a researcher I was initially confused about why this might be because simultaneously, those who had been on merit committees reported carefully reading their colleagues' materials. Yet, when it came to their own materials, I heard responses like the following:

> It has to go to external review and I don't know what external reviewers are willing to read…I am so deeply cynical that anyone above the chair level even looks at it. You know, they're not going to let you schedule your dissertation defense if you're gonna fail. Yeah, it's a weird thing because, if I hadn't done it, I'm fairly certain they would have had grounds to fire me. And yet, I'm not even certain that anyone will look at it. *Takes a long pause.* So, it's a very bizarre 200 some pages.

This sentiment was pervasive, even beyond the NT and AS faculty I interviewed to those in assistant professor roles. So, while constructing a standpoint of those off the tenure line, this sentiment seemed to speak to a larger, structural tension for faculty. However, unlike those on the tenure line, it also spoke directly to NT and AS faculty's sense of perceived value, of the investment in their work over the long term, or as one participant perceived it, "the kind of

investment the university makes in careers for tenure-track versus NT and academic specialist is huge, right? The disparity there is as remarkable as the pay inequity."

"Opacity"

Another key element that might help us map the divergences between Department X's well-meaning and well-crafted documents and practices is how participants experienced them. I refer here to the notion of opacity—or lack of transparency—and the ways participants tracked that to their trajectories in the department over time. Departmental efforts to understand the rifts in department culture through surveys and outside consultation surfaced this need for "transparency" over and over, yet it appeared as difficult to define and operationalize. Arguably, transparency speaks to a hidden curriculum, or the "stealth requirements" I mentioned in the previous chapter that may stem from how Department X interpolates members into unpaid service and participation. Though sometimes oversimplified as an unevenness between expectations and pay inequity, one interview participant summarized it this way:

> I would argue that our labor situation here is *not good*. I would be the first person to say that I think that the ways people move through here are opaque in ways I have not experienced elsewhere, even as an adjunct.

This participant used the metaphor of NT faculty being "like the kids in the department" to refer to how they perceived their expertise as being less valuable than others, a nod to status concerns. This participant further marked a connection to notions of long-term vs. short-term conceptions of their position in the department:

> The idea that you would constantly get from tenure-track people as an adjunct, "you're just an adjunct because you just started out. Not, you've been an adjunct for five years." Or you've been one for six years because we have a system that demands you stay an

> adjunct. You get that same idea with people [here] with NT. [It's] is the idea where there is a kind of "oh you're NT, because you do, you know, you're just starting out but like eventually, you'll find your way into a TT position like us.

This participant's perception of TT attitudes counters the sentiments of the NT and AS participants I interviewed, all of whom were planning to be in their positions permanently. The above participant (and others) located a lack of clarity around processes of observation and evaluation and the role those held in their advancement as playing into a sense of insecurity about what is possible, or probable even, for themselves as professionals over the long term. One noted, "[two colleagues] got promoted this year and so there is this big push like, [*whispering*] 'we really want you to do this' but it's really unclear what it means. Like, what does it mean?" They continued, "it's like, this really strange liminal…ideological…quandary…and the whole entire thing is based on the tenure-stream RPT[11] model. They can't figure out how to evaluate us on what our contracts really are."

"What is this Process For?"

The thick descriptions in interview data that contributed to the collective standpoint mapping in the context of long-term precarity and which might evince larger complexities of power in the department also seemed to revolve around processes themselves. For example, moments of tension in interview data seemed to occur for faculty when their experiences diverged from what they knew, hoped, or understood to be the protocols they would follow through moments of promotion and advancement. This seemed to cause them to need to make sense of or redetermine the nature of their potentials in the department. Arguably, these moments for participants spoke to their perceived sense of value to the institution and the possibilities or

[11] Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

lack thereof that they imagined for their careers over the long term in Department X and they tracked it directly to that. Below I tell three stories at some length that are meant to help support an understanding of such elements of the work and work processes, illuminating where long-term precarity showed up in the experiences of these faculty.

Navigating a Teaching Review Process

In our artifact-based reflective interview, one participant brought in the materials they submitted for a promotion and described them to me by first defining them and then explaining the process they experienced in relation to these texts. They first noted that gaps appeared in a few ways in the materials themselves. They specifically explained that much of their work is administrative but that it is difficult to document. They explained that, though this process appeared to "mirror" a TT promotion process, they were unable to provide accompanying materials because of their appointment type.

They next described a situation in which the process of promotion for their rank seemed unclear or unknown to the department itself, despite the language in the Bylaws. Incidentally, this lack of clarity was confirmed by other interview participants in regard to the AS rank. This participant described the unfolding of their process across two semesters, in which they requested information about the proper process to follow but that information was either not provided or unknown. A set of materials was then requested in the week following finals, with a time window of 10 days to complete and submit. The participant described this moment in this way:

> [Because it was the week after finals] I was totally fried. But it had to get done, so I did it. And then [it was] made more frustrating [because] I don't know what happened to my external reviewers, supposedly they received all the materials? I have not been told one

> way or the other. I was, however, informed, on January 15th that my teaching committee had been formed and then was told by a member of that committee, outside of any formal communication, that they had not received any of my teaching materials [and] could I please send them? And that was maybe like, Feb. 3rd.

This participant account, reflects well, IE's notions of slippages between what workers know or believe should happen in how their work is coordinated and the slippages that happen between ruling relations (instantiated in boss texts) and the social coordination of daily or yearly practices.

In speaking to others in the department, it was clear that this experience was perhaps anomalous and that other teaching committees were able to move other AS faculty through the process smoothly. However, this participant's experience provides insight into a potential unevenness in the process from which the faculty member garnered a feeling of precarity. The AS rank in Department X remains a somewhat nebulous area in moments of promotion and evaluation, which perhaps is a byproduct of their creation by a former chair's executive decision, with little explanation of the role itself.

For example, a TT teaching review committee member confirmed in another interview that they tried to follow the TT process in the absence of other information, yet, as the above participant noted, their appointment type dictated they would be unable to provide a TT-like dossier for such an activity. This AS interview participant reflected on their promotion process as:

> There's just no sense of an actual investment in a career, right? And so, that part of the intention there was, as you said, to build in bylaws so that it had to happen that there would be this sort of mentorship available. But the problem is there's no one in our

> department who is a senior academic specialist and the nature of at least our employment in this department has made it that the opportunities to meet and network with people beyond the department are not readily available.

Of particular import to this discussion to me, was the moment this participant described how they marked a difference in their ability to gain mentorship and access to networking opportunities outside the department as an AS—and, perhaps, they speculated, because of their gender—as a distinct feature of how they perceived precarity in the long-term and how they perceived the value of their work in the institution:

> My observation has been that any opportunities I might have to expand my network beyond the department have been opportunities that I have both fought for and sought out myself…If you're doing your job and you're doing it well, it's easy to be overlooked. Especially if you are in an institutional structure that does not have space to reward you… I mean, technically it's a promotion, but really, it's "congrats, you can keep your job." Right? Like, it's very unlikely that this is going to result in increased pay. It's certainly not going to result in any difference in how I operate in the institutional structures.

Other AS faculty in the department who are male, for example, had been offered roles that took them outside the department via committee or working groups, or to develop new skill sets in administration, campus-wide leadership and service, curriculum design, and online instruction. One of those participants explained that he felt these opportunities had prepared him, if not for a TT faculty appointment, for a university level administration position. Another male colleague's work closely mirrored that of a tenure-stream faculty member. This is in contrast to the

participant whose story I tell here, whose administrative work was housed in a support role within the department itself.

Finally, this participant specifically described the impact they perceived of the limits of their rank over the long-term. Of this, they said:

> I've tried to make connections with people that have more experience or are at a higher rank in order to try to kind of create some sort of stability for myself in terms of long-term goals and what I've come to realize is that, while there is a lot of positive talk around NT faculty and AS having careers here, that talk…(sighs)…is weirdly, inauthentic, right? Like *even* when it's coming from me, because there is this sense that there isn't forward movement and that professional development happens *within* the department, which means you aren't actually developing a network, you're not actually looking for the next step. You're only being made more and more insular because, within academia, if you don't have that larger network, if you don't have ways to think about the next step for your research and the next step for your teaching, the result is that you're left behind very quickly, right? Because there's always new grad students who are valued as those more likely to have a career than this person who has been in an NT position for 10 years. I don't know, it ends up kind of creating a weird set of tensions around…what's even possible.

This participant observation presents one of the most stark examples of long-term precarity in this study, in the way they were able to clearly map how, *over time*, their value, access, and agency was or were likely to be reduced due to the structural conditions of the institution, even as it offered some permanency within structures for advancement.

"The Weight of the Institution" in a Promotion Process

The next participant described "the weight of the institution," a reference to the ways bureaucratic processes move slowly and sometimes prevent action. They also mapped the very real impacts it had on their working life. In IE, that weight can stem from what is referred to as "institutional discourse" (McCoy, 2006, p. 121), which both guides and limits possibilities. McCoy notes interview participants sometimes mark their own experiences in opposition to such discourses. The participant whose story I tell here highlights moments of opposition and calls into play the concept of the "extra-local" or what is outside of a participant's experience, even though they may have strong knowledge of its workings (LaFrance, 2019, p. 31). As such, this participant began to weave in the moments of sense making and oppositional discourse that faculty sometimes engaged in our interviews by describing their process of promotion. In Department X, promotion activities are part of a social coordination process that exists both within and extra-local to the department in the college.[12]

In response to my artifact-based reflective interview request, this participant explained that there were many items they might share with me that related to how course observation somehow showed up later down the line in their promotion work. They walked me through several examples in the course of our interview but began with an email communication from one of the deans in the college related to the submission of materials for the "Des B" promotion. They saw this as a document linked to observation work, which is why they selected it, as their appointment type is primarily teaching based. Their submitted materials centered pedagogy in all its multiple forms and they were evaluated primarily on teaching.

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[12] As noted previously, promotion documents circulate from departmental committees and processes outward to deans and provosts through academic HR and, eventually, back into the department via certification of a promotion.

They chose this item because it indicated clearly to them the value of their institutional participation in the college's workings. In many ways, their interview revealed what I note in the difference between short- and long-term precarity. This participant didn't feel as if their job was at risk, but they did seem to feel their efforts were less meaningful than they deserved to be or were only symbolically valued. This led to a sense of devaluation and limitation in their career trajectory over time. They related:

> I was doing the dossier and was told multiple times "you need to send everything." So, I had a 1000-page dossier. 24 hours before it was to go the provost's office, I received an email from the associate dean saying, "you need to cut this to 250 pages, you have 24 hours"… I cut the dossier by three-quarters and sent it back and made it clear I wasn't happy. And then received a long, apologetic email saying, "look, we read all your stuff, we just can't send it to the provost." And so that email, that moment of feeling…as if 750 pages of my 1000-page dossier could just be deleted, that would be fine…functions as an artifact on a number of levels.

For this participant, interactions like these were indicative of a lack of communication and attention to NT faculty and their work and this interpretation showed up for them in other locations as well. For instance, this participant noted a move to shorten time to promotion for NT faculty but wondered, "are you really valuing the work we're doing? It's super unclear." For them, much of this was tied up in their identity as a scholar and they noted a process by which they used their scholarship to affirm their own worth and value, even as it would not gain them institutional status. They remarked, "I did a presentation on 'the NT art of failure' [at a national conference] and doing that made me feel, 'oh, wow, you're not a failure.' I'm a f***ng good teacher and here's this thing that shows that."

This participant spent much of our interview making sense of their own understandings of the institution's motives and the larger ruling relations and social coordination outside Department X. They explained that the promotion process was, for them, in some ways, an acknowledgement of the permanency of their role, if not its status, noting that "it's like, oh, hey, you can have a career, feel good about it, we can't address the pay inequalities but we can put associate professor on your business card." However, this was largely a symbolic achievement for this participant, made somewhat inauthentic by the material conditions themselves. They remarked, "It's not like we can go on the market as an untenured associate professor and expect to just start with tenure, right? So, it really is, what does this mean? Is this just naming? Is this a naming convention?"

Further, they marked a tension in the process of evaluation specific to rank that spoke to a central tension of this study. How do we evaluate faculty across rank? Do we standardize the process for each rank, should they be different? What are the impacts of those choices? This participant said,

> You can't have this division of labor and evaluate everyone the same way, right? That would be like, let's say you work in a produce department and you're stocking apples and then you're stocking the oranges and somehow you're evaluating them the same way. It it doesn't work, right? And until this year, no one asked us [NT]. No one asked the specialists, hey, what do *you* think needs to happen?

As the above indicates, this participant's responses mirror the kind of discoordination I marked in Chapter Two in the way the FAIS reporting system assumes particular faculty functions in contradiction to the appointment type of the majority of faculty in Department X. Yet, this participant described participating in quite a bit of service and engagement work and said they

would continue to seek promotions as they were available with a "why not?" approach. In this way, long-term precarity showed up as a disconnect between those processes and any meaningful advancement over time. Rather than locate agency over this with the department itself, the participant tracked their experiences back to the entire institutional paradigm and noted that the holding up of tenure as the central standard of faculty roles was "archaic" and disappearing, leaving them to question their own promotion processes as aligned to that standard.

Interviews like this bring up vital questions about the roles faculty play in a changing academic landscape and the disappearance of tenure. How might we continue to build in labor equity as these structures change, knowing that work off the tenure line is the actual condition of the majority of faculty? The real benefit in achieving promotions for this participant wasn't pay or status, which they marked as unavailable to them, but rather continuance. That continuance afforded them a place from which to push back against the power structures of the institution. They explained, "the whole thing brought about an epiphany: I'm just gonna stand up and speak truth to power and if you don't like it, you can *not* reappoint me in three years when my rolling contract—nope actually, it's a rolling contract, so now you're stuck with me and if you don't like it, don't listen."

Teacher Scholar Identity as Refuge

The final narrative I tell here diverges from the first two in key ways. Rather than engaging oppositional discourse (McCoy, 2006) in relation to the ruling relations or dominant narratives of the department, institution, and field, this participant aligned themselves *to* those discourses and located a sense of agency over their work and status in the department and institution through a strong identification with what we might call a teacher-scholar identity.

This identity formation was indicated in part by the object they chose to share with me for our interview, which was a text on pedagogy, something that was not generated or connected directly to the local conditions of their employment but that, for them, helped start a journey as an effective teacher as a graduate student. They told a story about how this book led them to focus on teaching over time and that it also connected to evaluation and assessment more broadly in that measuring teaching effectiveness is part of their disciplinary participation and citizenship. Their very use of "we" language indicated a sense of belonging, which I noted in contrast to the language of some other interview participants who preferred either "they" constructions or used passive language to ascribe responsibility to their department or the institution itself. When explaining their relationship to assessment, this participant explained, "I think the ability to be assessment literate, to be reflective of your own teaching practices, can be our biggest tool in improving the lives of students and faculty."

This participant also explained that they spent time thinking about "what it is to be a good teacher and to be able to translate the things we care deeply about into useful and transferrable knowledge for students." They continued, "I'm of the belief that, certainly, sort of what we were talking about right before we got on the microphone here, that humanists, those in the liberal arts, one of our biggest strengths can be our ability to go into the classroom and teach well."

Additionally, in contrast to other participants, this person noted an overall trust and faith in the observation and evaluation process, relating that they felt fairly valued as a teacher-scholar in the department. They also spent time relating their understandings of the discipline and humanities in general and used the metaphor of "the sky is falling" as a persistent interpretation of assessment that they saw in the discipline where they felt instead, that assessment is integral to good work and teaching.

However, using standpoint methodology to look closer at this interview, a few key moments of tension arose that helped me locate "the disjunctions, divergences and distinctions experienced by [this] individual(s)" (LaFrance, 2019, p. 35). For instance, while other participants felt a lack of agency over their status, this participant did not track tensions to their work in the department directly. Yet, when I asked them whether or not they felt the department viewed them as a "teacher only" and whether that had an impact on their work, they took a long pause. LaFrance notes that pauses, sighs, and affective moments in interviews can act as "significant tells" (p. 28) in IE work that demonstrate moments where a participant is grappling with contradictions between what they know and experience. After the long pause, the participant answered hesitantly, "I think so…that's a great question. I think sometimes yes but it's something that I haven't necessarily pushed back on." They explained that they didn't necessarily perceive this role as a bad thing and that they viewed their colleagues as "generous and wonderful."

Initially in this interview, I began to question whether or not my working problematic was an accurate one for the site of this study. This person seemed to have accessed networks for growth both inside and outside the department in their career trajectory and seemed comfortable in their role as teacher-scholar. Yet, later in our conversation, after our formal interview questions, they revealed the following, which for me spoke to a deep, underlying complexity in their work and career trajectory. This portion of the conversation is why I tell this participant's story here. It locates long-term precarity not simply in the ways professional identity unfolds at institutional rank, but the way this participant navigates that identity *outside* the institution.

They specifically described navigating identity through a significant tension between the cultural status of being a "professor" and the actual, material conditions of their work off the

tenure line. IE seeks an understanding of the material conditions in work cultures and this participant was able to speak to that relationship quite clearly. This participant particularly marked how their material conditions impact their familial and social relationships.

In answering a question about the most challenging aspect of their work off the tenure line, they began:

> I'll start with the biggest of them and work down to the most local. Just in general, pay and remuneration are the most pressing questions when it comes to NT faculty. Summers suck and right now you're seeing these emails, these Facebook posts, because people aren't getting summer appointments and people are having to drastically revamp their lives to reimagine what they thought their lives would be like.

They continued by describing the first two years of their employment in Department X:

> I do not remember two years of this job and it was…I don't know how we made it to be honest with you because it was scary. Because I was on a fixed-term…I thought, I have a career now and I was scared to death…I'll never forget going to get my taxes done. The two tax preparers were MSU graduate students and when they saw, "you're an assistant professor," they read my income and they're like, "how do you live off this?"…And I'll never forget it because I remember my dad and my brother being there because we were doing this all at the same time and then this is the first time they heard what I made. There were like, "you're an assistant professor?" And I qualified that year for the earned income tax credit which was, according to my tax preparer, "the poor people's tax credit." I'll never forget it, because for that year, it was one of the toughest years of my life.

The above is indicative of how this participant's story was reflected in my conversations with department leadership. In those conversations, it became clear that pay disparity is a persistent problem on everyone's minds, regardless of rank. I do not tell this narrative to ascribe any cruelty on the part of the department itself. Everyone is concerned with this issue. Instead, I share it to point to it because as I mentioned early in this chapter, conversations about pay can, at times, be oversimplified. We don't often consider the impact of the issue over time in faculty career trajectories or how it builds precarity in the long-term identification of faculty as professionals.

We tend to view pay in a linear as opposed to ecological model. Further, it simply isn't possible to have a conversation about long-term precarity without addressing the issue of pay, which affects the majority of teaching faculty in Department X and the majority of non-tenured faculty everywhere. Interview participants consistently noted that it was only possible to make it work because they ALL had working spouses making middle class incomes. This participant explained that, as a parent of small children, they would mark real success by whether or not they could send their children to school at the institution by the time their children were college aged. Many expressed that, even with a 50 percent discount as a faculty member, it would be impossible to do on their salary. I wondered, then, how might our approach to labor equity change if we viewed work off the tenure line as permanent, not short term, or at will? What would we be willing to do change?

Systems of Remedy and Alignment

As with the previous two discussion chapters, I offer potential locations or methods by which systems in Department X might be more aligned to the remedies needed to specifically address labor equity and long-term precarity. This aspect is the most difficult to address in this

final results chapter because of the scope, scale, and synthetic nature of the problem and the multitudinous ways faculty off the tenure line in Department X choose to adapt, affirm or reject, manipulate, or come to terms with their visions of their working and professional lives in the long-term.

For example, I noted in an earlier draft of this chapter that the particular confusion around systems of documentation, the purpose of evaluation at each rank, and the impact of evaluation and feedback could be solved with more information dissemination, more feedback, and clearer adherence to departmental processes. In other words, by closing the loop of evaluation and the resulting feedback. I made this suggestion because, as noted in Chapter Four, faculty consistently reflected that they *wanted* more direct, thorough, and individualized feedback in their moments of promotion and observation, even as they noted it was likely not possible given the time and effort it would take. I also pointed out that the persistence of this confusion coupled with a desire for more feedback spoke not only to a lack of resources, but also to confidence and faith in the processes themselves, or the lack thereof. I argued in that draft that this tension, even if superficially fixable, deserves reflection.

However, as a part of the work, I applied an extended member checking method (Chase, 2017) wherein participants challenged me and pushed back against my own simplified notions as a researcher regarding an easy communicative "fix" at the level of boss texts. They all quickly explained that this solution also ran the risk of being just as symbolic as the current process feels (i.e., "rubber stamping"). Instead, one participant spoke about their engagement in a university task force with NT faculty from across campus and upper-level administration. The task force is collectively working to improve evaluation models to mirror those of a genuine "peer review" and thereby make them more meaningful across rank. Though this process was in its beginning

stages, the participant was hopeful that it could affect change. As a part of that work, they noted that, "[we] are re-writing the promotion protocol for UNTF and AS and it might have reverberating changes. They [the group] are advocating for language change, from NT to 'professor of practice.'" They further explained that the work is coalitional across ranks and that changes will start at the college level. They hoped that "when it works in CAL, HR and employee relations will take note and make changes broadly."

I share this response here because it is important and powerful. At the heart of feminist methodologies, IE, and any work that draws itself from Marxist ideologies, the idea of collective stances, mutual aid, and collaboration are key components to improving institutional spaces, workplaces, and societal structures. In universities, this work speaks to the need for us to think and act cross-institutionally to support labor equity. As such, my suggestion here is simply that Department X align to, support, work with, and incorporate the coalitional redesign being done by non-tenured faculty and adopt it in their own processes and documents.

Yet, I do not offer this example to address long-term precarity writ large. Instead, I do so to indicate one potential location from which this department can engage the complexities of faculty evaluation across rank. In the conclusion below and in the following chapter, I begin to consider long-term precarity more broadly.

Conclusion

> *Fieldwork begins with an analytic stance that is committed to gathering evidence to build an account about how something in the world is being socially organized for particular people. Data collection is focused on learning from people about how they do their work and to learn about how problems are linked and connected within institutional processes. The analytic goal is to find and describe the ruling relations that can be shown to extend beyond the study informants. (Rankin, 2017, p. 6)*

I end here with a return to Rankin's notion of fieldwork in IE. As the anchor standpoint, participants' accounts here (i.e., those working off the tenure line) reveal something significant

about how they do their work. In addition, their accounts reveal how their labor is linked to the institutional processes that inscribe such work from promotion processes in the Bylaws to college level reviews to material conditions. In Department X, there are broader opportunities for non-tenured faculty than in most places and these structures in turn enable us to consider a broader range of issues beyond what is normally considered in discussions of adjunct labor in writing studies. Those conversations are often confined to short-term precarity. Instead, the accounts here can help us clearly see the nodes of long-term precarity that reside in the work and ruling relations at play in the department. Specifically, contributing factors to this long-term precarity in department X appeared in: (1) the insecurity related to value and opportunity over the long-term that shows up in observation, evaluation, and promotion processes; (2) the lack of continuity with larger institutional processes in which NT and AS work is perceived as expendable or not worth paying attention to in evaluation; and (3) the pay and remuneration over the long-term that prevents faculty from achieving the full benefits of the professoriate, even as they perceive meaning and value in their teaching and scholarship. These aspects "extend beyond the study informants" in that they are tied up in texts, procedures, and institutional workings.

Much of this may also be bound up in "stealth requirements" but also in the very real necessity of shifting some of the service and administrative labor in Department X to those off the tenure line. As Department X continues to work with less than 20 TT faculty and more than 50 NT faculty, these movements will only become ever more present. The stories of non-tenured faculty thus present a key opportunity for reimagining faculty work while, at the same time, building in structures to alleviate precarity in the long-term. The next chapter devotes itself to envisioning some of these possibilities and locating structures in Department X that might make it a model for how to do so ethically and pragmatically.

CHAPTER SIX: CENTERING LABOR EQUITY: DEVELOPING FACULTY EVALUATION HEURISTICS FOR A CHANGING ACADEMY

Me: what would you say is the most challenging part of your job?

Participant: I like doing the observations because, again, I get to learn, which is great. I wish I could do more. [But] *I think a more robust system of doing* [different] *types of observations is needed. The problem is that we are just absolutely bonkers stretched thin as faculty [with] service overload that I feel really bad asking people to do it. So, then, I end up doing it and then my schedule doesn't necessarily allow me to observe all the classes I can or return letters of observations to people I thought I had in a timely manner.*

I mean, the joke I make with everyone, just having to turn in my annual review stuff is, nowhere in my contract does it say service but I'm on twenty *committees. So, my argument is that I justify it mentally and emotionally by saying, "well, that's a part of my job"…mentally, I try to justify it by saying to myself, "that is a part of your administrative role and that's how it is."*

Introduction

The work of this dissertation focuses primarily on faculty observation and evaluation by centering the perspectives of those working off the tenure line—i.e., those from whom the primary concept of "long-term precarity" emerged—as an anchor standpoint. Yet, in conjunction with and related to that concept, another element surfaced in my interview work as well as my examination of the departmental Bylaws and the highly participatory and developed committee structures engendered in that document (Chapter Three). It also appeared in discussions of how observation works as a tool of evaluation (Chapter Four). That is, observation exists in the category of "departmental service." The service overload that was repeatedly mentioned in interviews with faculty of all ranks fed one side of the problematic of this study: that Department X does many things well in faculty observation and evaluation but can at times fall short, possibly due to a lack of time-resources for those called to do this labor. This counterpoint illuminated that reality and demonstrated that my research was not merely about the promotional

act of observation or the role it played in evaluation, but the ways it is connected to larger structures of shared governance and institutional membership.

For example, while tenure-stream faculty are typically the only faculty rank with explicit percentages of their work devoted to service for the purposes of advancement in the tenure system, I begin with the narrative above because this faculty member works *off* the tenure line. The participant's story reflects the impacts of larger structures in Department X and thereby reveals slippages in its connections of rank to appointment type, particularly in terms of service. In other words, there aren't enough TT faculty to do the labor of managing personnel as well as curricular tasks in the department. As a result, this work has been increasingly shared with faculty off the tenure line (i.e., NT and AS).

My interviews indicated the department has accomplished this by working at the college and departmental levels to make NT and AS appointment types inclusive of administrative, service, and leadership work. This shift in appointment types marks a notable change to the typically rigid distinctions between those who have TT appointments and those who do the majority teaching work in the department, institution, and the discipline of writing studies more broadly. Yet, the material and status rewards over the long-term career trajectories of those shifting appointment types are uneven. First, there is no system by which those off the tenure line might achieve pay parity with their TT counterparts. As an example, average TT faculty salaries in the department are one hundred thousand dollars per annum and AS faculty are fifty-five thousand. Second, work done off the tenure line in service of the institution is rarely as legible outside the university for those not serving in TT roles, a fact I contend contributes to long-term precarity.

The initial argument I make here is a material one, but it is incomplete. A purely material argument leaves out the need for the more complex, nuanced conversation that needs to take place in writing studies. This issue likely cannot be solved by pay remuneration alone or by simply shifting appointment types. I attempt to address some of this nuance in the final two chapters of the dissertation. A discussion about status, legibility, and portability of status as related to administrative and service labor requires further consideration as a feature of long-term precarity and pushes back against the notion that faculty in these roles are necessarily temporary. The narrative of temporary employment is a pervasive and common misconception that allows our discipline to bypass recognition of the need for equitable structures for those off the tenure line in the *long term*. Without recognizing this, we are likely to maintain the conditions we find ourselves in today, what Susan Miller (1991) calls, "the sad woman in the basement" phenomena of writing programs.

Importantly, the exigencies for my discussion (i.e., material conditions and long-term precarity and how they are bound up in shared governance and institutional membership) reside in an awareness that tenure is disappearing and that faculty of all types and training are more likely to end up off the tenure line than on it.

The Why of a Heuristic Approach to Labor Equity

In general, this chapter presents the culmination of this project: a heuristic model for observation, evaluation, and shared governance informed by labor equity. I present this heuristic for two reasons. The first is that, throughout this project, I was cautious in providing prescriptive recommendations but also wanted to offer something to the departmental community that might be useful if and when they chose to consider labor equity as more central to shared governance, observation, and evaluation. As the project came to a close, I participated in conversations with

the director of first-year writing, who remained curious about how my findings might be useful to program revisions. The heuristic modes in this chapter thus echo those conversations. I marked this interest as a feature of the success of this project in that it directly spoke back to its context in useful ways. From those conversations, I began to consider a key question: what areas of program structure could be systematically reconsidered through the lens of labor equity for effective changes to be made?

The second reason for the heuristic approach in this chapter is that, from the beginning of this project, I hoped to speak both back to and beyond my own department. Writing studies has long discussed the foundations of our discipline inside its labor arrangements writ large and, in addition, has begun to take up the institutional case as a method by which knowledge sharing on labor issues might occur (Kahn et al., 2017). I hoped to build from those conversations by designing a flexible, dynamic, inquiry driven framework by which other programs and departments might account for the standpoints of their own particular contexts, as well as the particulars of academic rank at their institutions as they move toward making changes. The heuristic is grounded in materialist feminist frameworks that seek systematic, structural change for better working conditions for the collective.

When we evaluate aspects of institutional ruling relations and social coordination, we are too often left with a "now what?" question. This heuristic is meant to move beyond models of critique to provide the next steps for departments seeking to address labor equity or long-term precarity more specifically. It is grounded in the "looking up" of IE and based in the standpoints of those most precarious in our labor hierarchies.

Developing Labor-Equity Heuristics

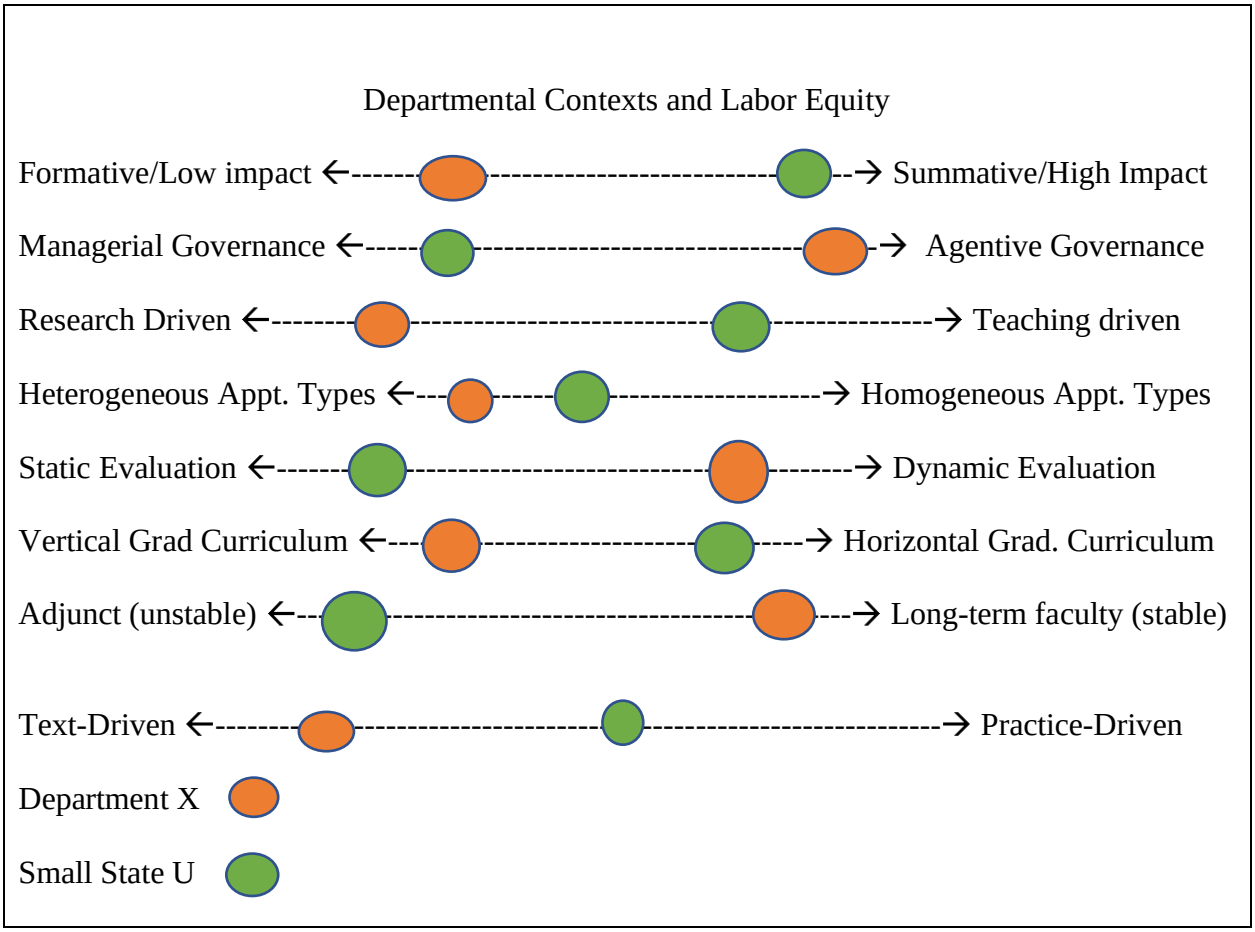
My engagement with heuristic approaches comes from the work and teaching of Dr. Julie Lindquist, an ethnographic pedagogical researcher, my advisor, and the director of FYW in Department X. In a one-on-one conversation, she explained her orientation to heuristics as somewhat outward facing in that they set up epistemological structures that address the application of conditions to outcomes. For example, if Department X, or any department, wanted to address clarity in evaluation processes for those off the tenure line, what conditions would have to exist or be created to achieve that outcome? In other words, if you want "x," what "y or z" things would have to appear first? In addition, I employed a visual tool developed by Michael Wojcik (2013) to conceptualize heuristic conditions, tools, and outcomes for organizational structures and to plot features of my data within departmental models.

I take this approach here and in the discussion using Department X as an empirical example to offer ways for considering how departmental governance might be relevant to revising faculty evaluation with a labor-equity lens. These heuristics are meant to illuminate what means exist, what is available, and what is obstructed in a departmental workplace for the purpose of identifying viable processes in particular locations. Conversely, and more hopefully, another question to consider is: what do particular changes to training, practices, and structures *afford* in programs or departments seeking to address long-term precarity and labor equity more broadly? The empirical examples that are heuristically presented in this chapter are meant to consider aspects of long-term precarity primarily for those off the tenure line but also to examine a more ecological model of disciplinary labor structures from graduate education to, shared governance, to membership in institutions of higher education.

As such, I consider three key areas of this heuristic approach I believe must be manipulated to redress long-term precarity. I do so in conjunction with the visual in Figure 3 to address specific nodes within these three primary areas and use Department X as an empirical example to discuss how heuristic questions in each of the three areas might conjoin with the nodes from the visual to enact change.

1. Graduate education and training
2. Departmental/local Practices
3. Structures/systems change, departmental and institutional

Figure 3 Features of Departmental Structure



I borrow the visual schema above from Michael Wojcik's (2013) MA thesis from Department X to imagine features of departmental contexts and shared governance. Plotted here is Department X (i.e., the site of this study) and Small State U (i.e., the previous institution whose narrative begins this dissertation in Chapter One) as a contrasting institution types. Specifically, I analyze eight features of departmental arrangement that I see as having a relationship to labor (in)equity. The purpose of the chart is to map the following: specific types of observation (formative vs. summative), governance structure type, department/institution type or mission, departmental faculty makeup, evaluation across time (static vs. dynamic), graduate education models, labor arrangements for those off the tenure line, and the role of texts or spaces in which ruling relations are instantiated in a departmental space. I highlight these features in the following sections across the three locations necessary for considering change: graduate education, practices, and structures/systems.

Graduate Education and the Seeds of Long-term Precarity

Disciplinary participants in writing studies enter through various nodes and locations but much of their disciplinary enculturation occurs in graduate programs like the one in Department X. As previously noted, (Chapter Four), my interview data revealed that much of the department's graduate training teaches the notion of academic citizenship via research profiles in research-based appointments. My understanding of the structure of graduate training in Department X is drawn both from that interview data and from my own participant role in these structures. In particular, Department X has a vertical curriculum and is research driven (see above). Thus, it is my contention that the seeds of long-term precarity are sown here, when training and education for graduate students does not align with the realities of the field and higher education more broadly. Applying a heuristic approach, we might consider the following:

If we seek to shift graduate education models to address long-term precarity and center labor equity, what do we need to know/consider about graduate programs, curriculum, and professional training?

Using Department X as a sample, it is clear that several aspects of graduate training provide locations for change. Primarily, I argue that graduate student preparation must change. Consistent with IE, this curriculum is imbricated with ruling relations and boss texts. Using IE, we might therefore consider how the curriculum extends to practical training, program administration, and viability. For example, Department X runs a large graduate program and has only just begun to consider size in direct relationship to long-term trajectories and professional opportunities available to those they train. At the time of this writing, discussions about curriculum change in the graduate program were taking place in the job market group, of which I was a member, as well as in a series of committee meetings and town halls. The incoming graduate director was organizing a professional development space for those seeking work in publics and non-academic settings, in which several graduate students participated in its pilot form (myself included). According to the director and conversations with an academic dean, I also learned the program had begun to more purposefully consider the size of the academic job market to guide their acceptance rate in the graduate program. It must be noted that much of that was hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial justice uprisings of 2019-2020 than by department initiative.

In particular, the graduate students and faculty were beginning to consider how to build doctoral study as a vehicle beyond that of a tenure stream faculty identity (Townhall, personal communication). As the researcher of a study relevant to these efforts, I suggest curriculum in community engaged scholarship and practice to move toward la paperson's (2017) notion of a

"school-to-community-pipeline," which begins by working with more collectivist notions of institutional mission (p. 42). Such an approach would align with the departmental values of Department X (Bylaws, Mission). In addition, curriculum that includes institutional literacies would provide conditions for graduate students to engage as active, institutional participants who understand institutional change making. For example, it was clear to me in the course of this research and in my participation in graduate student advocacy spaces (WRAP, Graduate Student Demands) that few doctoral students in Department X understand the workings of RPT for faculty across rank, the observation and evaluation processes that faculty engage, department salaries, or the documents that guide these moments of shared governance from the Bylaws to the university handbook. Arguably, curricular changes could begin to address these gaps by investing in shaping students as institutional participants as opposed to mere researchers or even teachers. Understanding these genres and their rhetorical power is critical to the institutional citizenship they will have in their careers regardless of rank, and for building tools for institutional citizenship and activism.

Second, my conversations with NT and AS faculty, as well as with graduate students, revealed that practical moments of mentorship and training were lacking across rank. These areas touch on both current and future labor conditions and curriculum. For example, there are currently few productive connections between NT faculty and graduate students. Given this, argue there is an opportunity for graduate students to learn from NT faculty, as their future professional models in addition to graduate faculty, almost all of whom are in TT, research driven roles. To return to the central focus of this study, graduate students should have access to the structures of observation and evaluation as practitioners in the field and should have opportunities to practice peer evaluation and writing in those genres.

Finally, my data also indicates need for an ecological model of graduate education that does not rely on graduate students for cheap labor (Bousquet, 2004) but instead considers the viability of academic careers in the long-term. For example, how many students might reasonably be supported during and *after* they complete their studies? Such changes might be made in accordance with agentive governance (above), which would model for graduate students the permeability of institutional structures and the availability of change-making based on collaborative, coalitional, labor structures. In the visual above, these moves would be plotted on the right horizontal side of the continuum and may afford meaningful pathways to long-term career trajectories for the students we train in writing studies.

Observation and Evaluation Practices for Agentive Governance

Practices of observation and evaluation in Department X are somewhat consistent and well guided by an ethics of care. However, they are perhaps less meaningful than assumed according to patterns in the interview data. In addition, interviews revealed that the institutional circuits by which observation-as-evaluation travel are not clear or meaningful to those experiencing them. A simple heuristic question emerges here:

> *If we seek to make observation and evaluation more meaningful across rank and time, what do we need to know about the practices surrounding it and how those practices circulate?*

As demonstrated in several data, including interviews with administrators, the boss texts from Department X, and departmental histories, (Fero, 2009) the department is agentive in governance, its practices of observation are driven by formative principles, and its process of observation/evaluation is dynamic across time. Yet, many interview participants drew a sense of precarity at the moment of professional evaluation and observation in Department X. Though

Department X resides at the opposite end of "Small State U" in most ways, feelings of precarity in moments of evaluation are persistent across both institution types. Though observation is not directly tied to annual renewal in Department X like it is in "Small State U," it also does not provide the moments of attention and evaluation the faculty I spoke with desired. This lack of attention, or "rubber stamping," was revealed in interviews as connected to sense of value in the department. It was also, according to the data, tied to a sense of *advancement over time*. As such, addressing evaluation and observation practices are a potential location for move Department X into balance with formative (low impact) and summative (high impact) nodes on the continuum. Indeed, Department X is dynamic in its evaluation modes, so moving all the way toward static evaluation will not solve the problem but, at the same time, a purely dynamic set of evaluation practices and structures may be causing some of the opacity and confusion experienced by faculty. Codifying practices, closing feedback loops, and building explicit connections between professional evaluation and advancement are all part of addressing long-term precarity. This dissertation has worked to map the circuits by which observation and evaluation travel and their impacts, purposes, and tools used for observation to uncover places where these changes might occur. For example, addressing observation practices as part of shared governance is an area wherein long-term precarity might be considered. Doing so could create alignment between practices, values, and structures across both summative and formative features.

Changes in Systems and Structures toward Labor Equity

The Bylaws and FAIS Supplement reveal a heterogeneous appointment type distribution in Department X. Survey data and interview data specifically revealed labor structures as fairly stable and long-term in nature across rank, even as workplace activity across rank was becoming more flexible. Critical to IE is the ability to take an activist approach to research and make

changes in institutional spaces—in this case, a departmental workplace—and these labor arrangements make that work possible. To illustrate, I return to a story that unfolded after my initial data collection that speaks directly to what I discovered about Department X as it worked to make good on its "means well paradigm."

In one interview, an NT faculty member described working in a college level task force to examine promotional practices broadly. This signaled to me agentive practice across rank within a stable appointment type. Further, in the larger context of this study, such work reveals foundations that for engaging institutional change that begin in Department X and move upward across the university.

Constellated with long-term precarity, initiatives like the one described above shift institutional focus on promotion and advancement over the long-term for those working off the tenure line and they reimagine the use of institutional circuits to do so. The participant in the task force asked questions in our interview like, *why are all models for promotion and evaluation based in the tenure-stream protocols, purposes, and practices*? They thereby noted the fissures, slippages, and misalignment for faculty of their rank and their everyday work processes that result from those models.

As I completed this dissertation, the results of that work were coming to fruition and appeared in a draft of new guidelines for the promotion of fixed-term faculty that was sent to the colleges in October 2020. The text is included in Appendix G. Importantly, the guidelines began to imagine a wider range of activities for promotion and appointment type in promotion and evaluation structures:

> The promotion criteria used by the College of Arts & Letters and its affiliated units may be in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and/or service/outreach

> corresponding to the relevant position workload percentages. The successful candidate for a fixed-term faculty promotion is expected to have demonstrated rank-appropriate excellence in intellectual leadership in the areas of their assignment.

Further, it instantiates language like the following for each moment of promotion, that each assessment should have a "firm basis in actual performance for predicting long-term capacity for the achievement and maintenance of enduring high-quality professional achievement" (n.p). As the above indicates, the notion of intellectual leadership corresponds to the College of Arts and Letters' schema for institutional participation (Frietzche, Hart-Davidson, & Long, 2017), which I introduced in Chapter Three and can also be found in Appendix F. Taken together, this work is evidence of departmental agency and participation in larger institutional structures to affect change toward labor equity specifically at the interstices of faculty roles and long-term precarity. Department X is an example of the answer to this heuristic question around systems/structure change:

> *How much/what sort of knowledge of and participation in institutional systems is necessary to make those systems permeable for a department as it seeks to address labor equity/long-term precarity?*

At the department level itself, egalitarian, participatory structures instantiated by the boss texts work to fulfill an altruistic vision of shared governance. The work of the new guidelines may serve to instantiate some of those values as observation and promotion documents follow institutional circuity.

However, I want to take a moment here to trouble the articulation of practice to structures/systems and resist notions of an easy solution by simply changing a practice or appointment types to distribute labor. To begin, as it plays a role in institutional circuits,

observation takes up enormous amounts of time and input from all who participate, creating a labor burden for TT faculty primarily. According to my interview participants, that overburdening forecloses time for thoughtful feedback. Further, it remains idiosyncratic, uneven, opaque, and an open loop that diminishes its substantive potential at the department level.

In addition, in the merit review committee, which is tasked with year-to-year evaluation, there is no central rubric or system by which materials are evaluated (static). Given this, it is not surprising that the feedback resulting from these labor-intensive, collectively engaged activities leaves many feeling unclear about the value of their labor against any collectively determined set of standards.

Further, in the absence of clear protocols, there is little recourse for a faculty member if they feel they have been unfairly evaluated. One faculty member interview participant, for instance, related that a supervisor let them know privately that the committee had a problem with a particular, widely used term the instructor had used in their narrative for annual review and was subsequently being reprimanded for it. This participant remarked that it felt "punitive" but that they didn't really know (1) how to address it, or (2) how their annual materials were being ranked otherwise. They remarked that this left them feeling that the best they could do was to work to maintain good graces with supervisors in other ways in hopes for advancement.

The task force documents evince a move toward recognizing a full spectrum of activity within appointment types. Yet, this too is complex, especially in regard to service and professional development. The former chair who moved NT faculty to a 90/10 contract noted he did so because he believed building in a commitment to engagement, participation, and faculty development was an important part of making the department stronger. But, in addition to representing more work for the same pay, most faculty interview related that the PD

opportunities felt remedial, infantilizing, and connected to the notion that their labor was solely contained within the department. Thinking heuristically, we might ask:

> *What do departments need to know or decide about professional development and the ways it moves within an institution to harness its extra-departmental purposes?*

I want to be careful here to not erase the individual efforts of *many* faculty members working off the tenure line who engage across campus because there are many who do. Yet, its sanction by the department and benefits to the status and longevity of those faculty remained unclear in interviews and the documents I assessed in conjunction with Department X. This particular aspect is thus worthy of more study and consideration. For example, does engagement across campus, paid or unpaid, increase notions of job satisfaction, long-term stability, and advancement?

Affordances of Institutional Models

Ultimately, long-term precarity at the location of observation and evaluation is not unique to Department X but I believe it presents a place from which to consider a set of labor-equity centered heuristics grounded in materialist feminist principles of structural change and collective agency. In fact, I contrast it with my own previous institution, where hierarchies were somewhat different, managerialism was the system of operation, observation was much more summative, and where evaluation was conducted in a regularized, consistent set of practices year-to-year for those off the tenure line. Much of that practice was driven by a union contract that superseded departmental agency, gave faculty of all ranks redress for moments of unfairness in the process, heightened transparency and YET, did not alleviate precarity. So, what happens when some features of departmental context (Figure 3) are functioning for labor equity and others are not? A

heuristic approach provides avenues to manipulate graduate training, practices, and systems/structures in those directions.

Consequently, I end my exploration of heuristic approaches not with a set of clear answers or positivist assumptions about solving the problems in the discipline or department. Nor do I end with the assumption that it is an impossible task due to the nature of social coordination, which might disperse agency. Materialist feminisms argue that, to do either, further entrenches the liberal and neoliberal white imaginary (Ebert, 1996). Instead, I end with a mapping of locations for inquiry in writing studies that might lead us to center labor equity, a notion that connects, constellates, and intersects with multiple forms of oppression workers experience in the academy. I therefore seek a heuristic that can be portable to a wide range of departmental contexts and institution types in this regard, from the egalitarian research driven model of Department X to the teaching focused, managerialist "Small State U."

A Coda

There is one final moment of story I want to share in the work of this study that relates to both the current context of our national conversation on racial justice and the local labor configurations of Department X. I tell it here because of its intersection with the heuristic approaches I offer as the culmination of this research project. I believe this narrative provides an extension of those heuristics by asking: what happens when aspects of department life arise as having the most significant bearing on the labor equity work of that space? How might we continue or incorporate labor equity centered curriculums, practices, and systems/structural thinking in the context of the complexity of departmental life? These considerations are directly tied to the time/place of this writing, namely a global pandemic, the fracturing of late-stage capitalism, and uprising for racial justice.

In the fall of 2020, the graduate students in Department X collaboratively composed a set of "demands" to the department that were located in a desire for racial justice and the centering of anti-racist pedagogy. Modeled after a set of demands within NCTE and CCCC from the Black Caucus, the document asked for increased transparency and for structural changes and curricular changes to be made in service of social equity, justice, and inclusion, particularly against anti-Black racism. In many ways, these demands were aimed at holding the department accountable to its highest goals and aspirations, long in place, but perhaps not consistently articulated in the lived experiences of its members.

The department responded by addressing the immediate concerns of the document, building space for town halls and incorporating the graduate student demands into their one, three, and five-year plans. In many ways, the department seemed happy to have the graduate student document as a guide, yet, concerns arose for faculty, particularly NT and AS faculty. In part, the difficulty was erasure. NT and AS faculty are, overall, invisible to graduate students in the department, rendering opportunities for shared knowledge, expertise, and coalition non-existent. The demands primarily made clear that graduate students expected an overhaul of the first-year curriculum and that it be centered in anti-racist pedagogy, but it left unarticulated *how* such a demand would be met. NT faculty rightly saw demands being made over their work without any acknowledgement of the material conditions they faced as teachers *or* their existing efforts toward equity-centered pedagogy.

My own participation in the demands spoke *directly* to some of the tensions I found when participating in Department X, attending cultural change roundtables, and conducting my research. That tension was a lack of shared standpoint or viewpoint across the departmental hierarchies. In fact, one AS participant named it specifically as TT faculty "having blinders on"

when it comes to seeing the work experiences of others. Structurally, by the very fact that there are few opportunities for GA and NT relationships to be built in the department, labor across rank becomes further invisible.

So, how is the work of these goals of creating less precarity and more robust anti-racist educational practices related? To meet the graduate student demands, the bulk of the teaching faculty would have to be trained—or perhaps retrained—and the WPAs would have to become experts in anti-racist pedagogy and move their own curriculum in new ways. This takes time, labor, and money. So, while asking for very critical changes away from whitestream curriculum in the face of an uprising for racial justice, the graduate student demands essentially locate the work for that goal in the labor of others, mostly that of NT and AS faculty.

Rather than see this as a problem or a tension, I see it as an opportunity. Or rather, I see it as both a problem and an opportunity. The problem is located in a lack of relationship and potential for more top-down, exploitative conditions. Yet, opportunities for collaborative curriculum design, which include understandings of the "interlocking oppressions" of race, class, gender, ability, nationality, etc. might be centered through the lived experience and expertise of teachers and in coalitional work across department hierarchies and constituencies. The existing efforts of NT and AS faculty in these directions might thus become visible to others, a problem that has been ignored for too long. In addition, graduate students might learn what a herculean effort curriculum redesign is when done in collectivist, egalitarian governance frames and they might be helpful participants IN it. There are, unfortunately, few opportunities in institutional spaces for explicit training in coalitional work, yet that work is what moves us toward change.

In this way, graduate students might learn about what is *structurally feasible*, not merely ideologically necessary, across the constraints of time, budget, status, and expertise that are all

too real in institutional spaces. Such a redesign could be guided by both best research practices, localized conditions, and shared knowledge.

This work is as immensely difficult as it is rewarding. The perspectives of the graduate students are centrally important in Department X and its mission but so too are the work lives of NT and AS faculty. Thinking heuristically, we might ask:

> *What do we have to know about institutional labor to achieve a curriculum built on racial justice?*
>
> *What do we have to know about one another to move toward the shared goals of collective liberation?*

Later, in the spring of 2021, the department released a more comprehensive assessment of their workings—initiated in part by the grad student demands, Covid-19 and NT organizing efforts—which detailed some of their forward moving plans, changes to graduate curriculum, changes to assessment and promotion and host of other evaluative reports based in the work done across several working groups and committees. The work begins, the work continues.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HIGHER EDUCATION MODELS FOR REIMAGINING FACULTY LIVES

Introduction

This concluding chapter locates areas of scholarship outside writing studies where new paradigms for faculty roles have been proposed and considers how that work might constellate with the central focus on evaluation and "promotional acts" within my own research site. I present this mapping because I believe we should both harness our disciplinary strengths and look elsewhere for potential models of practice and systems change. Department X provides a viable location from which to consider such approaches and my belief that such an approach is possible is grounded in the already successful aspects of governance the department engages, namely that of a mission-driven, egalitarian structure built on participatory approaches and agency over its own departmental culture.

In the final moves of this dissertation, I therefore approach my own context and findings from a broader lens to further examine potentials for writing programs and departments. IE resists divorcing any theory from the particulars of context and location. Nonetheless, I believe research studies in higher education might offer some of the context needed for further work around labor equity and the changing nature of universities. In this, the final section, I examine inquiries into how redefining faculty roles, as Department X has already begun to do, might assist us in understanding our relationships to institutions.

Scholarship on Faculty Evaluation

Scholarship on faculty evaluation and assessment paradigms in writing studies and higher education studies maps the need for multiple measures of evaluation that recognize the changing assessment and accountability models now common in higher education (Moore, 2015) and

analyzes how departmental structures might shift accordingly (Walvoord et al., 2000). At the heart of this work is often the argument that departments and disciplines can and should engage practices centered in their own disciplinary knowing. Our own disciplinary knowing, of course, is highly contested but at its most broad definition, might be said to move in the general direction of democratic, equity-based approaches to research, teaching, and administration.

Comparatively, work in higher education studies in the last 40 years has begun to carefully consider the university more holistically by examining its mission and social function and again asking how faculty roles support that mission. In a conversation with Ann Austin, a leading scholar in faculty assessment work and higher education, she noted that her own work (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007) has begun to consider the *value* of TT faculty as a way to identify the central elements of that appointment type and, further, to ask how those elements might be preserved in work both on *and* off the tenure line. Austin related that the essential elements of tenure include "respect, collegiality, autonomy, academic freedom, flexibility, and professional growth, as well as a relationship to productivity and satisfaction." In our conversation, she asked, "how do we reconceptualize these essential elements, even if that labor is not protected by tenure?" (personal communication, 2019).

Accordingly, some of Austin and her colleagues' work has been to devise ways to structure positions to do that in the face of the disappearance of tenure (amongst other exigencies). Austin, who is involved in this work at both the institutional and national level, mentioned that she believes institutions and the communities and societies they serve need to imagine a different kind of social contract with one another. So, she asked, "how do we create a new one?" (personal communication, 2019). In response to that question, Austin and Trice (2016) argue for a new compact between faculty and their institutions built on a "reciprocal, two-

way relationship that includes benefits and responsibilities for both the individual faculty member and the institution that is relevant for all faculty members regardless of employment type" (p. 60).

As mentioned in Chapter Five, much of this has a global context related to industry, parents, and communities who question the assumed value of a college degree. It is also a response to national conversations that ask how U.S. education models might stay "competitive" in a global market in the face of changing economies, student loan debt, austerity, and the rise of online education. Further, many of these initiatives, including funding through NIH grants and institutional and national mandates, were disciplinary mandates as well. As Austin noted, when this work began 25 years ago, STEM fields paid a dearth of attention to pedagogy and moves to increase the efficacy of classroom practice in those areas have constituted a large portion of the national conversation regarding the assessment of teaching and faculty evaluation in higher education. These initiatives, like CIRTL (Center for Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning), considered how a lack of effective pedagogy acted as a gatekeeping mechanism for minoritized students, particularly in STEM fields and how, over the course of the last few decades, they have developed what they refer to as "evidence-based teaching practices" built on techniques like peer learning and problem-based and active learning principles (Austin, personal communication, 2019). This evidence-based teaching practice undergirds Austin and her collaborator's "TEval" project mentioned in Chapter Four.

However, while equity is a component of this work at the local level, it also appears to lend itself well to neoliberal conceptions of autonomy and accountability, individual reward, status, and profit-driven narratives, running the risk of creating monolithic notions of effective pedagogy. Though I present higher education studies perspectives here as useful to our own

discipline, in some ways, writing studies is right to resist such positivist approaches. However, when considering a "post-tenure" academy, our response has been typical of our discipline. Taking a rhetorical approach alongside others in the humanities, we tend to mark our value to the mission of a changing academy and seek to retain a place within it, while protecting our expertise and making the case that our knowledge is valuable in business and culture (see: *Inside Higher Ed* and *Chronicle of Higher Education* think pieces). While valuable and noble, retaining disciplinary autonomy may also serve to protect our current practices related to labor (in)equity in a discipline built on managerialism, feminization, and subordination within the academy (Strickland, 2011; Bousquet, 2004; Crowley, 1998).

In a chapter titled, "Recognizing the Need for a New Faculty Model" from higher education studies, Kezar and Maxey (2016) perform what I suspect for most of us in writing studies is an uncomfortable critique of current faculty roles in higher education. I discuss it here in some depth. They note that, contrary to what they cite as administrative perspectives, the importance of investing in faculty in terms of institutional models and student success across a number of factors including the success of marginalized, First Gen, and BIPOC students improved depth and quality of instruction (pp. 24-8). They proceed by critiquing adjunct labor models and tracing their history: they believe adjunct labor grew out of the idea that practicing professionals would add their expertise in classrooms and, because they would be teaching in addition to their main careers, full compensation wasn't necessary. Writing studies bears a slightly competing narrative: that teachers of writing were first women secretaries (Strickland, 2011) or women "lay readers" (Ritter, 2012). Regardless of the particulars of institutional history, we know adjunct conditions did not unfold as originally intended. Yet, it is useful to understand the impact of these historical narratives, as they perhaps are the cause of a persistent

perception in the academy that adjunct labor is not permanent, that adjuncts are "guests" rather than the foundational, low-wage labor on which the current academy functions.

Kezar and Maxey additionally note that a surplus of adjunct labor leads to a shift in TT workload, including increases in "areas of governance and leadership," which they further attribute to a situation where "curricula remain outdated, new faculty must fend for themselves and potential innovations are ignored" (Shuster & Finkelstein as cited by Kezar & Maxey, 2016). As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this sentiment is certainly echoed in Department X. What's more, according to my interview data, it may also relate to non-tenured faculty conceptions of the mentorship opportunities (or the lack thereof) available in Department X.

Resisting easy fixes, Kezar and Maxey rightly point to a number of problems with adjunct labor but they also critique the tenure-stream model, which, they argue, devalues teaching in service of privileging research. As a pedagogically centered discipline, writing studies may suffer less in this regard but interview responses do bear this out in the research-heavy faculty context of my study. Next, Kezar and Maxey assert that, in many cases, a focus on research can compete with the instructional missions of institutions wherein reward systems are geared toward publication and knowledge dissemination (p. 35). This structure may also increase gendered, classed, and raced inequities (Massey & Hogan, 2012). Kezar and Maxey add that tenure-stream models prevent flexibility in hiring responsiveness in relation to changing disciplinary areas and modes.[13] They note that tenure-stream models de-incentivize service to the institution in other capacities, as they take time away from publication for tenure. In response to

[13] The College of Arts and Letters' process of developing the Department of African American and African Studies is indicative of this difficulty.

fears about the disappearance of tenure and its impact on academic freedom, they somewhat controversially argue that academic freedom does not require the presence of tenure.

These assertions as well as some of the characterizations they make are uncomfortable to say the least, yet I maintain they are worthy of a degree of skepticism, particularly regarding the assumption that teaching is of low value across all disciplines. Further, it is still true that a shift in faculty roles away from tenure opens up the potential for further exploitation, decreases in salary, and a lack of long-term, steady, stable appointment types. They also stray dangerously close to late-stage capitalist notions of profit making and institutional belonging. However, it may be worth asking whether or not these shifts away from tenure stream models are already occurring (they are) and why we would work to ignore them rather than to shape a new faculty in equitable ways by accounting for the multiple exigencies at work, some filled with opportunity, others deserving of caution and pushback. I believe writing studies is an ideal place to engage this work and I believe our work here must be clear-eyed, uncompromising, and agentive.

Alongside Elizabeth Holcombe, Kezar and Maxey (2016) support their argumentative analysis by conducting a 1500-person survey across ranks and institutional demographics to empirically understand perceptions and identified needs for change in faculty roles. They cite the following as areas of consideration and identified needs by administrators and faculty alike:

- restoring professionalism to the faculty role,
- reduced dependence on part-time faculty and a move to a focus on full-time employment,
- creation of more/differentiated faculty roles,
- importance of teaching, scholarship as a core element of new faculty roles,
- flexibility, collaboration and community engagement,
- and a consideration of faculty as engaged in the public good (pp. 47-53).

Together, these assertions well align with disciplinary values in writing studies and the findings from my research in this study.

Moreover, and important to my study when considering the feasibility of more flexible and differentiated faculty models, Holcombe, Kezar and Maxey (2016) identify that survey respondents called for a university where "all faculty members have access to the tools and information necessary to do their jobs, clearly defined expectations and evaluation criteria and clear terms for contract renewal or termination and processes for addressing grievances and violations of academic freedom" (p. 55). And yet, the largest assertion they make is when they say, "we need some deep thinking about the ways to support faculty learning and expertise the goes beyond involvement in disciplinary societies, which are currently the main avenue for scholarly development…the embracing of collaborative work and community engagement is aligned with recent changes in the environment in which academic work takes place" (p. 55). The Bylaws of Department X explicitly present collaboration as valuable and the work structures there evince this very set of moves across the institution through leadership roles, dual appointments, and the university service it engages. In spite of this, it is typically most available to TT faculty, though again, as I've pointed out, those off the tenure line are increasingly interpellated in this work.

So, while the models emerging from higher education studies are flawed in some ways in relation to our disciplinary orientation in writing studies, I believe this summary of a portion of the more recent scholarship related to reconsidering faculty roles deserves attention in writing studies and in Department X itself. I believe so because, even with our focus on labor, writing studies has failed to address the fracturing of tenure, its disappearance, and the reality that we

must function as participants across our campuses, an opportunity particularly complicated for NT faculty (i.e., the faculty doing the bulk of our teaching).

Changing Appointment Types in Department X

To conclude, I again revisit the role of changing appointment types discussed in the heuristic section at the beginning of this chapter. I do so to extend the discussion about changing institutions and to ground those sometimes-abstract notions in the study of this dissertation. The institution in which Department X resides has, as noted, several ranks of faculty across campus, which represents both a significant set of opportunities as well as constraints. For example, the AS rank was created in the department in the last decade by a former chair who essentially, according to him, "hand-picked" the faculty he thought would succeed best in these roles (personal communication). According to a number of respondents in interviews, this worked against what most believe to be a community driven decision-making model in the department.

These positions were created to provide a more flexible model for departmental faculty. The chair who created them noted in a conversation with me that those off the tenure line at the institution, in his view, have a distinct lack of career trajectory and that his decision was directly connected to a desire to mitigate some of that marginalization and offer better opportunities for those workers. He acknowledged that the material benefits of this move, however, were and are limited. At the same time, his move also served the department itself. Those in AS roles now serve in a variety of capacities usually reserved for TT appointments, including administration, directing undergraduate programs, curriculum design, online education, university service, and community-engaged projects, as well as teaching graduate level courses in the department, thereby mitigating some of the service and leadership burden for TT faculty. Faculty evaluation and observation are one of these areas of service, despite the fact that the Bylaws continue to

instantiate limits on observation for promotion by requiring a number of TT faculty to be a part of teaching review committees.

I do not mean to oversimplify. Much of my data presents how the problematic of this study, captured by the "means well paradigm," is especially complicated across rank as NT and AS faculty perform work outside their appointment designations with no remuneration and little recognition. For example, one AS related that when they were moved from the NT to AS designation, it was explained that such a shift was the *only* possible way to move from a 90/10 contract, making them appealing roles to step into. However, with a successive chair, it was discovered that NT appointment types are also flexible and now some NT faculty are working in more flexible appointment types that also include leadership, curriculum design, and administration. One AS remarked that, given the choice again, they would *not* accept the role of AS for a number of reasons. Primary among them was that, once placed in an AS role, the clock for advancement was reset and each of these faculty had to essentially "start over" toward the continuing status awarded after six years. Secondly, AS are not protected by a union so, while their appointments might have more opportunities for professionalization, they are more precarious from a labor standpoint in their ability to work in collective bargaining and offer one another mutual aid. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the university made moves to reduce salaries. Those in NT positions had their salaries protected by a union contract. As faculty, however, they were subject to cuts without recourse. Further, as demonstrated by interviews and the department's Bylaws, evaluation procedures related to AS are unclear and not well articulated as those faculty must interact with both the AS Handbook and the institutional level and localized department procedures. As told in Chapter Five, gendered patterns in AS faculty work may be reproducing patterns from writing studies writ large in which women

typically do more of the service labor that gains less recognition (Massey & Hogan, 2010; Strickland, 2011).

I am certainly not arguing that transforming the entire department to AS designations is the way to open up avenues for broader participation in Department X. Instead, I argue that these designations are important to examine as tenure disappears. They are designations from which considering labor equity—specifically long-term precarity—is vitally important if the department and university are to make good on their highest values. What then, is possible for faculty off the tenure line in terms of "intellectual leadership" and how can we ensure these roles do not become further exploitative?

As the university conceives of them currently, NT and AS serve instrumental roles in direct relationship to the institution's needs. Even when AS are on 100 percent research appointments, documents like the AS Handbook and Faculty Handbook make it clear their research activities are "at will" to the institution and are primarily meant to directly serve the university. In contrast, TT faculty research is meant to move extra-institutionally and is more successful when it does, thus their labor is far less instrumental and structured to be more flexible and autonomous.

However, because Department X already enacts a fair degree of agency over its own workings and this agentive dexterity may be and is already proving to be (Guidelines, 2020) useful and effective at the university level as well. Other examples are a current department chair solving a course-cap issue, a former chair moving NT into flexible appointment types and advocating for higher wages.

Importantly, these actions create models for others in the college and institution. If we take the view that the previously discussed scholarship from higher education adopts, purposeful

consideration of how we act as a department within the wider institution provides multiple opportunities to enact our already developed practices for the benefit of faculty at all ranks. This permeability to the institution may work to mitigate some of the silo effects that those experiencing long-term precarity face in their career trajectories and thereby elevate their work.

To return again to the primary methodology of my study, IE demonstrates that, in order to be successful, these moves must be made by looking "from the bottom up" or what we might also call working "up the power gradient." I return again to an anecdote from the previous chapter and the critical role of standpoint and ruling relations in this study. In a follow-up conversation with a faculty member working off the tenure line, we discussed a possible remedy suggested in Chapter Five, particularly my recommendation of "closing the loop" of feedback surrounding course observation and evaluation. They related that, yes, on paper, my suggestions appeared simple and achievable but that, in reality, they experienced a sense of their TT colleagues "wearing blinders." They argued that those outside experiences of long-term precarity seem to have a difficult time conceiving of how it impacts others. Secondly, this participant noted the reflection of larger labor issues and confirmed that those in the best position to assist faculty off the tenure line are those who are already overworked and overburdened with service. It therefore seems these two aspects must be addressed if we are to solve long-term precarity.

In another powerful metaphor that spoke directly to the effects of long-term precarity, a faculty member described working off the tenure line as being like a car. They said, if you are TT, your worth is that of a specialty vehicle that appreciates over time, while NT labor depreciates and is subject to a "loyalty penalty." This metaphor of depreciation was clearly echoed in nearly all participants' accounts of the evaluation process, which one described in relationship to the FAIS in particular as a "micro-aggression" that causes many to give up and

choose not to advance in the department in the ways that *are* available. Given this, it is clear these long-term, flexible appointment types are critical in efforts to change inequitable academic structures and that approaching them with labor equity in mind may be the key to success.

Particularly, as this study has shown, a materialist feminist standpoint approach opens up ways to consider the lived experiences of those on the margins as powerful locations from which to make change (hooks, 1994). At times, materialist feminisms are positioned as being at odds with post-structural or post-modern feminisms, while materialist feminist approaches like those of Dorothy Smith, the progenitor of IE, locate themselves in the lineage of Marxism. They are meant to locate power and help us take activist approaches to our workplaces. Teresa Ebert (1996) argues that shifting focus from historical materialism (the conditions of labor production) abstracts conditions of power and leads to a reinforcement of white, male, middle class values, as well as white feminisms, which we know are rampant in the academy and have been argued against by numerous Black and Women of Color feminists (Hill-Collins, 2004; hooks, 2004; Ahmed, 2017; Kynard, 2019). While arguments for a theoretical binary are unlikely to be what leads us to concrete change, I invoke materialist approaches here to access the need for an approach to feminism that focuses on the lived experiences of those in marginalized roles in our workplaces. These approaches keep us firmly grounded in the argument that women's lives in particular and BIPOC, LGBTQ, disabled or immigrant lives more broadly are subject to class oppression at the hands of capitalist profit-making structures (BlackPast, 1977; Ehrenreich, 1997).

At the time of this writing, the world was in the midst of a global pandemic that disproportionately affected women and BIPOC at the location of their material and health conditions and that sparked a global uprising against white supremacy and capitalism. These

conditions cannot be separated from the work I do here of examining the labor conditions and equity in a single, independent writing department.

Conclusion

In the culminating moments of this dissertation are potential avenues for further inquiry into institutional spaces. I present these bodies of knowledge as starting places from which to consider labor equity as a lens and to complicate and resist notions of easy fixes as appointment types become more permeable in Department X and higher education more broadly. Further study should be done longitudinally regarding long-term labor off the tenure line. Potential avenues to explore there are participation and status. The pandemic is shaping and reshaping much of the labor configuration in higher education and will likely continue to do so, necessitating more research. Finally, more work with the heuristics I present needs to be done in implementation and assessment.

However, these questions must also be considered in the context of a community-oriented, systems approach to change and, I argue, one specifically based in a materialist feminist praxis. That praxis does not foreclose post-modern or intersectional feminist approaches, but instead engages the aspects of labor and production that unfairly impact marginalized people in institutional spaces. The primary methodology of this study sought to do just that by engaging the standpoints of those working in marginalized labor positions. This was done to uncover the complexity of the everyday work and work processes these faculty must engage to remain in Department X and to uncover how they contend with the professional and material working conditions there.

Of course, the issue of pay equity persists. There are no easy solutions to this pernicious aspect of the work for those off the tenure line, in part because much of the enterprise of

academia relies on these low-wage configurations. Yet increasingly, more and more faculty are working under just such conditions. Unionization represents one critical answer to better working conditions. In terms of disciplinary responses, graduate education and continuing conversations about faculty evaluation should not merely rest in a rhetoric of preserving tenure at all costs. Rather, it should signal moves to return to grassroots and collectivist approaches to shared governance across disciplines, institutions, and departments. Again, Department X has already begun to engage in these ways, and I believe should continue to do so. Centering the lived experiences of those in compromised labor or social positions in Department X requires some uncomfortable work around dismantling notions of status, advancement, value, and hierarchy, all of which, unfortunately, Department X has not yet engaged fully according to this study.

Hopefully, this work can begin in course observation and faculty evaluation. Specifically, these practices should be made more meaningful, useful, and reflective of shared values and practices outside of the rigid hierarchies of appointment type. Each of the previous chapters have suggested locations from which change might be made by using IE to ground the descriptions of texts, processes, and the lived experiences of faculty.

Finally, I believe Department X continues to be a national model of an independent writing department that seeks to push back against systemic conditions of oppression in our scholarship, administration, and teaching. The department's work continues to engage the changes that must be made across the landscape of higher education in response to the sweeping shifts taking place there.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Qualtrics Survey Questions

1. Have you had a teaching observation of your teaching or observed someone else's teaching in the last year? - Selected Choice

2. Have you had a teaching observation of your teaching or observed someone else's teaching in the last year? - Other - Text

3. If you have not been observed in the last year, when was the last time your teaching was observed?

4. Was your participation in the observation process (either as observed or observer) a part of your renewal, promotion, tenure, annual review or academic advancement? - Selected Choice

5. Was your participation in the observation process (either as observed or observer) a part of your renewal, promotion, tenure, annual review or academic advancement? - Other - Text

6. If you answered yes above, please choose what role (s) the observation played in your work. - Selected Choice

7. If you answered yes above, please choose what role (s) the observation played in your work. - Other - Text

8. If observed, who conducted your observation? - Selected Choice

9. If you were the observer, who did you observe? - Selected Choice

10. Were you provided with/did you provide written text to document or accompany the observation? - Selected Choice

11. If you were observed, did you generate written texts to document or accompany your observation in any form (for the annual review or RPT process for example)? - Selected Choice

12. How long have you been in the department?

13. What programs have you taught in during your time in WRAC? - Selected Choice

14. What is your academic rank?

15. Do you have an administrative position in the department? - Selected Choice

16. What is your gender identity?

17. What is your racial, cultural and/or ethnic identity?

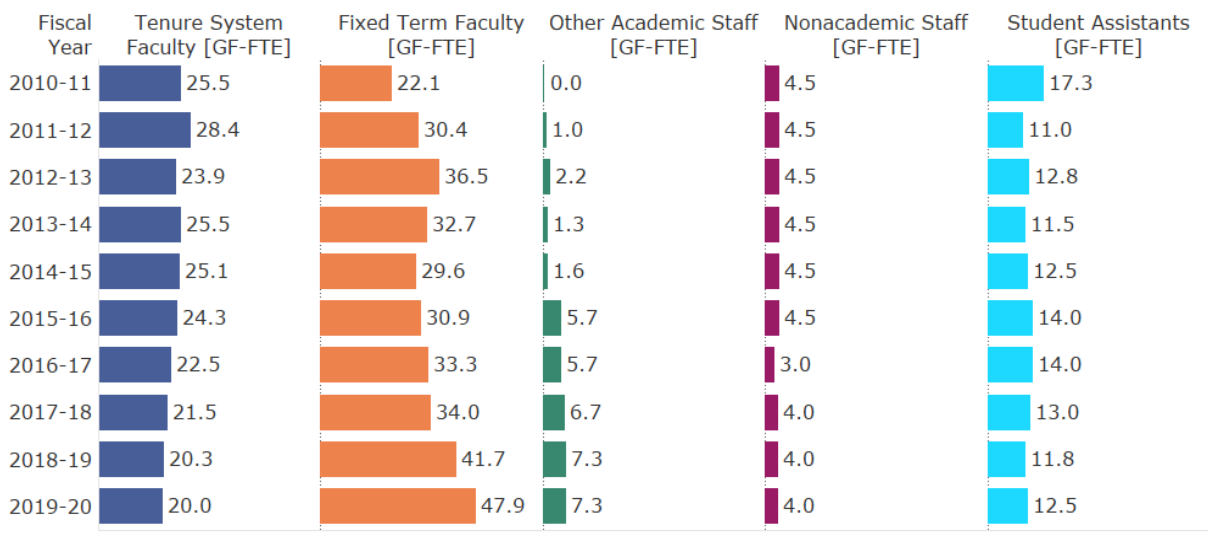
18. What is the title of your highest degree (For example: PhD, Rhetoric and Composition)

19. If you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview about your experiences with the observation process in the department, please enter your name and email in the box below and thank you!

APPENDIX B: Departmental Demographic Data

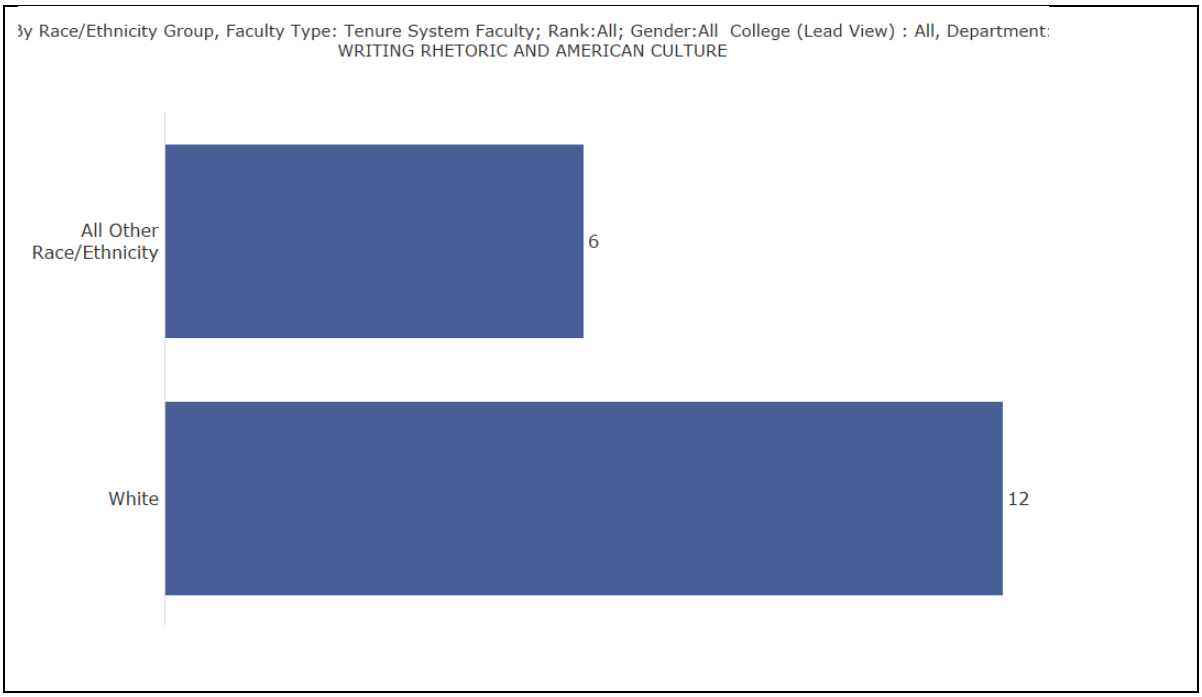
Department Demographic Data

Figure 4: Whole Department by rank/time



	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Tenure System Faculty [GF-FTE]	25.49	28.44	23.93	25.55	25.14	24.28	22.51	21.54	20.28	20.04
Fixed Term Faculty [GF-FTE]	22.06	30.39	36.51	32.71	29.56	30.94	33.34	34.00	41.67	47.85
Other Academic Staff [GF-FTE]	0.00	1.00	2.23	1.33	1.65	5.67	5.67	6.67	7.26	7.25
Nonacademic Staff [GF-FTE]	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Student Assistants [GF-FTE]	17.25	11.00	12.75	11.50	12.50	14.00	14.00	13.00	11.75	12.50
Grand Total	69.30	75.33	79.93	75.59	73.36	79.39	78.52	79.21	84.96	91.64

Figure 5: Tenure Stream by (1) Race (2) Gender



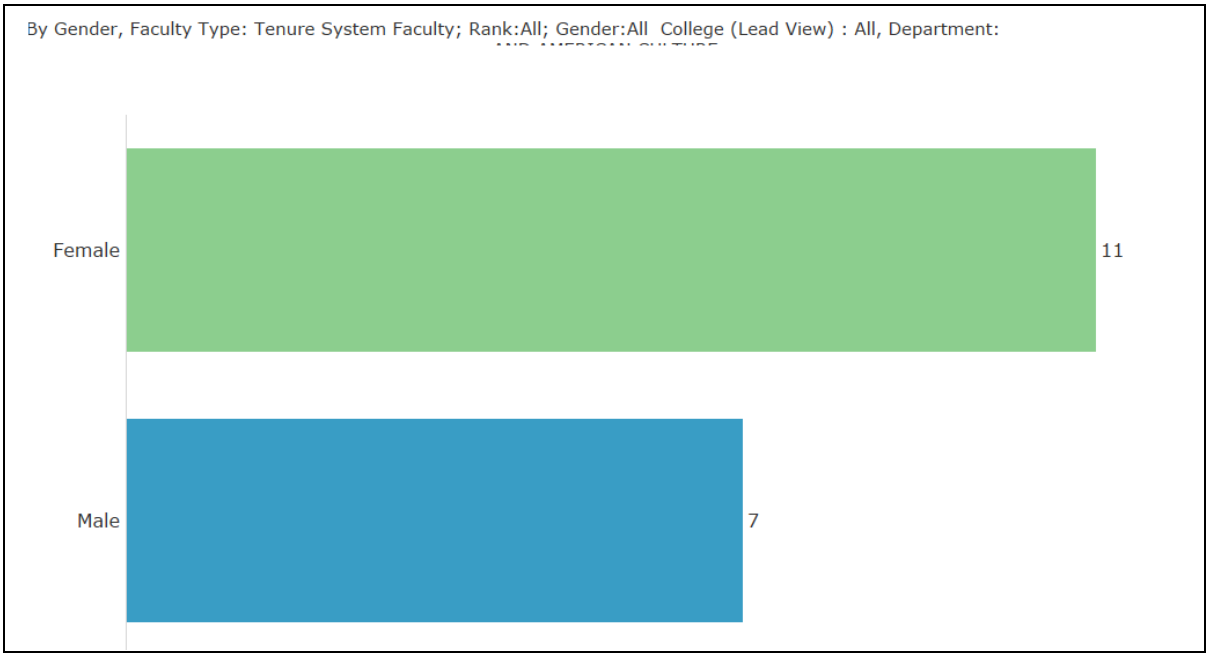
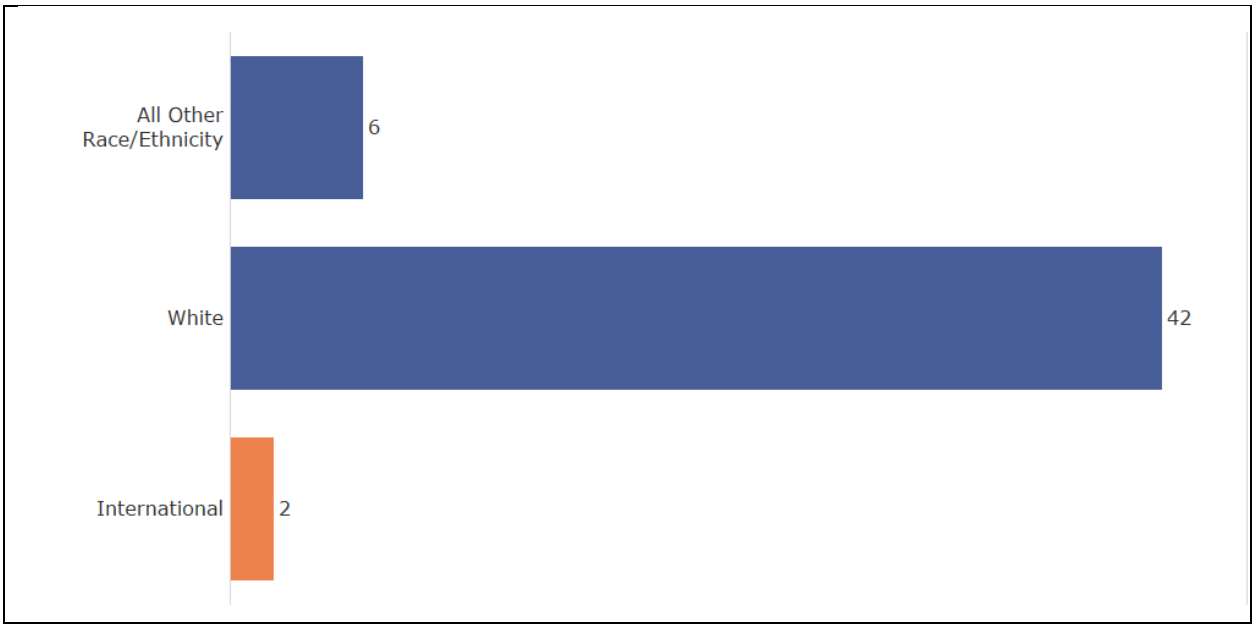


Figure 6: Non-tenure faculty by (1) Race (2) Gender



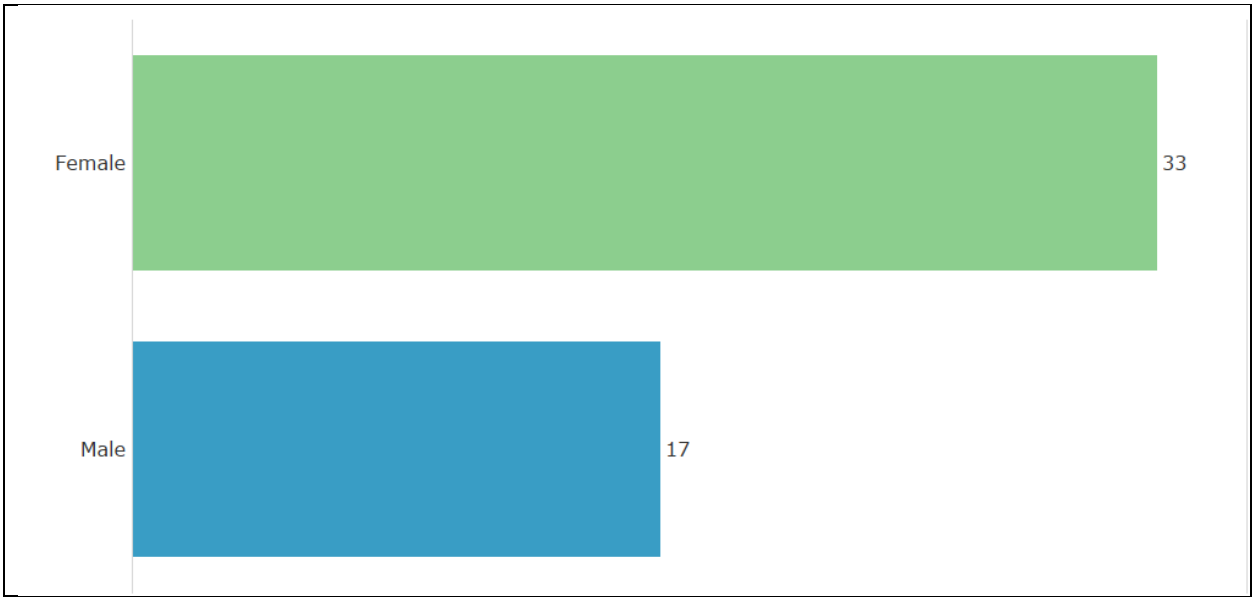


Figure 7: Tenure Stream by Rank

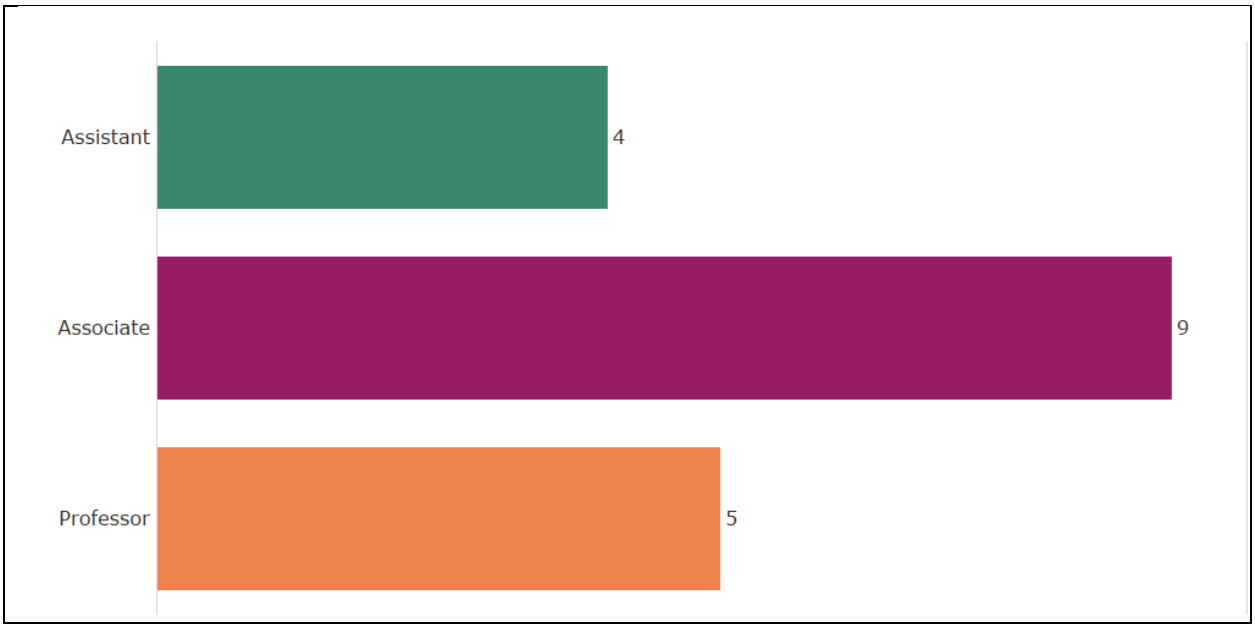
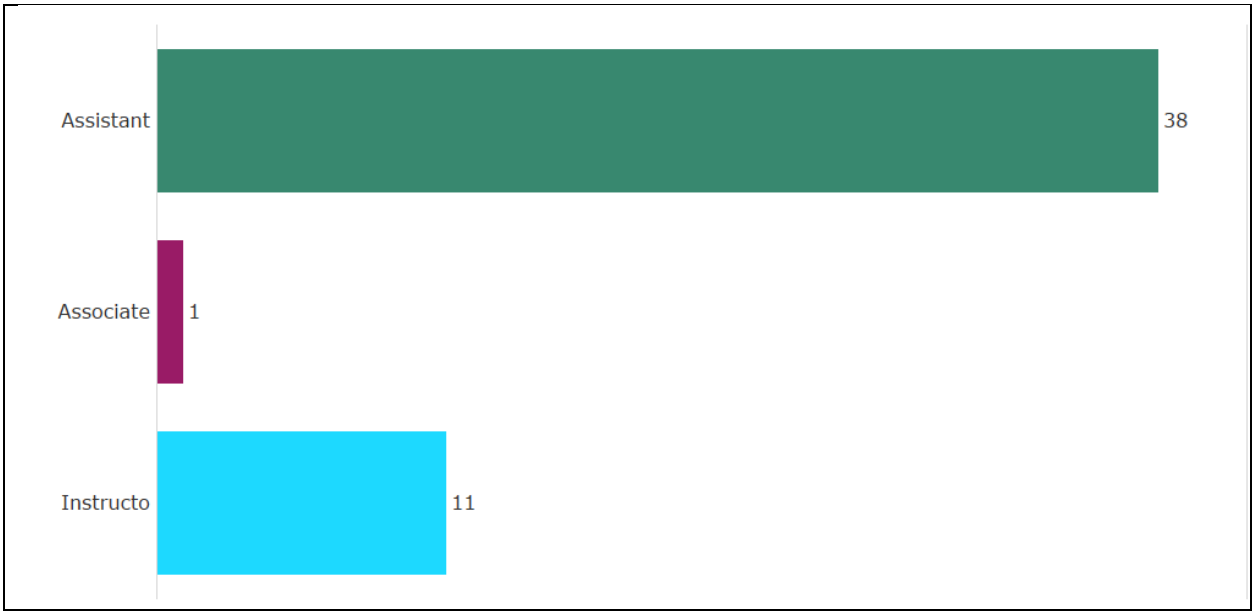


Figure 8: Non-tenure-track by Rank



APPENDIX C: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol 1

Artifact-Based Reflective Interview Prompt

Protocol: Bring an object or text related to your teaching observation.

1. What is the object you chose? Describe it.

2. Of all the objects you *could* have chosen, why this one?

3. What is the relationship between this object and your experience/process of professional evaluation? i.e. How does this object serve you in your employment?

4. Describe how this object appears/participates in an observation experience. (Where does it show up? What does it do?)

5. How did you produce this object/how was it produced? What was most difficult about that?

6. Who else sees/touches this artifact?

7. Is there anyone you work with who would be surprised that you chose THIS object? Anyone who wouldn't know what it was?

8. Do you or have you ever had a relationship with a similar object? What was the object, and where did it live?

9. If I were you to ask you to choose an object for this purpose five years hence, do you think you'd choose the same thing?

10. What other objects *could* you have chosen? How did you end up deciding on the one you brought?

Interview Protocol 2

Interview Questions for Program Coordinators/Administrators

1. What is the common practice around observing teachers in your program? i.e. how do you approach it, when does it happen, what happens after the observation and why?
    a. Has it changed recently, or over time? What are updates?

2. Who else does observations in your program? Do you support or direct that in any way and if so, how?

3. What are the purposes for which you observe teachers?

4. Does your observation practice change, based on the purpose of it? For example, when is it formative, when is it summative and why?

5. Are there texts, policies and/or documents that guide your observation practice, from the institution or department?

6. What written texts are produced as a result of the observations you do? If so, can you describe them?

7. What role do you see these observations playing in the work of the teachers in your program?

8. what is the one thing I would have to understand to have some idea of what the observation is for you?

9. What do you wish people understood about the observation that they don't?

APPENDIX D: Interview Request Email Templates

Email Templates for Interview Requests

Dear {{First Name}}

I'm writing to thank you for indicating your willingness to talk to me for my dissertation work. Thank you! I'm so grateful.

I would like to invite you for a follow up interview. This interview will take one hour and will be scheduled at a convenient time and place for you.

I am also contacting you because you meet three criteria for my study: you indicated that you have been observed in WRAC, that you received and/or generated some kind of written documentation/text related to that observation and that the observation played some role related to employment (RPT etc.).

I request that you do a few things to prepare for the interview. First, indicate your availability to talk to me and second that when we meet, you bring an artifact/object you believe is related directly to the course/teacher observation. I am asking you to do so to participate an "artifact-based reflective interview" which consists of a series of questions related to an object or artifact and which is meant to be generative, exploratory and inquiry-driven. So far, it's been really fun!

Examples of artifacts could be something generated in a pre/post communication, something that you wrote related to the observation for your annual review or renewal, the report generated for you by the person who observed you, a teaching letter, a lesson plan etc. I chose this protocol because it allows the flexibility for you to bring in something you feel comfortable sharing, while allowing you privacy and anonymity to whatever degree you need.

My goal is to hear your perspective on how the course observation serves as a function of your employment. However, this protocol is meant to be open and provide you the opportunity to choose something you feel is salient to observation in any way **you** interpret that. You can of course choose which questions to respond to and there will be no penalty of any kind if you decide not to answer the question or to end the interview.

I am working to schedule your interview in the month of February so please let me know some good times for you to get together. My best times are M/W/F but I have some availability on T/TH as well. I will work around your schedule in any way I possibly can.

Again, thank you so much. Please let me know what questions you might have about the interview protocol or anything else.

I look forward to hearing from you.

~Anicca

Hi {{First Name}}

I'm writing to thank you for indicating your willingness to talk to me for my dissertation work. Thank you! I'm so grateful.

I would like to invite you for a follow up interview. This interview will take one hour and will be scheduled at a convenient time and place for you.

I'm contacting you because you are involved observing teachers in the department for various purposes and at various levels/programs.

You need not do anything specific to prepare for our interview. The interview protocol I will be using is semi-structured and I am mostly interested in your approach to and experience with observation of teachers of writing, including what guides that practice and in what ways you see it being purposeful for teachers.

I am working to schedule your interview in the month of February so please let me know some good times for you to get together. My best times are M/W/F but I have some availability on T/TH as well. I will work around your schedule in any way I possibly can.

Again, thank you so much. Please let me know what questions you might have about the interview protocol or anything else.

I look forward to hearing from you.

~Anicca

APPENDIX E: University Documents

Figure 9: FAIS Supplement

WRAC 2019 Annual Report Instructions

Faculty are required to use the online Faculty Activities Information System (FAIS) for annual reporting. You can access FAIS at https://www.egr.msu.edu/activityreport/. The system is open now and will remain open for input and editing until **January 30, 2020**. After that day, you will not be able to add or change material for your report on calendar year 2019.

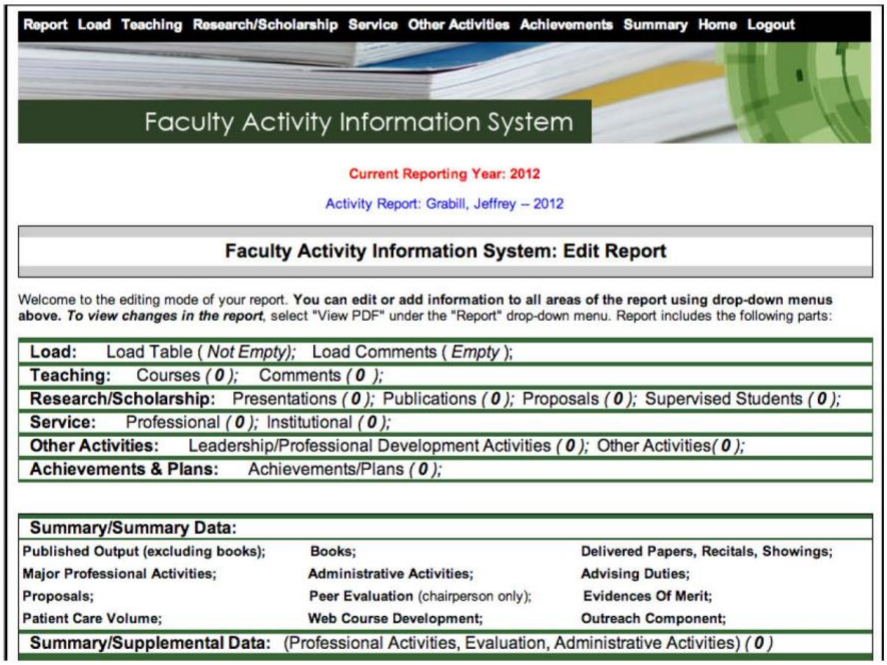
Please note that while I am asking you to upload your syllabi (there are two places to access the upload, "Teaching Evaluations" and "Upload Documents."), I am asking you ***not*** to upload copies of publications, presentations, papers delivered, and so on.

Some Instructional Details

Below is the basic interface for FAIS. The data entry functions are found via the menu in the black bar at the top of the page

1. Under the "Report" menu, be sure to upload your most recent copy of your CV.

Figure 1: The Main FAIS Screen

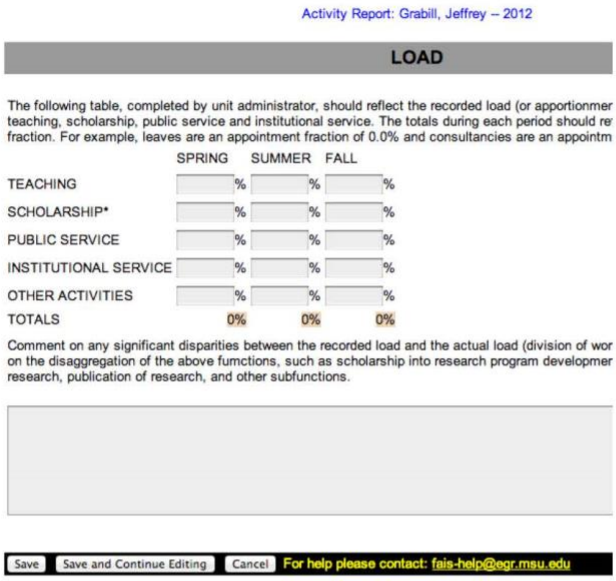


2. At the "Load" menu, enter your percentage effort for the past calendar year (use your contract for precise numbers). Most of you will leave the summer column blank. If you have an approved variable workload assignment for this year, the comment box is the place to describe that arrangement. DO NOT GUESS. USE CONTRACT NUMBERS.

Figure 9 (cont'd)

Please note as well the black bar at the bottom of the screen with the "save and continue editing" button. Please use this button (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Load Screen with "Save" Functions at the Bottom



3. The "Teaching" portion of the system holds few surprises but some wrinkles. "Students" is for those of you with advising loads. "Courses" for listing your assigned teaching.

Note that the graduate advising to be reported here (under "Students") is for committee work for which you are not the chair. Chairing or supervisory work with graduate students is reported under "Research/Scholarship."

There are two items for particular attention, however:

a. "Teaching Comments" is the place for you to include your teaching narrative. You may wish to include discussion that contextualizes your courses and evaluations. Consider addressing instructional goals and approaches; innovative methods or curricular development; or significant effects of instruction. If you have received instructional awards and peer recognition, mention them here.
b. "Teaching Evaluations" is the place for you to upload a copy of your SIRS forms. Faculty are now responsible for downloading their course results from the system and uploading them into your annual report (http://sirsonline.msu.edu). Upload your syllabi here as well.

4. The "Research/Scholarship" *functions* are self-explanatory, but I'd like you to attend to the following issues as you code/designate publication types in the system:

- **<p1> books**: Use for single-authored books, collections that you have edited, and feature-length films.
- **<p2> book sections/chapters**: Book chapters.
- **<p3> monographs**: Use "books" instead. (an esoteric distinction between book and monograph).

Figure 9 (cont'd)

- **<p4> reviewed, archival journal papers**: Peer reviewed articles only.
- **<p5> other journal papers**: Non-peer reviewed articles.
- **<p6> reviewed conference proceedings papers**: Very few conference proceedings in our fields are actually peer reviewed and published, but we have them (e.g., IEEE). Use this code appropriately because it is valued in specific ways.
- **<p7> other conference proceedings papers**: This rarely will be used by us because our fields don't often publish papers from meetings. But in the event that you have participated in a meeting that publishes papers but doesn't have a clear peer review process that includes rejection and revise and resubmit as options, use this code. Giving a paper at a conference is a "Presentation" and is reported there and not as a "Publication."
- **<p8> reviews**: Book reviews, software reviews, and the like.
- **<p9> other creative works (such as reports, bulletins, patents, and documented software packages [both protected and public domain])**: We produce publications in this category as a faculty: whitepapers, reports for professional organizations, and so on.

5. Please note that within the "Research/Scholarship" section, "Supervised Students" is the place to list the graduate students you supervise.

6. The "Service" reporting functions break down into "Professional Service," which concerns scholarly, disciplinary, and service within the broader community, and "Institutional Service," which is service within the University.

7. For the "Other Activities," function, please let the instructions in the FAIS system guide you. In addition, use this part of the report to list any awards, accomplishments, and professional development activities not included elsewhere.

Figure 3: The Summary Data Interface

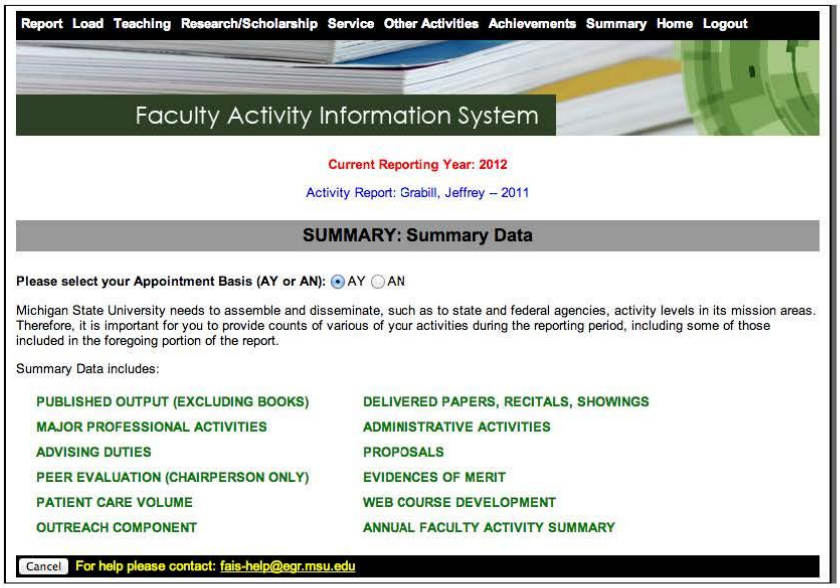


Figure 9 (cont'd)

8. I would like to use the "Achievements and Plans" section to provide a brief narrative and a work plan, not more than five pages total for both parts.

a. Narrative. Please synthesize and contextualize your achievements and activities listed elsewhere in this report. When the scope and impact of your work may not be self-evident, explain its significance to directions in the discipline/field. Also use this section to describe your engaged work, which at MSU is assumed to cut across your teaching, research, and service. Here is the place to explain how you "spent" your contract percentages. What does 10% curricular development look like? How about 20% service? Etc.

b. Work Plan. If you created a work plan last year, please note your successes and challenges, and project forward another 3-5 years. If you did not create a work plan last year, please draft a 3-5 year trajectory for your work. Discuss any projects that are underway but not yet published and how they will shape the work you intend to do in the immediate future. This plan will serve as a basis for our conversations about your trajectory and about the kind of support you might need to do your best work as well as your pathway to your next milestone (continuing status, promotion, etc.).

9. The "Summary" function needs to be completed as well. We are only able to report "Summary Data" (not "Supplemental Data"). It is unfortunate that this data does not aggregate from other data entry in the system. One functional difference is that you will need to click on the green links to reveal the data entry fields (see Figure 3).

10. Please complete the Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument: https://oemi.msu.edu

Links to Genre Tracing Documents
Department Bylaws

https://wrac.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2020/02/WRAC_BYLAWS_4-25-17.pdf

University Handbook

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/

Academic Specialist Handbook

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/academic-specialist-handbook/index.html

UNTF Contract

https://hr.msu.edu/contracts/documents/UNTFContract.pdf

Sample Promotion Forms by Rank

NTT, Form B: https://hr.msu.edu/ua/hiring/documents/UNTFDesignationBForm.pdf

Academic Specialist, Form C: https://www.egr.msu.edu/sites/default/files/AcadSpecRecFormC-UPDATED_Oct2019.pdf

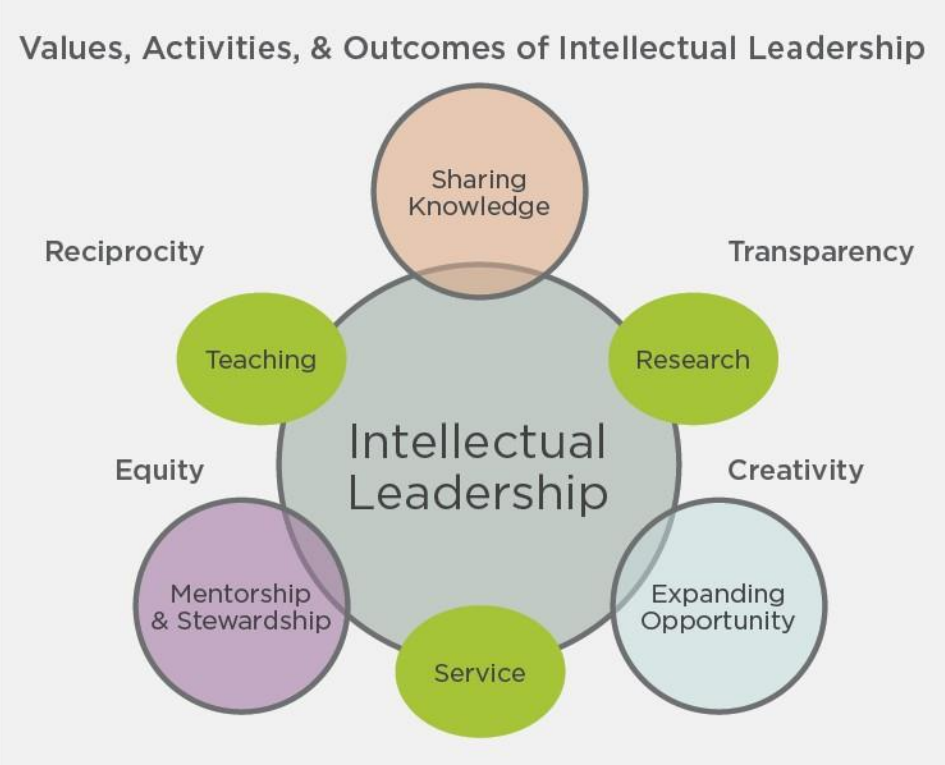
Tenure Stream Form D: https://hr.msu.edu/ua/forms/faculty-academic-staff/info-rrpt-pages.html

APPENDIX F: Schema for Intellectual Leadership

Schema for Intellectual Leadership

Frietzche, Hart-Davidson and Long (2017)

Figure 10: Intellectual Leadership Map



APPENDIX G: Draft of Updated Promotion Guidelines

Draft of Updated Promotion Guidelines NTT

Guidelines for Promotion of Fixed Term System Faculty from Assistant to Associate Professor or from Associate Professor to Professor

This document specifies the criteria and procedures used by the College of Arts & Letters (CAL) and its affiliated units in reviewing applications for fixed term system faculty promotion. It follows the university policy on the *Promotion of Fixed Term Faculty*, which can be found at: https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/fixed-term promotion.html

It also follows the College of Arts & Letters bylaws, which can be found here: http://www.cal.msu.edu/faculty/bylaws

The promotion of fixed-term faculty will be based solely on an evaluation of the duties and responsibilities specified in the candidate's appointment and position description. A fixed-term faculty member must have received a PhD or MFA to hold the rank of assistant professor fixed-term.

It is recommended (but not required) that candidates for promotion from assistant to associate professor consider attaining UNTF Designation B status before being considered for promotion, as this process will provide them with valuable experience in assembling a dossier and receiving feedback on that dossier.

The promotion **criteria** used by the College of Arts & Letters and its affiliated units may be in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and/or service/outreach corresponding to the relevant position workload percentages. The successful candidate for a fixed-term faculty promotion is expected to have demonstrated rank-appropriate excellence in intellectual leadership in the areas of their assignment.

In the absence of specifically adopted guidelines to the contrary, the promotion criteria used by the College of Arts & Letters are drawn from the University's standards.

A recommendation for **promotion from assistant professor to associate professor fixed-term** must be based on at least six years of sustained, outstanding achievements in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, administration, and/or service/outreach corresponding to the relevant position workload percentages and should provide a firm basis in actual performance for predicting long-term capacity for the achievement and maintenance of enduring high-quality professional achievement.

A recommendation for **promotion from associate professor to professor fixed-term** must be based on sustained, outstanding achievements in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, administration, and/or service/outreach corresponding to the relevant position workload percentages. There must be a sufficiently long period in rank, typically the equivalent of six years, prior to the promotion, so as to provide a firm basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert or artist of national stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high quality professional achievement.

The **procedures** that the College of Arts & Letters and its affiliated units will use for reviewing

promotion are as follows.

a. Each year, during the required annual performance review, unit administrators should discuss with eligible fixed-term faculty the criteria for promotion in rank, the faculty member's progress toward promotion, and discuss whether he or she wishes to seek promotion in the coming academic year. The administrator shall provide a written copy of this review to the faculty member. Each fixed-term faculty member eligible for promotion will be informed by the unit administrator in January of the previous year of the university promotion schedule. If the faculty member elects to seek promotion, the applicant will submit a dossier of all pertinent information related to their record and achievements that support reappointment by the end of the spring semester for review the following academic year.

b. If the faculty member elects to seek promotion, the unit administrator must prepare a description of the candidate's assignment including, for example, the percentage of the appointment devoted to research/creative activities, teaching, and/or service/outreach. This description will form part of the promotion review portfolio and will be distributed to all individuals of the unit's review committee who evaluate the candidate's materials.

c. At least one fixed-term faculty member should be included in the review of the candidate at the unit level. The College suggests that the fixed-term faculty member on the unit review committee hold the rank of associate or full professor rank if such an individual is available; if not, the College suggests, an academic specialist with continuing status from the unit or from another unit and selected in consultation with the unit administrator. If the candidate is being reviewed for full professor fixed-term, then the College suggests that the unit review committee include at least one Full professor fixed-term or senior academic specialist. If the candidate has a joint appointment or assignment, the members of the review committee should represent various units in which the candidate has an assignment.

d. If teaching is an activity in the candidate's assignment, the College suggests that the unit assemble a Teaching Review Committee or create a subcommittee of the Promotion Review Committee. Members of this committee are responsible for observing two classes taught by the instructor in the given review period, meeting with the candidate to discuss the observations after they have occurred, and providing written feedback on the course observations to the Promotion Review Committee. If the candidate has been observed in the past year as part of an annual review process, this may count as one of the observations. If the candidate teaches online or hybrid courses, then at least one member of the committee should have advanced experience in teaching online or hybrid courses as well in order to help with the evaluation of these courses. If the candidate has a joint appointment or members of the teaching review committee or subcommittee should represent various units in which courses are taught.

e. In preparing materials for the review portfolio, the candidate is required to provide information or documents related to the activities that are part of their assignment,

using the Recommendation for Reappointment, Promotion, or Tenure Action form (Form D) as a guide. MSU guidelines specify that these materials must include:

i. Form D
ii. A current curriculum vitae.
iii. A self-evaluation of 3-5 pages about accomplishments during the reporting period, detailing the leadership activities undertaken in the areas where they have duties (teaching, research/creative activity, administration, and/or service/outreach). If, for instance, teaching is an assigned duty, this would include a reflective teaching statement, showing ongoing development of effective instructional practices with examples.
iv. Evidence of excellence in performing assigned duties, for example, significance, impact, and innovation of instructional activities, research/creative activities, a representative sample of scholarly or creative work, professional development, service, outreach, curriculum development, program coordination, or administrative activities. This should be a representative sample of the candidate's best work, and the candidate should reference these in their above narrative to provide context.
v. The candidate must provide the unit with a Teaching Portfolio that must include the following items:
    - Syllabi and instructional materials, such as heuristics, activities, multimedia learning materials, projects, assignments, etc., consistent with the unit's pedagogical aims.
    - Unit-approved Student Instructional Ratings Forms (or online equivalent) for all classes taught (every course, every section, every semester) in the past six years to the unit review committee for analysis. (The College advises that reviewers should not afford undue weight to these SIRS forms and similar student evaluations. They should not be used as the sole source of data, but rather as one indicator of many in the portfolio.)
    - If applicable, evidence of undergraduate and/or graduate student mentoring, including service on exam and thesis/dissertation committees, advising, curriculum development, and professional development.

f. In all cases, four review letters must be included. For promotion to associate professor fixed-term, two letters must be external to the university following the established peer review process, a third can be external to the unit from the College or University and a fourth internal to the unit. For promotion to professor fixed-term, three letters must be external to the University following the established peer review process and the fourth must be external to the unit. Letters should follow the established peer review process and/or demonstrate recognition by peers and colleagues both within the University and/or regionally or (inter)nationally whenever

possible. Candidates should suggest two names to their supervisor and, if desired, also be able to specify that 1-2 potential reviewers not be contacted. The candidate is not informed of those individuals who provide letters of evaluation. (See also Confidentiality of Letters of Reference for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Recommendations" in the Faculty Handbook.) All

letters must come from individuals who hold a rank above the candidate's current rank or an experienced professional equivalent. External referees must be professionally capable to evaluate the candidate's dossier objectively and to comment on its significance. All of these individuals will be independent of the candidate (e.g., not be former graduate or postdoctoral advisors or students of the candidate, or co-authors) and have no personal interest in the outcome of the review.

Some other guidelines for unit administrators to help with the variety of workload types: If research/creative activity is an assigned duty, at least one or more letters (depending on percentage of workload) external to MSU should be obtained evaluating said activity. In other cases, if the faculty member has worked with other partners external to the unit, whether in teaching, service, or outreach, a letter should come from one of those MSU or community or equivalent partners. A letter might also come from an officer or member of a scholarly pedagogical organization or artistic/professional institution where the faculty member has been especially active. If the faculty member is engaged in creative scholarly activity or outreach, at least two letters should come from full-time referees at institutions of higher education.

g. Units should review the promotion materials focusing only on their assigned duty categories. If a unit does not have an existing review system, then the supervisor must consult with the Associate Dean for Academic Personnel and Administration.

h. The faculty member must have the opportunity to confer with the faculty review committee before a recommendation is made.

i. The review committee will submit in writing to the unit administrator recommendations for personnel action and reasons for its decision. Minority opinion, if any, will be noted, and a minority report may be included. All members of the unit promotion review committee will sign the recommendations. Unit administrators should notify candidates of the recommendation and that their dossier has been forwarded to the College.

j. Promotion recommendations for fixed-term faculty must be sent to the College Dean by January 15 of a given year, submitting Form D and supporting materials relevant for the assigned duties as described above, and must include copies of the written annual reviews of the candidate (see item A above) during the reporting period. This recommendation should provide an analysis of the candidate's performance in their assigned duties, as well as the leadership activities in which they have been involved.

k. The College Dean will consult with the College Review committee and make a final recommendation to the Office of the Provost, according to the timetable for the academic year in question.

Updated 7/5/18, 1/13/20, 2/3/20, 4/27/20, 5/11/2020, 8/26/2020

APPENDICES

A: College Deadlines for Promotion

January 15 - **Promotion dossier deadline** to the College February

28 - **College RPT deadline** to the Provost's Office April 1 -

Promotion dossiers to the Provost's office

B: Teaching Review Committee General Practices

The Teaching Review Committee (or Subcommittee) should use the following general process in assessing the candidate's teaching performance:

- Meet with the individual to discuss course syllabi, assignments, philosophy of teaching, and methodologies and strategies. Prior to this meeting, the individual will provide the Teaching Review Committee (or Subcommittee) with a teaching portfolio (as described in item 2.e.iv of this document).
- Set two agreed-upon dates during one (preferably the fall) semester for classroom visitations when at least two of the three committee members can be present; the candidate can request additional visitations if they so desire.
- Meet with the candidate after the classroom visitations are completed for discussion, questions, clarifications, and feedback.
- Write a committee report focusing on:
    - organization and presentation of concepts, skills, and reading and discussion materials;
    - interaction with students; and
    - effective and productive use of class period in relation to instructional objectives.
- Submit a draft of the report to the candidate, who shall have the opportunity to respond to it in person or in writing, in order to make relevant comments regarding points of substance, emphasis, or neglect.
- Submit a revised and final report to the unit promotion review committee.

Teaching review committees (or subcommittees) should restrict their reports to the substance of the teaching and instruction according to the areas identified above and to the course and instructional materials made available to them. Committee members should also recognize a diversity of instructional methodologies and strategies that can be used to reach common curricular goals. The Teaching Review Committee's deliberations are to remain confidential within the Teaching Review Committee and the chair may consult the unit head as needed.

APPENDIX C: Teaching Portfolio Materials

The Teaching Portfolio may also include select examples of the following that are representative of the candidate's best work:

- Examples of student papers and projects

- Evidence of effective formative and summative commentary on student papers and projects.
- Letters of commendation written by colleagues or peers.
- Reflective statements or learning narratives written by students.
- Honors or awards.
- Evidence of course and curriculum development.
- Evidence of participation in professional development workshops, seminars, and/or activities.
- Evidence of teacher-research.
- Evidence of work in the instruction and mentoring of other teachers as well as program and TA coordination.
- Evidence of outreach, including outreach instruction, which might include credit-bearing courses offered off-campus; noncredit-bearing seminars, workshops, conferences, exhibits, and performances related to teaching.
- Evidence of instructional materials and activities particular to online or distance education; such materials should be reviewed in the media for which they were intended.

APPENDIX D: Research/Creative Activity

https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/academic-specialist-handbook/index.html

The fixed-term faculty member appointed in this functional area facilitates scholarly research and creative activity of a national and international stature appropriate for a premier land-grant, AAU university. These individuals must perform a lead role on research and creative projects, including developing grant proposals and/or directing the research/creative project with the designation as (co-)principal investigator or investigator, and/or in performing position responsibilities. Individuals in this category typically:

- promote an appropriate climate for creativity/diversity in the research or creative activity setting;
- promote and adhere to intellectual and scholarly honesty;
- conduct independent research or creativity activity as a (co-)principal investigator or is involved in joint research/creative projects on a (co-principal) investigatorbasis;
- may participate in, manage, operate, and/or maintain instrumental facilities, laboratories, computer systems or bureaus conducting research and/or providing service to a wider audience of researchers or artists within the unit, the University, external agencies, or the general research community;
- contribute significantly to the design and execution of experiments and research/creative projects;
- analyze and interpret data;
- contribute directly and indirectly to the research and creative activity goals and efforts of the unit and/or other University units, external agencies or other externalclients;
- may consult with, collaborate with, supervise, train and otherwise support faculty, students, and other clients in the pursuit of research and creativeendeavors;

- attract and manage, both individually or in concert with others, resources, i.e., people, funding, materials, etc., necessary to the operation of the individual research or creative project or the research/creative support facility;
- author (or co-author) books, manuscripts, reports and other scholarly instruments reflecting the output of individual research/creative projects and/or research/creative service facilities;
- may serve on graduate student guidance committees;
- present seminars, lectures, papers, posters,etc.;
- present performances, productions, exhibits, events, and/or showings
- may serve as reviewer, editor for journals or other publications;
- may serve as a consultant in the professional field;
- play a key role in securing funding for research/creative activities and equipment;
- is well known and respected outside of Michigan State University and has established a sustained record of important contributions to research proposals, reports, papers, monographs, books or other publications, performances, productions, exhibits, events, and/or showings.

APPENDIX E: Service/Outreach

The fixed-term faculty member appointed in this functional area facilitates service/outreach activities of state, regional, and national stature appropriate for a premier land-grant university. While the service/outreach mission of this University originated in the area of agriculture and the mechanic arts, this emphasis now has broadened to encompass fields such as health, human relations, business, communications, education and government, and extends to urban and international settings. The individual appointed in this category typically:

- effects and promotes the transfer of information, knowledge and expertise from the University to the general public;
- is committed to leadership and excellence in the delivery of technical and educational information and knowledge to off-campus clienteles;
- promotes an appropriate climate for diversity in the service/outreach settings;
- develops independent projects/programs or is involved in projects directed byothers;
- consults with, collaborates with, supervises, trains and otherwise supports faculty, students and other clientele in the development of service/outreach programs;
- may manage, consult, direct, operate or maintain diagnostic facilities, laboratories, computer systems or bureaus conducting research, and/or providing services to external agencies and the general public;
- authors resource materials, technical fact sheets, reports, manuals, computer programs, manuscripts, books and other educational publications on technology and/or applied research for distribution to the public;
- presents non-credit seminars, lectures, workshops, training, etc. for off-campus client groups;
- writes grants, individually and cooperatively, and manages resources, i.e., people, funding, materials, etc. necessary to carry out service/outreach programs and projects;
- may serve as reviewer for grants and publications and/or editor for newsletters and other

publications;

- disseminates to students/professionals/clientele groups relevant research findings and technical information for practical application;
- conduct needs assessment studies and applied research with the ability to work out appropriate solutions for the people and groups involved;
- may be a liaison with, respond to requests from, and/or develop cooperative programs with other universities, agencies and organizations as well as the general public;
- provides program leadership and coordination in the development, execution, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of service/outreach programs;
- assumes significant roles in peer group organizations and professional societies;
- obtains recognition within the University, college, professional groups.

APPENDIX F: Administration

An individual appointed in the fixed-term system may also serve in administrative roles. This may involve significant responsibilities in promoting and contributing to the efficient and effective management of the applicable unit or program with the related responsibility of attracting and managing resources, funding, material and/or people to achieve unit/program goals and to maintain administrative accountability. The individual with an appropriate assignment as an academic specialist in one or more of the three previously designated functional areas may be assigned such administrative duties with a relevant title in addition to designation as an academic specialist or senior academic specialist. Examples of such titles could be Assistant to the Dean/Chairperson/Director, Coordinator, plus other relevant academic administrative titles. As is the case for other academic unit administrators, as relevant, such administrative assignments may involve an annual appointment basis and the assignment of an administrative salary increment.

APPENDIX G: Advising

The academic advising category includes individuals who provide advisement on course options and other academically related matters. These academic specialists have responsibilities in an academic department, school or college or in a unit that serves University-wide populations (e.g., Supportive Services, Undergraduate University Division, Honors College). These persons typically:

- provide advice on course and curriculum selection;
- monitor students' programs;
- recommend certification for graduation;
- maintain contact with advisors in other units;
- provide incidental information on the relationship between course selection and career options;
- refer students, when necessary, to other units in the University for assistance with educational, career and personal concerns;
- participate in activities devoted to the retention of students within University programs;

- provide assistance and guidance to students reentering programs;
- may be involved in instructional activities associated with classes, labs and seminars;
- participate, as required by the unit, in professional development activities, both on and off campus, including conferences, workshops and seminars to enhance the ability and knowledge to perform as an advisor;
- participate in department/school, college and University level committees;
- make a significant professional contribution by making scholarly presentations: present papers, lectures or workshops on campus or beyond related to academic advising or training;
- assume leadership roles involving the coordination, supervision and training of new academic advisors.

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