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1. A Major in Flexibility

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century, given the way that rhetoric in the university has fragmented during the last century and now many different departments claim ownership of it. Given that rhetoric is spread throughout the university, a major in rhetoric, Beard contends, will be an incomplete major. Because of its fragmentation, Beard questions whether it is in the best interest of all stakeholders to continue to pursue and grow the undergraduate major, claiming that "the historical moment for rhetoric to manifest itself fully in a major . . . is lost." As a part of his discussion, Beard describes two different (and seemingly failed) rhetoric majors that were developed and eventually dismantled at the University of Minnesota. While his position is at odds with most of the other chapters in this book, Beard does agree that the undergraduate major has the potential to fundamentally change the field of rhetoric and composition and should be developed cautiously and deliberately, taking into consideration the micro and macro implications for all stakeholders.

Much like chapters 5 and 6 are interconnected, chapters 7 and 8 provide readers with two perspectives on historically connected programs. In the final chapter of the second section, Lori Baker and Teresa Henning analyze their department's professional writing and communication major and its roots in one of the rhetoric majors discussed in the previous chapter. After defining rhetoric as "the use of language for a purpose in a specific communication situation, and as such, we acknowledge that texts are designed to bring about material effects in the world," Baker and Henning explore the implicit consequences for program development of such a definition. Through a thorough discussion of their curriculum, they demonstrate how their operational definition of rhetoric allowed them to resist "impoverished definitions of writing" while providing a sense of disciplinary integrity.

Section 2, "Curricula, Location, and Directions of Writing Majors," looks at curriculum and program development—the content and focus of individual classes and courses of study—as well as the impact of these decisions on the programs themselves, the students who graduate from them, and the discipline as a whole. The first six chapters in this section argue that programs should be attentive and responsive to a variety of disciplinary influences and concerns, such as classical rhetoric, civic rhetoric, textual production, creative nonfiction, process-based program assessment, and program identity formation. The final chapter of this section offers a heuristic for mapping the many different majors discussed and proposed throughout the book.

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In the first chapter of section 2, Dominic Delli Carpini and Michael Zerbe argue that the growing number of undergraduate degrees in rhetoric and writing "provides a catalyst for examining how we deliver writing instruction at all levels." Delli Carpini and Zerbe focus on the five canons of rhetoric and consider the reasons style and memory have so often been ignored in favor of invention, arrangement, and delivery. These three canons have been emphasized because of institutional pressures on "the practical and under-resourced delivery of first-year writing," they argue, pressures that have historically defined what the authors aptly refer to as "the first generation of composition studies." Through a general discussion of their undergraduate major and an in-depth look at their Advanced Composition course, the authors explain how they have designed a curriculum to include, and indeed emphasize, style and memory as integral to an undergraduate writing major built on a foundation of rhetoric. Finally, they offer a compelling argument for the inclusion of the progymnasmata, exercises in rhetorical style, in the advanced composition curriculum.

Thomas A. Moriarty and Greg Giberson argue in chapter 10, "Civic Rhetoric and the Undergraduate Major in Writing and Rhetoric," that in order for our new programs to thrive, they must be rooted in civic rhetoric. Moriarty and Giberson argue that as we develop our writing majors, we must resist the temptation to ground them in practical concerns. "The history of our field suggests that our programs grow and prosper along the lines drawn by our guiding focus," they write, and a focus solely on practical concerns will weaken our programs in the long run. A focus on civic rhetoric, however, will secure our place in the academy because such majors will prepare students for their public lives, an important sphere of human activity long neglected by other majors on campus.

In chapter 11, "Composing Multiliteracies and Image," Joddy Murray argues that undergraduate degree programs must take into account how the emerging "creative economy" necessitates a valuing of many literacies. Focusing specifically on multimodal composition, he argues that as society continues to value technological innovation and technological literacies (specifically the rhetorical use of images), so must undergraduate programs be designed to produce hyper-literate graduates. To accomplish this, "new undergraduate majors must develop the necessary scaffolding and preparation required to become multiliterate and accustomed to multimodal textual production technologies." However, familiarization with technology alone does not necessarily make one

literate. He argues that it is just as, if not more, important for students to understand the centrality of the image in textual production and how new technologies are changing our understanding of how texts are created, how they function, and the processes through which they are produced. Undergraduate majors designed with this in mind have the potential to produce graduates prepared to develop the kind of innovation demanded by the creative economy.

In chapter 12, "Not Just Another Pretty Classroom Genre," Celest Martin makes the case for the inclusion of creative nonfiction (CN) as a form of professional writing in the undergraduate writing major. Acknowledging that the inclusion of creative nonfiction as a part of the discipline has been an issue in the past, Martin argues for its more recent establishment within composition studies. She suggests that the study of CN provides students the opportunity to practice a craft with professional and business applications, the experience of writing and reading in personal and literary genres that are craft- and audience-oriented, and the skills to become freelance or staff writers for various types of publications that value CN writing.

"The Writing Arts Major" explores the development of a ten-year-old, award-winning undergraduate degree in writing arts at Rowan University. Jennifer Courtney, Deb Martin, and Diane Penrod argue that for the undergraduate writing major to remain strong not only at their institution but at any institution, it is necessary for those working in undergraduate degree programs to keep the notion of revision in the forefront of their programmatic thinking because institutional, departmental, and disciplinary changes threaten to make static programs irrelevant. Through a discussion of their institutional and department history, as well as the development and continued revision of their undergraduate major, the authors provide a glimpse into the various revisions they have made and anticipate making to keep their degree program viable and relevant for students. Notably, in their discussion of the various mechanisms they use to provide direction for their revisions, the authors describe their inclusion of current students in the program, as well as former graduates, arguing that they can provide the realistic and practical assessments of the program that, perhaps, faculty cannot.

In "What Exactly is This Major?," a second chapter from colleagues at Rowan University, Sanford Tweedie, Jennifer Courtney, and William Wolff explore the practical and theoretical development of an introductory course in Rowan's major in writing arts. Recognizing that individual

undergraduate writing degrees are developed "based on local exigencies," they argue that the inclusion of an introductory course that provides students with an introduction to the discipline itself can provide a more coherent vision of it "in both national and local terms." The authors observe that there are very few, if any, undergraduate majors that currently require an introductory course for "non-specialized writing within a disciplinary context," and that most courses that are introductory in nature tend to be genre-specific, such as professional writing or creative writing. The introductory course at Rowan is designed to "provide an introduction to the goals, objectives and curricular content of the major" as well as "introduce students to potential careers based on the major," all the while exposing "students to some of the characteristics foundational to all writing." As a part of the discussion of the actual course, the authors provide an analysis of the development and revisioning of the course per the process discussed in the previous chapter, building on the argument that degree programs, as well as individual courses, must be open to revision to be and remain successful.

In the book's final chapter, "Toward a Description of Undergraduate Writing Majors," Lee Campbell and Debra Jacobs suggest that while some sense of consistency between undergraduate and graduate degrees in rhetoric and composition is desirable, it is important to celebrate the fact that "the field has not suffered a forfeiture of its crucial multidimensionality," which so many chapters in this volume amply demonstrated. Campbell and Jacobs offer a heuristic for mapping undergraduate majors to provide some direction to those developing or revising undergraduate majors—not to discipline and standardize programs but to help mitigate the difficult work of program design. By exploring how courses might fit within a matrix consisting of two continua (general to specific and liberal to technical), the heuristic offers a way of thinking through program design while allowing for the localized nature of program development. While acknowledging that their map is one of many possible configurations, their work demonstrates the possibility and importance of a more systematic discussion of course and program design for the continued growth and development of undergraduate degree programs.

MAKING SENSE OUT OF MULTIPLICITY

The contributors to this volume do not speak with one voice—far from it. But their varied experiences and the programs they have developed and imagined represent the state of the art in program design and

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implementation. And though they sometimes disagree, they do share some basic notions about undergraduate majors in writing and rhetoric. First, they all agree that undergraduate majors should be more than a collection of old service courses, stitched together and called a major. They should include specialized courses that draw upon our vast disciplinary knowledge. Second, they recognize the potential for these new majors to change the very nature of our writing programs and, more broadly, our discipline—from pushing us into new alliances to broadening the focus of graduate education in rhetoric and composition. And finally, they see the potential for these majors to attract many new students to our programs, students who will clamor for new and innovative course offerings and whose numbers will change the power dynamics in our departments and on our campuses.

These are boom times for writing programs, and we hope the following chapters inspire you, challenge you, and, most importantly, empower you to develop innovative undergraduate majors that will enrich your students and invigorate our discipline for many years to come.

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SECTION 1

Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Issues for Writing Majors

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1
A MAJOR IN FLEXIBILITY

Rebecca de Wind Mattingly
Patricia Harkin

In this essay our argument will be that a post-disciplinary major in rhetoric and composition is a particularly good idea for research-intensive universities in the current technological and fiscal states of affairs. We shall describe the benefits such a major would potentially offer to contemporary students, to the faculty members who teach them, to tertiary institutions (especially state-sponsored ones) in general, and even to multinational capital. We shall also necessarily describe the institutional impedimenta that such an innovation is likely to encounter. Finally, we describe a course that might serve as the entry to such a major at research-intensive universities.

We begin by emphasizing that our argument is for rhetoric and composition as a *major*—not as a discipline. Historical and theoretical arguments about disciplinary status for rhetoric have already been made by many scholars and critics from many points of view (Lauer, Mailloux, Harkin, North, Sosnoski), and it is not our intention to rehearse them here. Our concern is institutional: As Steven Mailloux observes in *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech, and Composition*, "academic disciplines are hierarchically organized, institutionally supported, self-perpetuating networks of practices for knowledge production and transmission. . . . That is, disciplines are, fundamentally, the transformation of practical wisdom into accredited techniques" (2006, 5). In one sense, of course, the network of practices that such scholars as Sharon Crowley, Victor Vitanza, Susan Miller, Richard Lanham, Susan Jarratt, Michael Leff, and Chaim Perelman have called "rhetoric" has existed since the fifth century BCE. The transmission of those practices, however, has occurred in such diverse institutional venues as departments of English, speech, communication, journalism, media studies, classics, political science, schools of business, and online instruction in winning

friends and influencing people. In most research-intensive universities, no single institutional venue has been the locus in which the practical wisdom known as rhetoric is transformed into *accredited techniques.*[1]

Techniques become "accredited" through institutions such as departments, curricula, and majors. In most research-intensive universities, it is not currently possible for an undergraduate to earn a baccalaureate degree in rhetoric and composition in a department *of that name.* One can be an English major with a writing emphasis or a communication major who concentrates on composing and analyzing "speeches." One can be a literature major with an affection for "rhetoric" as Paul de Man used the term in the 1970s and '80s. One can get an MA or PhD in rhetoric and composition. And one can get an undergraduate degree in journalism or writing for the media.

Our argument is that rhetoric and composition should have an institutional space—a tenured and tenurable faculty, adequate office space, a budget, a copy machine, and at least one administrative assistant. In that way, (and perhaps only in that way) within the university's own symbolic system of value, rhetoric and composition can be understood not only as a service but also as an institutionally constituted area of inquiry.

Because its networks of practices are not available to undergraduates as a single major *under that name,* rhetoric (and composition) lacks the status that comes in the academy from a unique budget and the other aforementioned perquisites. That prestige, or lack of it, is noticed and felt on the pulses of undergraduate students. It is also felt by faculty members in all departments. In the departments of English and communication, however, the lack of status has important implications. It is, we think, the overwhelming tendency among English faculty in research-oriented universities to think of writing as a service and rhetoric as an attempt to graft a research agenda onto this service. In departments of communication oriented toward social science, on the other hand, writing is often ignored (or minimized) and rhetoric regarded as a remnant of the bad old days before new media studies. Administrators notice that the emphasis on writing is more often than not lip service. And so they relegate rhetoric to the back burners of their development agendas, as something different from—and less than—a "real" major.

1. Notable exceptions include Berkeley.

We believe that a major in rhetoric and composition would change attitudes toward writing and rhetoric on the part of students and faculty by demonstrating (with cash) that the university believes writing and rhetoric are important enough to support. It would provide research-oriented universities with data for arguments that they are addressing the crises in literacy that are decried by media and government at regular intervals (as well as with an opportunity actually to address the problems underlying those calls of "crisis"). It would also provide corporate capital with employees who are aware that differing situations call for differing approaches and appeals.

STUDENTS

First, focusing on rhetoric and composition is a good idea for students who are thought of as "problem writers," especially, to offer only one example, when their "problems" occur (or are seen) as a consequence of technology. Students who successfully navigate text messages, e-mails, blog entries, online forums, and the like, tend, in more formal, traditional situations such as the environment of work, to produce writing that audiences (in those spheres) judge as underdeveloped, lacking in transitions, and often orthographically and syntactically "incorrect." Hence, the authors of these messages are characterized as underprepared.

The reasons for this characterization are obvious: e-mail, texts, and the like are typically produced without extensive revision, for a specific recipient (frequently unnamed and not noted by the author beyond pressing the "reply" button) who can be presumed to know what the author is talking about, based on previous, recent-in-memory communications the two have shared. Successful examples of these kinds of written exchanges rely on brevity, so no time is wasted reestablishing the context for the utterance or expressing the niceties of polite address. Dates and times are provided by the device or program used to compose the message, so the author is relieved of the burden of noting those crucial tools for reconstructing text conversations. In short, these technologies of writing de-emphasize the articulation of context and quite thoroughly excise conscious acknowledgement of the audience from the written artifact itself.

The authors of these kinds of computer-enabled utterances develop skills that serve them admirably so long as they remain in the technological sphere, communicating with like-minded acquaintances who are well-acculturated in the digital domain. The writers' difficulties arise

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when they are thrust into formal letter or memo writing, proposal or report construction, sales-pitch-drafting, or other, more professional, writing scenes. More critically for our purposes, technology-sphere writing habits become problematic when students are expected to enter disciplinary discussions in their first-year classes. In these situations, audiences may sometimes require elaborate articulations of context (such as the "literature review" of a social science research report), while on other occasions they require writers to assume that the sender and receiver are both already in the discourse. Professional writing sometimes requires direct attention to the intended recipients of the message while at other times demands rhetoric general enough for Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) universal audience. Writers from the technological sphere have minimal practice in providing such audience analysis. Frustrated readers interpret the lack of these crucial aspects of the writing in formal, traditional genres as a lack of skill or capability, and they punish the writer accordingly with their inattention or disapprobation.

It's an obvious statement, but one that the ease, speed, and copiousness of computer-enabled writing seems frequently to mask: Students who don't get enough exercise in paying attention to context and audience in their native forms of computer-enabled writing are more likely to fail to meet the needs of context- and address-sensitive audiences in the types of writing situations encountered in college and the workplace. Margaret Gonzales (2007) asserts that, "[Students'] written literacy skills may be defined by their use of instant messaging and text messaging, where abbreviated and context-free is the norm. . . . A writing major would help them learn that written communication comes in many forms, and those forms are determined by context, audience, and purpose for writing. Communicating with your boss in writing is not going to be the same as communicating with your friend."

What a rhetoric and composition major can do is introduce students to a broad range of situations that call for what Bill Hart-Davidson characterizes as "solving problems by writing."[2] These situations require conscious attention to audience and context in ways technology-sphere natives may not otherwise encounter. For the students who have been labeled as underperformers in formal, traditional writing situations, the classes they would take as rhetoric and composition majors could help

2. Hart-Davidson's Web site: www.msu.edu/~hartdav2/.

them leverage their native competencies in concise, reactive composition to address the concerns their teachers and employers have about their writing skills in more formal and professional spheres.

A rhetoric and composition major is also a good idea for contemporary students who are thought of as good writers. "Good" student writers often earn that acclaim because they are facile with traditional elements of "correctness." Such students need to expand their sense of writing beyond the simple correctness that characterizes many secondary and even college English programs. For these students, a rhetoric and composition major would provide an opportunity to understand rhetoric as a multidisciplinary field of study into questions about "what happens when human beings make texts," rather than merely as a "service" to other departments in the university and to the students in general.

A major in rhetoric and composition is a good idea for the many, many students who attend four-year colleges or universities for the same reasons students attend community colleges and technical institutions and for the same reasons they participate in online programs: to gain certification in skills they understand themselves to need to secure employment.

For example, in a 1999 survey of reasons University of Colorado students chose to attend college, that university found that, "When just the *most important reason* [for attending college] is considered, by far, the two most often cited reasons to attend college are to gain skills or knowledge for a job, graduate school, or later in life and needing a degree to get a good job or go to graduate school; together, two-thirds (66 [percent]) of students mentioned one of these two reasons as most important" (Office of Planning, Budget, and Analysis, University of Colorado at Boulder 2001; emphasis in original). An informal survey we conducted of a dozen or so colleagues and friends gave similar results: When asked how important certain considerations were to them when they started going to college, three-quarters of them said the "requirements for a career you preferred" and "interest in making more money by qualifying for a better job" were somewhat or very important to them. In contrast, less than a third of them cited "Interest in making a lasting contribution to the world of knowledge" as similarly important to them.

In acknowledging the importance students place on getting job skills out of their college and university experiences, we bring to light another reason an undergraduate major in rhetoric and composition would be a good idea: students specifically stipulate that they want practical,

wage-earning proficiency in real-world abilities like composing employee reviews, documenting processes, charting progress, crafting effective proposals, writing press releases, developing advertising campaigns, and so forth. Providing a rhetoric and composition major would allow schools to offer a system of classes in writing that would prepare students to meet those kinds of writing challenges appropriately and effectively *because students would understand theories of persuasion and argument.* Students would likely be receptive to selecting such a major because of their hopes of gaining authority or higher salaries in work situations through impressing employers with their competence.

Although all of the skills we have just enumerated are already available to students as courses and parts of courses in English, communication, business administration, and so forth, they are, in most research universities, not available *as an undergraduate major.* The message that students inevitably receive is that these skills are not important enough to constitute a major. A rhetoric and composition major can introduce students to the notion that writing is not simply a tool through which content is transmitted (unchanged) from sender to receiver but rather an area of study—a topic about which research is being conducted. A major (as against a required course) in rhetoric and composition would attract students who like to write and who want to learn about writing's processes. Too often, in required first-year writing courses, teachers are inclined to skip the theoretical accounts of writing in favor of offering instruction in specific assignments—whether those assignments are part of a project of fostering community literacy, "inventing the university," or finding and expressing a self. As described by the editors of this volume, a rhetoric and composition major would include courses in, for example, journalism and media writing, professional writing forms, aesthetic forms such as poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and so forth. Our point is that the major would attract persons who are interested in those forms and the differences among them. The very fact of there being a rhetoric and composition major would increase the prestige of writing courses, whether they were required or not. Further, this rising tide would be likely to lift all boats. Even students who "don't do well in English" would, we think, be inclined to notice that people who do like to write are employable. At the moment, in our research university, students tend to think that there are no jobs for English majors.

It does not seem to us that such a major would inevitably pander to consumerism. Rather, we think it appropriate for a course of study to prepare

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students for situations they are likely to encounter in the world. There is a difference, however, between instruction in specific forms (the memo, the proposal, the sales pitch, and so forth) and instruction in attention to context and audience (even if/when those forms are the examples).

Much current, curricular thinking holds that students arrive at the university with assumptions about writing that are no longer valid at the college level. These assumptions include, for example:

- That language is merely an instrument for pointing to knowledge that has already been made or discovered.
- That manipulating words and sentences has little effect on the knowledge to which these words and sentences point.
- That the manipulation of these words and sentences is governed by rules that students learn in English classes. The knowledge itself, however, resides in other departments.

By contrast, a rhetoric and composition major would demonstrate to students that language is an instrument through which knowledge is made discursively.

FACULTY

Additionally, a rhetoric and composition major is a good idea for research-university faculty because it represents an institutional way of interrogating tacit assumptions about language that lurk beneath many faculty complaints about student writing. Like students, faculty in sciences and social sciences often (in our view) carry an unexamined, positivistic view of language.

Faculty complaints about student writing reveal the assumption that language is a pellucid medium through which stable knowledge is communicated. The complaints that we've heard, oddly enough, seem to limit themselves to matters of form and correctness—that students can't spell and punctuate or that they fail to format disciplinary forms correctly. By contrast, when problems of audience, context, and development become apparent, faculty tend to regard them as disciplinary problems with the topic in question rather than as writing problems. Such complaints reveal, we think, the tacit assumption that language becomes disciplinary after it has first been "ordinary." It is, in the complainers' view, the job of departments of English to give instruction in

"ordinary language" so that students will be ready to learn discipline-specific lexicons and genres. Such a perspective, we think, works to constrain thought, not expand it.

A department having rhetoric as its institutional focus would be uniquely positioned to address issues such as these. Whereas departments of English tend to focus on the interpretation of texts and departments of communication tend to look at the ways in which texts function in the world, a department of rhetoric and composition could uniquely look at the production and reception of texts of all kinds, attend to their ambiguity, and address problems of their dissemination.

UNIVERSITIES

A rhetoric and composition major, then, would change the conditions of work not only for students who elect that major, but also for the entire university culture. A major in rhetoric and composition is a good idea for universities themselves. Universities are frequently seen as being tasked with reacting to and meeting the needs of several disparate audiences: students, of course, but also parents, faculty members, administrators, state and federal officials, and the corporations and industries that hire their graduates and offer much-needed monies back to the universities to continue their educational work.

We should pause here and emphasize that we are not characterizing universities as the necessary puppets of their constituents, particularly of the industries that hire and sometimes direct the educational experiences of university students. We make our assertions here instead on the grounds that capital is a requirement for the successful day-to-day running of universities, and corporations can be a source of capital. We are interested in this argument in the ways that necessity can be turned to the advantage of students and the universities who serve them.

A rhetoric and composition department will therefore benefit universities themselves because its institutional focus would be multidisciplinary, socially useful, and lucrative.

More and more often, "vision statements" seem to acknowledge that the problems the world presents resist solution within single disciplinary paradigms. The proliferations of multidisciplinary programs—peace studies, neurobiology, urban studies, disability studies, gender studies, and the like—suggest that narrow paradigmatic thinking has proved unequal to the task of addressing the social and scientific problems that confront us. Statements with titles like "Vision 2010: The Challenge of

the Future" that land on our desks and enter our in-boxes consistently emphasize the importance of collaboration among departments, units, and even colleges to keep the university viable against the threat of for-profit institutions, declining state funding, and rising costs. Within this milieu, it seems appropriate to constitute writing as an institutional object and to look carefully at the multiple ways in which it has been and can be defined, described, explained, and analyzed. Post-disciplinary programs save money, draw students, and impress the public. A post-disciplinary major in rhetoric and writing would accomplish these goals with ease. The faculty, in most cases, is already in place; the demand is there; the research inquiry has already been deemed a vital national priority in such initiatives as the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The relations with corporate culture that such a major would encourage are a selling point for prospective students. Our experience has been that corporations that ask us to prepare persons with "good communication skills" know *exactly* what they are asking for. They do not, in general, ask us to send them a worker who knows a particular corporate genre but rather a person who knows that as situations change, discourse must change to meet that challenge. The corporate representatives with whom we have spoken consistently stress that good engineering skills, for example, are no longer enough. The engineer must be able to explain her conception to multiple audiences, argue its usefulness and profitability, describe the procedures for its production, and chat amiably with prospective customers.

Our experience has also suggested that, in spite of good intentions, writing-intensive courses in majors tend not to "improve" writing behaviors generally but rather to enhance skills in the genres native to that major—the lab report, the term paper, computer documentation, and so forth. In our view, discipline-specific writing assignments in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs in research-oriented universities often fail to achieve their avowed purpose precisely because research faculty have little experience and less interest in the teaching of writing and are disinclined to remedy that situation. Prompts prepared by these faculty members often tend either to ignore the rhetorical situation completely or to stipulate it more stringently than is necessary or useful. In our work developing assessment procedures for graduating seniors, for instance, we have encountered faculty-prepared writing prompts that ask simply, "What is [discipline] 'x'?" Offering no context, this prompt gives the student too

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little information about the rhetorical situation. The student writer has no idea to whom she is writing, nor does she have a sense of how her writing is likely to be used.

On the other hand, other prompts function basically as knowledge-tests in which the situation is firmly established and the writer's task is constrained. The student writer is faced with a dizzying array of answers his writing must provide, yet he is again left in the dark as to how his writing relates to any context outside of the paper he will hand to his teacher. Once again, we think a rhetoric and composition major with departmental status would go some distance toward helping faculty members with this problem.

Now is the time for such an endeavor. With all the words people regularly produce in their native genres, paying attention to what happens when writers make texts is an appropriate task for researchers at universities. Unfortunately, these inquiries, when they do occur, take place within specific disciplines. So researchers in psychology attend to the ways in which writing might be thought of as problem-solving behavior but eschew questions of self-expression. Philosophers of the Derridean persuasion might see writing as the manifestation of presence but evince little concern for the ways in which the "inscriptions" they study may or may not be successfully communicated to audiences. Members of departments of communications tend to assert that the medium is the message and then study the medium.

MULTINATIONAL CAPITAL

A rhetoric and composition major is a good idea for multinational capital. Corporations require workers with the ability to solve problems by writing rather than merely to follow stipulated formats. Many corporations actively seek alliances with schools. In return for their scholarship monies, however, they want "input" into curricular matters. In our experience, this "input" is not limited to formulaic matters. Indeed, many such corporations specifically say that they will take responsibility for teaching practice in the workplace so long as potential employees have a sense of the theory of rhetoric.

Students find the idea of working with/for a prominent business as an intern highly palatable—they see it as a chance to get "in" with a good company and as a good use of their academic sentence before they graduate and would have to compete with other candidates for these jobs (our jailhouse imagery is intended: many students tell us

they feel they are putting in time in college just so they can become productive members of society when they are released). Students like the idea of having easy access to businesses that use their skills. Schools that have program or internship relationships with corporations in place are thus more attractive to prospective students. Corporations with those relationships in place have easy access to qualified (in some cases, pre-trained) new workers when students graduate. It is therefore anomalous that so few research-intensive universities offer undergraduate majors in rhetoric and composition that take advantage of this synergistic potential.

WHY IS THIS?

We see several reasons why rhetoric and composition majors are not already part of the research-university system as it is commonly experienced by students in North America. Although research-intensive universities are now beginning to reward research into writing, they do so as part of an effort to improve a service, to perform what the Morrill Act requires of them, that is, to serve the interests of the state that supports them. And, as anyone who has ever waited in line at the Secretary of State's office can attest, those who exist merely to serve the interests of the state are rarely those who are passionate about and committed to the service they are providing.

But for most research-intensive universities, research into what prevents writers from making coherent paragraphs is not considered as important as research into scientific inquiries. Therefore, research on writers is less likely to be funded internally. And since internal funding is usually a precondition for external funding, writing research goes down the tubes. Science is sexy: headlines on the discovery of a new star, a tinier physical particle, or the gene for a physical affliction sound much more current, much more important, and much more worth the time of a university than do the kinds of modest statements compositionists and speech theorists make about the developments in their fields, such as: students write better when they are asked to write in response to a real-world exigency rather than to a fake "prompt"; and, speakers are using more indirect locutions in their criticisms of government policies than did their counterparts thirty years ago. We are still the grandchildren of the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment: if an inquiry doesn't touch on fastidious science, it doesn't seem worthwhile.

ONE EXPERIENCE—A FIRST-PERSON JOURNEY INTO INSTITUTIONAL INTERSTICES

We set out in this essay to make a case for granting institutional status to an undergraduate major in rhetoric and composition. We turn now to possibilities, to the ways in which the material realities of the university can be negotiated in order to produce a class like one which would be part of such a program. Such a project would require a change in the belief system that characterizes research-intensive universities. Sharon Crowley has recently written that

> [w]hat is necessary [to change entrenched belief] is for rhetors to be heard, for attention to be paid. Story is, perhaps, the most efficient means of garnering attention. I use the term here in its ancient rhetorical sense, where it refers to some exemplary narrative, historical or fictional, that makes a point by illustration or comparison (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 20). Aristotle says that examples are effective because they serve as witnesses. (2006, 197–98).

We therefore end our essay with a "witness" narrative that we hope you will find persuasive. We shift here to the first-person singular as one of us describes her actual experiences crafting and implementing a class that blended approaches to speechmaking and writing in a single, hybrid course that centered on the successful production of argument for first-year students. We suggest that such a hybrid course would be a realizable step forward for large, research-intensive universities interested in the advantages of an undergraduate major in rhetoric and composition but not yet ready to commit the resources required by a full-blown department of that ilk. We offer this story as an exploration of the institutional impedimenta to such a course, the forms that it can take, and the impacts it might have on the students who take it. We add a few thoughts on the lessons it offers to teachers, administrators, and university leaders guiding their students and their institutions toward improved undergraduate rhetoric and composition opportunities.

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When I first started pursuing my idea for a hybrid speech and writing first-year class, I met several blank stares—both in the department of English, where I was housed as a graduate student, and in the head offices of the department of communication, where I was at the time taking a course in the teaching of first-year speech. I had been teaching

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first-year writing in the department of English for several years and knew my students were not really getting what they wanted or needed despite the department's much-touted composition-program structure that allowed me to teach writing based on a centralized inquiry. In those classes, whenever I offered my students opportunities to share orally the investigations they were conducting for their papers, they jumped at the chance. In many cases, they did a better job of explaining themselves orally than they did presenting their arguments in their actual papers. Surprising numbers of them wrote warmly in class evaluations about their little speeches and the experiences they had preparing for and giving them. But it was not a straightforward process for me to turn my instincts about what students needed into an institutionally approved course for my students to take. There were obstacles, some expected and some surprising. I'll point out a few of them as I explain how my course came to be, what it looked like, and how students reacted to it.

When I took the graduate course in teaching first-year speech, I was struck by the similarities between the central messages of first-year speech and those of first-year writing—they seemed to have a significant overlap in their course content. There were similarities in the instruction of thesis-based argument development, ethical use of researched sources, and awareness of audience requirements, among others. But despite the number of years I had spent in graduate school, I had never run across any formal, institutionally approved information that would have directed me to think the first-year classes could be related in any substantial way for contemporary students. A smattering of information I'd received on the history of ancient rhetoric had indicated that speeches used to be considered the primary mode of argument presentation but that the whole history of the teaching of writing since Aristotle had been directed toward removing the taint of orality from writing in pursuit of "true" clarity. So my first obstacle was one of imagination, of knowing what was possible in and with other disciplines. If I hadn't inserted myself into both the first-year-writing and first-year-speech programs (a move not prohibited but certainly not encouraged by the chilly chasm of silence between the two departments at our university), I wouldn't have had a clue that students' first-year experiences in the two programs could be so similar.

Despite the absence of thorough rhetorical history I'd encountered in my graduate English courses, the facts of the similarities between the two first-year classes spurred me to imagine what a productive resonance

between speech and writing could mean for students. I theorized that students might be able to apply the lessons learned from developing well-done written or spoken presentations to the ones with which they struggled. I designed a first-year course that would give students equal chances to give and pay attention to spoken and written presentations of argument. I used the concept of argument as a stable bridge between the institutional formations of English composition and public speaking. The professor running the speech-teaching-training course accepted my hybrid syllabus as a credit-earning, grade-bearing, final project. But she gently pointed out that if I were to be invited to teach first-year speech, I would be expected to follow the communication department's guidelines for a regular speech class. In other words, my syllabus was great as a theoretical exercise, but the real format for teaching first-year students to speak would remain in the hands of the department. The obstacle of institutional(ized) authority, of doing things the way they had long been done, was a stumbling block in my path.

My interest had been piqued, however, so I began testing the waters in the department of English to see what the response to offering my hybrid class would be. My inquiries into the possibility of creating a new class, complete with new course number, were met with resounding silence, with one pitying suggestion from a senior professor that navigating the shoals of the university's course-creation committees was challenging enough for a junior professor and certainly a stretch too far for a graduate student to consider taking herself. The institutional expectations for the limited contributions graduate students should make to the organization of the department provided another stumbling block.

However, I was lucky to have worked previously for two years as an associate director of the first-year writing program, so I took my ideas there. I expended no little cultural capital in pitching my idea to my former program-administrator colleagues, who did eventually support my efforts to go forth with teaching speech inside a writing class as long as I promised to require "substantial writing" in support of the speeches. I met their constraint by introducing a requirement for speech portfolios of preparatory written materials, works-cited sheets, speech-delivery note cards, written peer reviews, and long post-speech reflections. But even so, my course was viewed with some suspicion by my fellow teachers of first-year writing, and I was told that my "nonstandard" syllabus had to receive special treatment from the directorship of the first-year writing program in order not to be flagged as nonconforming and therefore troublesome to