

A Return to Portland: Making Work Visible through the Ecologies of Writing Program Administration

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Five writing program administrators at separate institutions report on data collected about their work as WPAs for a full semester to make that work quantitatively visible and gain a current and nuanced understanding of WPAs' lived labor experiences. Using the Portland Resolution as a coding mechanism for their administrative data, the authors quantify kinds of labor that are often invisible, demonstrate how administrative labor for WPAs varies at different types of institutions, and argue that the daily work of individual WPAs both exemplifies and complicates the intellectual and theoretical framework of the Portland Resolution. The authors call for more data-driven studies of WPA labor to capture its rich variety. They also call for reconceptualizing the Portland Resolution and the statement on Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration to account for labor that is often invisible and varies with institutional context.

INTRODUCTION

Our study began during Casely Coan, Madison Bertenshaw, and Erin Whittig's 2016 CWPA session, "Making Mentorship Meaningful: Graduate WPAs and Professional Development." The five of us began discussing the nature of our work as WPAs, speculating about whether qualitative and quantitative data could make visible various aspects of WPA work that remain invisible—even to ourselves.

We aren't alone in raising questions of labor in academic settings. A quick glance at higher education publications illustrates the obsession faculty and administrators have with time, counting, and differentiating among the various elements of our academic labor. Scholars have established that faculty redirect far more time to teaching and administrative

obligations than to research (Jackson et al.; Ziker). The evidence from these studies won't surprise most faculty. We spend much of our time teaching; increasingly, our scholarly work is done "on our own time," alone, and under pressure to quantify our accomplishments (Flaherty).

The underlying goal of this project has been to make the work we do as WPAs quantitatively visible and to gain a more nuanced understanding of the range of WPAs' lived labor experiences. Rather than exclusively offering program narratives as the means through which we reported our work, we elected to track quantitatively the specific tasks that constituted our workloads as WPAs. Our project was, like Ziker's to some extent, a self-reporting time allocation study (although we used an in-progress method rather than a 24-hour recall reporting method). We documented our activities in real time through Toggl, a web-based application designed for tracking time.¹

Our data highlighted the mutable and kairotic nature of WPA administrative work: the prevalence of articulation-based labor, conflation of teaching and faculty development activities, ubiquity of WPA emotional labor, tension surrounding WPAs' administrative scholarship, labor experiences that were underrepresented in the *Portland Resolution*, and fundamental tension between our administrative labor activities and the evaluation of specific work output. We discuss these findings in detail by sharing our individual experiences and reflecting on what we learned by examining them collectively.

METHODS

Beginning in August 2016 and ending when grades were due in December, we each systematically recorded all of our professional activity in Toggl. Rather than identify and adopt predetermined categories for our activities, we labeled activities descriptively as we tracked them. Periodically during the semester, we shared our Toggl data in a Google Drive folder to discuss emerging patterns and determine whether we needed to refine the ways we were tracking. On spreadsheets we recorded the Toggl data, task, and time as well as materials produced, people involved, technologies or media used, and location of work (if not on campus).

During periodic discussions throughout the fall and early spring semesters, we discussed the data sets and talked through possible coding schemes. As we worked to define a framework for coding, we adhered to a collaborative coding model for reliability as described by Smagorinsky. Through our discussions, we determined that our codes needed to convey a connection between our efforts and those of scholars who have articulated the work of

WPAs to stakeholders within and beyond our immediate community (Fox; George; Gillam; Ianetta).

At a meeting during CCCC in Portland, Oregon in 2017, we determined that using the list of eight categories of WPA duties articulated in *The Portland Resolution: Council of Writing Program Administrators Guidelines for Writing Program Administrator (WPA) Positions* would provide the disciplinary grounding we needed while also providing an opportunity to test the categories of the *Portland Resolution* against our lived experiences. The *Portland Resolution* has served as the foundational labor document for our field since its adoption by the CWPA in 1992. The resolution stands as a “statement of professional standards,” articulating “prerequisites for effective administration of writing programs as well as equitable treatment of WPAs” (Hult et al. 88). In addition to outlining expectations for the working conditions, qualifications, and preparation of individuals hired to serve as WPAs (89–94), the resolution outlines eight categories of activities to which WPAs might turn in negotiating their job responsibilities, which we summarize as follows:

- **Scholarship of Administration.** Maintaining familiarity with/contributing to current research, scholarship, and pedagogy in the field.
- **Faculty Development and Other Teaching.** Teaching undergraduate/graduate courses; training, supervising, and evaluating instructors/tutors; designing/leading workshops.
- **Writing Program Development.** Developing, designing, and overseeing program curricula, course content, syllabi and resources; selecting textbooks; chairing committees related to the program; overseeing related programs; hiring instructors.
- **Writing Assessment, Writing Program Assessment, and Accountability.** Coordinating/administering student assessment/placement, maintaining program and assessment databases, administering student evaluation of instruction, analyzing/evaluating student and program data, conducting program reviews, and reporting to supervisors.
- **Registration and Scheduling.** Determining course schedules, staffing courses, overseeing enrollment patterns, and monitoring registration.
- **Office Management.** Supervising program office staff, maintaining equipment, and overseeing purchasing and supplies.
- **Counseling and Advising.** Mediating grade disputes, responding to instructor/student inquiries and concerns, managing matters related to academic integrity, liaising with relevant offices, and writing letters of recommendation for program staff/instructors.

- **Articulation.** Coordinating program activities/initiatives with other offices; updating program publications; and representing the program at meetings external to the program/department.

Using a collaborative model of coding (Smagorinsky) allowed us to understand our own work through the lens of the *Portland Resolution* while also testing its relevance to WPA work nearly a quarter of a century after its adoption.

Our goal in using this coding scheme was to explore the kind of labor being reflected, emphasized, misrepresented, deflected, or missing in a resolution intended to represent our work as WPAs and developed through the collaboration of multiple, respected scholar-administrators (Hult et al. 88). As we asked ourselves in our meeting notes in March 2017, “Can this lead us to a *Portland 2.0*? How do we define our goals? Working within, through, and against (?) the current *Portland Resolution*?” Our reflections confirmed our decision to frame our work as “A Return to Portland.”

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

In what follows, we articulate our preliminary findings and lay the methodological groundwork for future studies. We present our effort as a preliminary response to Richard Haswell’s and Chris Anson’s calls for more data-driven evidence about the work we do. Although such data “are nonexistent or scanty at best” (Haswell 186), they enable WPAs to speak persuasively to stakeholders outside of our discipline (Broad 207). Our pilot study offers little generalizable data; however, it provides an exigence for larger efforts that could help WPAs, non-WPA administrators, and departmental colleagues understand the scope and complexity of WPA work. Below we provide individually authored overviews of our data followed by combined analysis and conclusions.

Susan Miller-Cochran

Institution: University of Arizona

Program: Writing Program

Support Staff: 2 full-time staff, 3 associate directors (tenured or continuing status), 6 assistant directors (multi-year contracts), and 1 graduate assistant director

Release Time: Released from 3 courses of a 2/2 load

As figure 1 shows, I spent the greatest share of my time (29%) on articulation, followed closely by faculty development and teaching. Nearly all of my email and many of my meetings have to do with articulation in unex-

pected ways. I was surprised to find that much of my work deals with articulation in a wide range of forms. This result might be explained because of the size of the program I direct (roughly 6,000 students, 330 sections, and over 150 instructors per semester) and the number of initiatives that are connected to other efforts on campus and in the department.

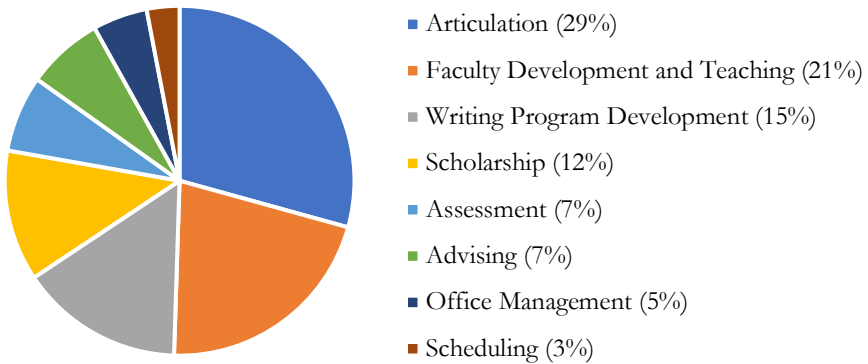


Figure 1. The allocation of Miller-Cochran's time to various professional duties during fall 2016.

I also realized that this representation of my administrative workload, from fall 2016, is merely a snapshot. I found myself wondering how different another semester would look. For example, we conducted a CWPA consultant-evaluator visit in our writing program during the semester I was collecting data, so I probably spent more time on assessment than I would have in another semester. I also spent more time on inter-institutional articulation because a surprising (to me) article came out in *Inside Higher Ed* early in the semester about the use of data analytics related to writing and retention at our university (Baldasare, Vito, and Del Casino). I spent a great deal of time during the semester working on articulation with people and units at my institution that I had not been working with prior to that publication. These relationships have been beneficial, but I was prompted to develop them in response to the article.

Other distinctions include the fact that I do not teach every semester and I collected data during a teaching semester. The allocation of my time to teaching would be different in a non-teaching semester. Complicating this matter further is the fact that I was teaching a graduate course in writing program administration. Some of the preparation for the course, mentoring graduate students taking it, preparing lessons, and responding to their reflections and work, overlapped significantly with other work I was doing as a WPA. Teaching this graduate seminar gave me space to work

on my own professional development and read new work on our field, and the *Portland Resolution* doesn't provide space (as Graziano notes below) for accounting for our own professional growth.

I also was surprised to find that I spent more time on scholarship than I realized. One complication that arose through coding, however, was that I included all of the professional service that I do within the discipline as part of my scholarship. There is no other space for such service in the *Portland Resolution*, although I likely would not have labeled that work as scholarship otherwise. Given that my professional service obligations were significant during fall 2016 (I was serving as president of the CWPA), I wanted to be able to acknowledge that work separately.

I also found that the code of articulation was problematic for me. Based on the use of the term in the *Portland Resolution*, I could not determine how to account for the work that I do as articulation within a program. The frequent meetings with graduate students, career-track faculty, administrators in the department, graduate program directors, and others are not accounted for in the *Portland Resolution* definition of articulation. The percentage of my work that is considered articulation is quite high because it includes a lot of outward-facing work for the program that is part of my job because of the size of the program and administrative staff.

Kay Halasek

Institution: Ohio State University

Program: Second-Year Writing

Support Staff: 1 three-quarter-time administrative assistant

Release Time: Released from 2 courses of a 2/2 load

I am struck—as Miller-Cochran was—by how different the semester might look if I had completed the timekeeping and coding during a spring term. In the second-year writing program (SYWP), for example, we conduct assessment each spring, which accounts for its absence in autumn 2016 (see figure 2). I was also struck by the limited amount of time dedicated to articulation (5%)—both in time and scope. I had anticipated greater time commitment and reach. If I were to have captured the spring 2017 term, for example, the articulation slice of my pie would have looked much different as Ohio State was undertaking a general education review.

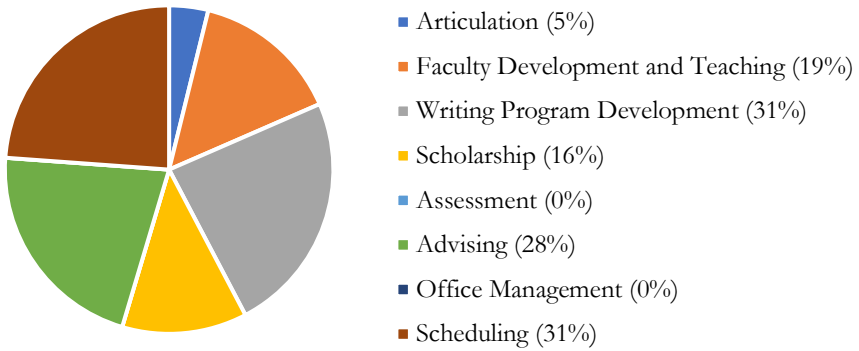


Figure 2. The allocation of Halasek's time to various professional duties during fall 2016.

At the same time, given our goal of capturing our work and its distribution across the *Portland Resolution* categories, the chart is representative. As director, I led a team of 30 to 40 instructors teaching 60 sections of second-year writing (1,400 students) each academic year, and autumn term work generally focuses on orienting and supporting GTAs and lecturers (e.g., counseling and advising at 28%, faculty development and teaching at 19%, and attending to program development at 31%). These responsibilities are clearly represented in the chart.

Even with these caveats in mind, I found two critical complications as I reviewed the codes, namely the difficulty of

- capturing and characterizing institutional challenges, scope, and impact and
- distinguishing between program and professional labor.

In coding articulation, I found that the scope of my work was exclusively internal to the department—coordinating with the other writing programs through our writing program directors' meetings and representing the SYWP at departmental meetings and through proposals for curriculum development and innovation. Also absent in the calculation of time devoted to articulation is the near constant work of naming and addressing the vast chasm between our own and the perceptions of our colleagues across the university about writing courses and writing program administration—an ongoing issue Tom Fox has raised.

With respect to scholarship (and the challenge of and call to distinguish between program and professional labor), I struggled with the question of whether a given project on peer response should be coded as WPA scholar-

ship (or not coded at all as it represented professorial scholarship). Nancy Welch’s comments in the opening plenary session of the 2017 CWPA National Conference in Knoxville, TN certainly speak to this matter and suggest that (as Miller-Cochran and Graziano noted in our discussions over email) scholarly work counts as part of WPA work. In other words, I began to erase some of the lines I’d drawn—and had been encouraged by my department to draw—between my professorial and administrative responsibilities.

As I reflect now, I recognize that my Toggl tracking did not take into account self-care and personal and professional reflection, rendering invisible both the emotional challenges of and intrinsic motivations for my work-absences that contribute to what Tokumitsu refers to as an “anti-worker ideology” in which adhering to the “do what you love” ideology actually devalues the work that we do.

Numerous times during our conversations, the five of us remarked about (1) the importance of self-care, (2) the ways we engaged in self-care, and (3) our limited attention to self-care, and we admitted that although fundamentally critical to our work and quality of life, self-care is not present in our data.

Leigh Graziano

Institution: University of Arkansas at Monticello (open admissions)

Program: First-Year Writing Coordinator, English Department

Support Staff: None

Release Time: Released from 0 courses of a 4/4 load

Given my institutional context and lack of release time, the distribution of my time isn’t exactly surprising (see figure 3). Obviously, faculty development and other teaching is my largest category, occupying 78% of my time. This time includes course preparation, grading, conferencing, and teaching classes. Problematically, though, in combining faculty development with teaching, the *Portland Resolution* asserts that teaching is a significant part of our identities. In fact, the large amount of time I spend in the first-year writing class greatly impacts the work I do as a WPA. For example, our population of first-generation, nontraditional students struggles to obtain the required textbooks in our classrooms because of high cost. In response, I compiled a list of Open Educational Resources (OER) materials for faculty and encouraged them to avoid costly texts because it was creating issues of equity and access in our courses. However, the category as outlined within the *Portland Resolution* was consistently problematic for me as I tried to make these sorts of connections between my teaching and my evolving

sense of how I could best serve my students and program. This wasn't the only work that was invisible or missing from the *Portland Resolution*.

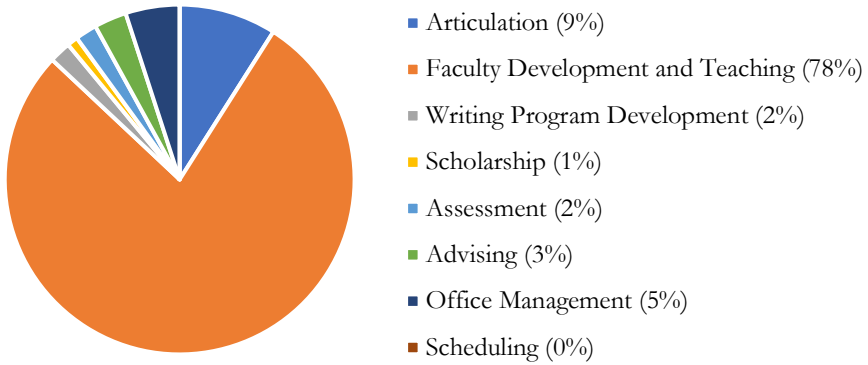


Figure 3. The allocation of Graziano's time to various professional duties during fall 2016.

My next two largest categories, articulation and office management, occupied 14% of my time collectively. I think of them collectively because most of what I coded as office management had to do with “checking in” with the director of the writing center, which also felt a bit like articulation to me, as the director and I frequently discussed aspects of the writing program and had an ongoing scholarly project together. The only distinction between that time is that it was inward-facing within the department as opposed to the outward-facing work I did with other units on campus, work that was more focused on efforts to collaborate and build allies.

Coding articulation at all became challenging for me because much of what I felt I was doing could also be considered emotional labor. How do I log passing conversations in the hall where I try to cultivate shared values about writing? How do I log advocating for my own existence when faculty ask me what it is that I do? Or, worse, when an email circulates inquiring whether a coordinator is even needed for first-year writing? Without a rhetoric and composition presence in the English department and with no prior history of a WPA at my institution, my isolation within the department necessitated constantly arguing and demonstrating the value of my disciplinary knowledge. As Alice Gillam notes, the *Portland Resolution* “reifies the distinction between intellectual and emotional labor and ignores the less visible and commodifiable aspects of our work” (123). I would add that while it reifies the distinction between these two types of labor, it certainly privileges the intellectual.

Regarding my own context, the distribution of the *Portland Resolution* codes reveals some of the inconsistency that can be expected from the creation of a WPA position without clear boundaries or institutional power and support. But as a new WPA, I found it troubling that the kind and amount of work I engaged in was so poorly represented in one of the governing documents of our field.

Frank Napolitano

Institution: Radford University
Program: Graduate Teaching Fellows Mentoring Program
Support Staff: None
Release Time: Released from 4 courses of a 4/4 load.

I was surprised to learn that I devote so much time teaching and working with faculty (72%) because I spend much of my day sequestered in my office, responding to emails, reviewing syllabi, planning and running teaching development seminars, observing graduate students' classes, and meeting individually with program members (see figure 4.) In other words, I tend not to notice how much I teach because I spend so much of my day doing isolated "office work." Although this work still focuses on new teachers' professional development, it doesn't always feel important. Our study has helped me see my work with different eyes and recognize its pedagogical value.

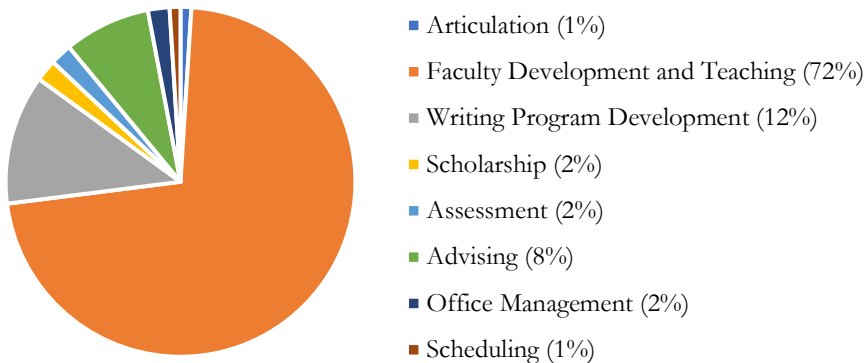


Figure 4. The allocation of Napolitano's time to various professional duties during fall 2016.

While this attention to pedagogy certainly is gratifying, it's clear that the 2% I spent on scholarship of administration didn't allow me to engage with research that would prompt me to reflect upon and reinvigorate our

mentoring program. While I am pleased with the progress the program has made during my tenure, I would also like to be more forward-thinking about ways to improve it. Engaging with the scholarship of administration is a key factor in doing so.

This observation about scholarship led me to realize a complication in our coding scheme, specifically that scholarship of administration is inseparable from several of my other duties. The *Portland Resolution* describes it as being “cognizant of current developments in teaching, research, and scholarship in rhetoric, composition, and program administration” and claims undertaking “scholarship of teaching and curriculum design as part of the essential work of the WPA” (Hult et al. 92). My preparation for teaching a graduate pedagogy course certainly falls within this category, but because I was reading this scholarship to prepare for a “for-credit graduate course in the teaching of writing,” the first activity listed under faculty development and other teaching (92), I included the activity under that code. Clearly, a good percentage of this time was devoted to scholarship, but it would be impossible to distinguish between my class preparation and my efforts to read current research.

Writing program development, nearly 14% of my work, also siphoned time from the scholarship of administration. In fall 2016, I collaborated on a US Department of Education Title III grant application to fund a WAC program. My primary responsibilities were to research and demonstrate the connection between interdisciplinary writing instruction and student success and articulate the relationship between a WAC program and a writing center. This work fits comfortably into the *Portland Resolution* definition of scholarship, but because the work product of the grant remained my main consideration for coding, I categorized these efforts as program development.

Another complication I encountered reflects the changing nature of graduate programs in the 21st century. In 2016, I devoted a significant amount of time to marketing my program: designing pamphlets, intake cards, and electronic advertisements appearing on screens throughout our college; bidding on search terms through Google AdWords; posting to Facebook and Twitter; and reaching out—via email or in person—to contacts at other institutions. Published in 1992, the *Portland Resolution* could not have anticipated writing program reliance on social media, and thus it does not provide any categories to accommodate much of this work. Given recruitment pressures placed on WPA positions tied to graduate programs, future articulations of our work should consider marketing for programs as another essential aspect of our jobs.

Natalie Szymanski

Institution: University of Hawai‘i–West O‘ahu

Program: First-Year Composition

Support Staff: None

Release Time: Released from 1 course of a 3/3 load

As figure 4 shows, I spent the majority of my time, 56%, on faculty development and teaching-related tasks. In retrospect, I wish teaching were a separate category in the *Portland Resolution* since the practices of teaching are related to but essentially different from the labor of faculty development. Specifically, I would have liked to have known which I spent more time on given the drastically different weight these two categories carry in my tenure and promotion materials. My next largest labor categories were articulation (17%), followed by writing program development (15%), both of which I think reflect the influence of ecology theory in my administrative philosophy and approach. It was not surprising that internal program development tasks such as the creation of a program website, adjunct contract memos, and pedagogical resources for FYC instructors (among others) occupied a large part of my time. Alternatively, the articulation portion of my data reflects the external-facing relationship building and collaborative work I did with support staff, grant directors, and administrative stakeholders on campus and in the community to develop and sustain my program.

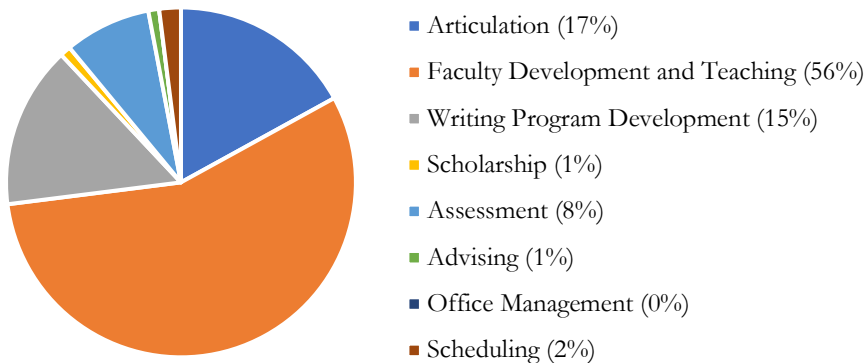


Figure 5. The allocation of Szymanski's time to various professional duties during fall 2016.

My data and the process of their collection also highlighted two troubling labor patterns. First, I spent only 1% of my overall work time during this semester furthering my own scholarship. This data point is particularly worrisome since it demonstrates quantitatively that the breakdown of

my workload in no way aligns with the percentages outlined and valued in my contract renewal and tenure and promotion materials. The way my labor is divided ensures that my FYC program is successful and sustainable while I—as an individual scholar and faculty member—am simultaneously unsuccessful (at least according to my university’s tenure and promotion guidelines) and the work distribution professionally unsustainable. Second, the process of collecting these data during the semester of my maternity leave brought to light another troubling realization concerning professional accommodation. Although I was on full leave for two weeks—an infuriatingly short amount of time due to the lack of paid leave in my institutional system—I found myself answering multiple emails from my hospital bed and participating in conference calls while nursing my son during our first days home because there was no one else to solve the “emergency” with our placement testing transition. During my multi-day labor my inbox filled with emails asking me to clarify my recommendations despite my “out of office/having a baby” email auto-reply, and when the messages went unanswered support staff and eventually upper administration called a meeting with the “accommodation” that I phone in from home to resolve the issue. My (lack of) maternity leave highlighted a significant concern: When I am gone, there is no one to maintain the internal and external ecologies of my program, and thus my own professional accommodations are not only complicated but nonexistent.

Overall, I see one large takeaway from my data: I would like to see (read: need) a more meaningful and articulated connection between the *Portland Resolution* and *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration*. If more and more GenAdmin are entering WPA positions (as Cristyn Elder et al.’s research argues) and facing promotion processes defined by traditional divisions and valuations of scholarship and teaching, our professional organization needs to bridge the cognitive and lived labor gap between these two foundational labor documents.

SHARED FINDINGS

A number of common patterns run through our data sets that speak to the utility (and limits) of the *Portland Resolution* in capturing our lived experiences as WPAs (see figure 6). Most of us noted that our data sets were *kairotic snapshots* that had the potential to change drastically from one semester to the next. For example, Miller-Cochran conducted a CWPA consultant-evaluator visit in her writing program during the semester she was collecting data, so she likely spent more time on assessment than she would have in another semester (7%). Halasek noted that her time spent on assessment

and articulation would have looked quite different if it had been collected in the spring semester due to the timing of departmental assessment initiatives and institutional general education curriculum review schedule.

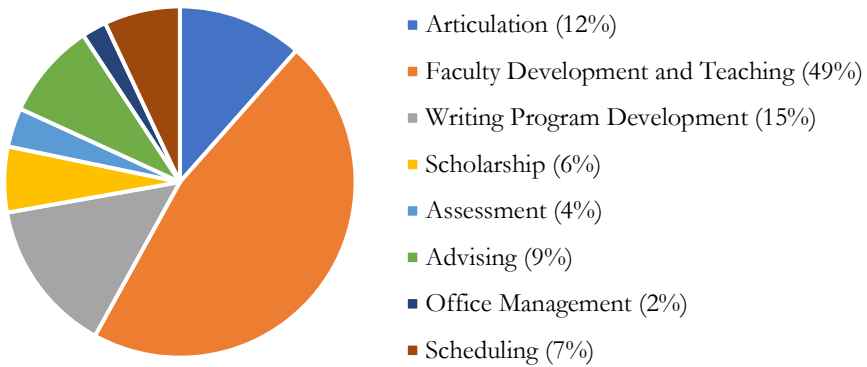


Figure 6. Percentage of time allocated by all participants to the *Portland Resolution* categories of labor.

The labor category of articulation had interesting implications for us, even though it accounted for anywhere from 1–29% of our total data. Miller-Cochran coded it most frequently and attributed that to the size of the program she directs and its connections to other efforts within the department and across campus. Szymanski attributes its presence in 17% of her data to the influence of ecology theory in her administrative philosophy and approach. In reflecting on her data, she makes an important point about the nature of the articulation category as focused on the external-facing relationship building and collaborative work we do with support staff, grant directors, and other administrative stakeholders on campus and in the community.

The *Portland Resolution* category for faculty development and teaching accounted for a large amount of time, ranging from 56 to 78%, for the three authors (Graziano, Naplitano, and Szymanski) located in small institutional settings. All five authors felt that the description of this category in the *Portland Resolution* was problematic. Only two of the items within the category, as it is defined in the *Portland Resolution*, address teaching specifically. The remaining five characteristics are focused more on faculty development or evaluating teachers within a writing program. This suggests that teaching is not a primary duty of the WPA, which does not align with our lived experiences. Teaching is a named and valued category in tenure and promotion, and much of the administrative work we do is connected

to the classroom. Further, the category itself obfuscates the data as we were unable to distinguish between the time we spent on faculty development and teaching.

Scholarship manifested as a contested category of labor in many of our data sets. On average, we fell far short of the 16.67 hours per week devoted to research reported by Jackson et al. (2). It is worth noting that Jackson et al. surveyed only “tenured faculty members at research universities,” so it is unsurprising that Miller-Cochran and Halasek, WPAs at large R1 PhD-granting institutions, spent a comparable amount of time (12% and 16% respectively) on scholarship. The tenure guidelines at these institutions often place increased value on scholarly production, but they represent the labor conditions of a very small portion of the professoriate.² The data from Graziano, Napolitano, and Szymanski quantitatively emphasize the struggle that WPAs at small institutions experience when attempting to balance and find time for scholarship (1–2% of their total time) amid heavy service loads, lack of support, or lack of course release time.

Our online and offline coding discussions repeatedly noted that the category of counseling and advising was insufficient and potentially inaccurate for describing the nuanced tasks of mentorship we found ourselves engaged in with faculty, graduate students, and administrators. The five of us spent anywhere from 1–28% on advising. These data also speak to institutional context and the particular semester that we were collecting data. Halasek and Napolitano are both responsible for GTA programs. Miller-Cochran, in contrast, only coded 7% of her time on advising but noted that she found some of this mentoring work was conflated with her teaching of a graduate course focused on writing program administration. However, that work was absorbed into the faculty development and other teaching category.

As a group, we also noted that the two categories of office management and registration and scheduling took up very little time for any of us. Although we do not intend to say that work is unimportant, we found that the two categories combined occupied no more than 10% of our time, regardless of the size of the institution. Almost all the other categories from the *Portland Resolution* show considerable variation in ways that are dependent upon either the particular semester of data collection or on the size or type of institution, but these two categories were stable despite that variation. Perhaps the focus on tasks like these has changed over time (given online scheduling tools, more centralized models of support staff or administration, etc.); perhaps WPAs in other institutional contexts would report different percentages; or perhaps WPAs who have been in their positions for many years have seen substantive changes in time spent on these tasks.

Finally, Napolitano provided anecdotal data about a fundamental tension on which we need to reflect as a field: Currently *the distinguishing factor of much of our labor is the work product created*. For Napolitano, this tension obfuscated whether a specific grant-related labor task should be understood as scholarship or program development, pointing to another reason the *Portland Resolution* (representing our field's definition of WPA work) needs to be aligned more clearly with *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration* (a point Szymanski makes). This small categorization repeated and magnified over time can have real ramifications in a WPA's tenure and promotion process. Melissa Ianetta, in her 2015 CWPA Conference plenary address, argues that

if we render our work only in those categories used by our faculty colleagues, whose professional identities and thus valuation systems are comprised almost entirely of teaching, research, and the zest of service, then we should expect that our colleagues will . . . presume our administrative roles fit whatever parameters suit their understandings. (146)

It is incumbent upon WPAs to claim agency in categorizing our work.

LIMITATIONS

Given the multivalent nature of WPA work, we realize that our data collection methods have limitations. First, our data do not speak to the full range of contexts that WPA work encompasses or with which it intersects. We work in writing programs that offer first-year, second-year, or other foundational writing classes at four-year institutions of various types and sizes. We are also either tenured or tenurable, so our data don't speak to the experiences of those in tenure-free lines (to use the language of the CWPA caucus), or staff or instructor positions. The institutional power embedded in the WPA role shapes the work of the WPA, so data that address the administrative work of WPAs who are not in tenurable faculty positions is essential to understanding fully the range of work WPAs perform. Our data also say nothing about the experiences of WPAs at other types of institutions, specifically at two-year colleges (Klausman; Taylor). Therefore, while we hope that our data are suggestive of experiences that WPAs share, we do not intend to offer generalizable conclusions about WPA labor. Instead, we offer our experiences and trace their common threads, knowing that the particulars are part of what we have been missing in conversations about WPA work.

Additionally, we are four white women and one white man, and our study does not include the work of WPAs of diverse race, gender, and other identities. Graziano and Szymanski highlight the importance of promoting productive mentoring relationships and acknowledging the emotional

labor we engage in (George; Micciche), but we are missing data that include the additional mentoring and emotional labor that people of color are often called upon to undertake in academic settings, especially when they are in leadership roles (Craig and Perryman-Clark; Adler-Kassner). White and cis-gender privilege allows us to conceive of our labor and identities as WPAs with little consideration for the role of race and gender identity, and these issues need to be examined more fully by gathering additional data from WPAs in other contexts.

Studying ourselves also impacted our behaviors and awareness of our work and may have influenced the data we included and the way we coded. We each felt the weight of the observer's paradox as we carefully examined our own work. Yet we also felt that it was important to examine our own data and contexts because we understand the nuances of the work we do. By talking with each other throughout the data collection and coding processes, we were able to refine each other's analyses of our work (drawing on Smagorinsky) and maintain stronger shared understandings of our coding scheme, specifically how we were interpreting the categories of the *Portland Resolution*.

Finally, it seems reasonable to ask why we kept working with the *Portland Resolution's* categories. Rather than viewing these coding difficulties as an indication that we should rethink our taxonomy, we see them as indications that our institutional documents themselves need to be revised. Our goal was to understand the possibilities and limitations of how our field defines WPA work. Our conclusions include several proposals for future inquiry and possibilities for revising the *Portland Resolution*.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study both affirmed the enduring value of the *Portland Resolution* and led us to question whether our profession has reached a point at which we need to reconceptualize much of our labor. In some ways, our findings revealed the flexibility of the *Portland Resolution*: Despite our employment at different types of institutions, we found that the document represented much of our work in all its variety, serving as a valuable touchstone for our shifting responsibilities. As our data accumulated, however, we noticed that much of our labor strained against the *Portland Resolution* classifications which, a quarter of a century earlier, were considered "comprehensive" (92). Many of us found that our work often intersected with multiple codes, which is unsurprising given recent work on the ecological nature of writing programs and "the networked agency at play in WPA work" (Reiff, Bawarshi, Ballif, and Weisser 5). However, there remains a dearth of scholarship that illustrates how acknowledging WPA work as a complex network of activities might impact how we define and evaluate our labor practices.

Our shared findings suggest a number of features of WPA labor that need to be considered as the field revisits and revises the *Portland Resolutions* and *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration*:

- Validating the flexibility and mutability in workloads and lived experiences
- Clarifying the articulation category to include internal and external facing tasks
- Separating faculty development and teaching into two separate categories
- Acknowledging emotional labor
- Defining scholarship and its connection to *Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration*
- Including national and local service to professional organizations
- Recognizing professional development for its own sake
- Acknowledging the value placed on (visible) work products
- Advocating for labor sustainability and maternity leave accommodations
- Recognizing the increased demands to promote our programs in on-line spaces

While our data highlight these areas of revision, the field needs more studies that include quantitative data to fill the gaps that remain. Our labor documents ought to reflect more effectively a range of employment situations, institutions, and programs. Revisions to the document should also address explicitly the multiple sites of writing program administration within a university, such as online writing programs, GTA mentoring programs, writing centers, and WAC/WID programs. Similarly, scholarship about the work of writing center directors (Caswell, McKinney, and Jackson) and WPAs overseeing WAC/WID programs (Thaiss and Porter; Condon and Rutz) could make the *Portland Resolution* more relevant to a range of WPA work. Overall, additional studies that examine the work of WPAs at a far broader range of contexts could build better understanding of the lived labor experiences of WPAs.

As a profession, WPAs need to heed the calls of scholars such as Chris Anson for more data-driven scholarship that accounts for the full range of our work. Such research would yield necessary rethinking and revision to our professional statements. The *Portland Resolution* does not account for the diversity of positions and activities we have discovered in our own analyses, let alone the full range of possibilities that we have yet to discover. The time may come for a new resolution. When it does, we will need a more complete picture of the current state of the profession, and that picture

must be built upon broad understanding of the range of WPA positions and the people who serve in those roles.

NOTES

1. Unlike much valuable research on the rise of the managerial class (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed; Kolsaker); workload allocation; or gender, race, and academic rank equity in workloads and salary (Barrett and Barrett; Bellas and Toutkoushian; Jackson et al.; Link, Swann, and Bozeman; Winslow), our study did not set out to examine (in)equities across gender and rank or create benchmarks against which WPA work might be measured. Instead, we were motivated by the prospects of making our work visible and improving the conditions and expectations under which we—and others—work as WPAs. We were less interested in the amount of time we spent (in terms of raw hours per week) than in how we spent that time. Nonetheless, it might be of interest to readers that we spent, on average, 30 hours per week on WPA activities.

2. The Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University reports that only 6.1% of institutions are characterized as having very high (3.0%) or high (3.1%) amounts of research activity.

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