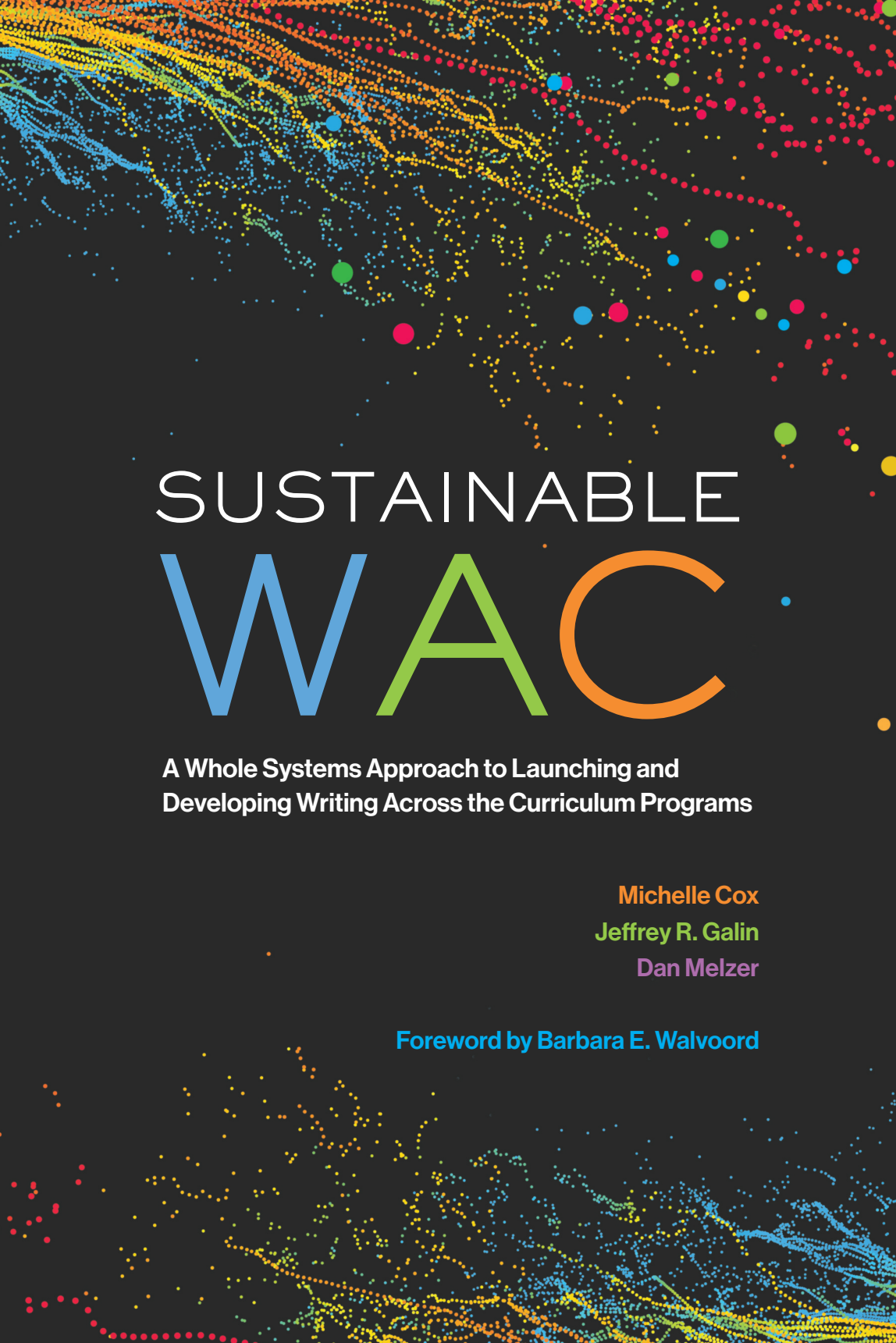
SUSTAINABLE
WAC
A Whole Systems Approach to Launching and Developing Writing Across the Curriculum Programs
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The Need for a Systematic Approach to Building and Sustaining WAC Programs

How will WAC survive? How will it grow and change—what new forms will WAC programs take, and how will they adapt to some of the present program elements and structures in the changing scene in higher education? What new WAC theories and research will help lay the groundwork for future WAC programs?

(McLeod, Miraglia, Soven, & Thaiss, 2001, p. 4)

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is the longest-standing curricular reform movement in the history of higher education in the United States (Russell, 2002), yet WAC programs fail to survive at an alarming rate of more than 50 percent (Thaiss & Porter, 2010, p. 558). One way to understand this phenomenon is to consider how WAC programs are developed and institutionalized. We can learn a great deal about how they develop, grow, and fare across time from the narratives of program directors. The field of WAC has a rich history of lore, which has been important for passing on knowledge based in the wisdom of experience. However, as the field matures, we would benefit from reframing lore through the application of a theoretical framework for program building. For these reasons, we frame this book with both vignettes from WAC directors and the whole systems approach to WAC program development and transformational change, a theoretical framework that we have developed by drawing on overlapping cross-disciplinary theories of complex organizations and sustainability.

This chapter opens with two contrasting vignettes demonstrating different levels of WAC's integration into a university system, from a "failed attempt" at WAC to a fully integrated and sustainable program. While these two examples are not meant to represent the broad range of programs across institutional contexts, they do provide us a starting place for considering what can lead to or detract from program longevity. In the first, "A WAC Failure That I'm Trying to Learn From," Michael Michaud describes steps he took to build a WAC program that are often advised in the WAC lore: he worked with a cross-disciplinary group of faculty who were enthused about integrating writing into the curriculum, he used his expertise in rhetoric and composition to guide conversations within this group, and he expanded expertise in writing on campus through faculty development events. And yet, as Michaud points out, the signs of the writing-intensive (WI) requirement's demise can be seen from the start. In the second vignette, "Handing Over the Reins: Ownership, Support, and the Departmentally Focused Model of Communication Across the Curriculum," Chris Anson and Deanna Dannels share the history of a well-established WAC program. This program took more than fifteen years to develop, including stages of data gathering, innovation, assessment, and, ultimately, a handing over of control of WAC to departments.

We selected these emblematic vignettes to open the book because they provide an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between how WAC is initiated and developed and the sustainability of the program—a relationship we explore throughout the book. Following these vignettes, we explain why a theoretical framework for WAC program development is needed and briefly describe the whole systems approach, the theoretical framework and methodology for developing WAC programs that structures the book.

A WAC Failure That I'm Trying to Learn From

Michael J. Michaud
Rhode Island College

You arrive on campus, a newly minted composition/rhetoric PhD, ready to get to work and excited to learn that your school already has an estab-

lished writing board, of which you are now a member. You are pleased to learn that the board has been around for some time. To a certain extent, the groundwork for WAC at your school has already been laid. While there is no official WAC program, no program requirements, no outcomes or assessment mechanisms, and no program director, there is a small band of faculty members from across the disciplines who have participated in WAC initiatives, made writing instruction a core element of their pedagogy, and made the advancement of WAC part of their work on campus. There is some sense, on the campus, that writing instruction is important and should be taken seriously, and that first-year composition is not the cure-all for students' inevitable ills.

Despite the fact that you have never officially consulted with faculty in the disciplines on matters related to writing instruction and know only a little about WAC itself, you are immediately granted "expert" status on the writing board because of your background in composition. During your early years on the board, you help plan the annual professional development workshop, a tradition that dates back over a dozen years and regularly engages about a third of the faculty in a one-day professional development workshop focused on writing and pedagogy. Occasionally, you and the board are given the opportunity to plan other professional development opportunities and to consult with various campus entities on matters related to writing and curriculum. You go to board meetings, you listen to your peers, you begin to be called on by campus entities to discuss writing. You are starting to become the WAC expert that your colleagues on the board members assumed you were.

As you learn more about WAC and become acquainted with the campus, you begin to realize that, while you are lucky to have a great group of colleagues with whom to collaborate, what you have at your school as far as WAC goes is pretty meager. You begin to wonder what you might help build, but your eye is on your upcoming tenure case and your research, which has nothing to do with WAC.

Then, something amazing happens. A powerful and well-respected faculty member who is heading up the campus-wide revision of general education and who is committed to quality writing instruction manages to persuade the campus community to accept a writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) requirement as part of the new general education program. You never quite learn how this was accomplished (you're still not sure). No one, in fact, seems to know how or why the WID requirement was inserted into the general education overhaul, but it's in there nonetheless, and, as the train that is the new general education program begins to leave the station, WID is on board.

The writing board is happy with this new WID requirement but is not really a part of the conversation. Its members mostly stand along the tracks, waving at the train as it goes by. They try to intervene, to ask what this new WID requirement will include, what its goals will be, how it will be assessed, and how faculty will receive training, but no one has

any answers and no one, it seems, wants to entertain these questions. You and your writing board colleagues are told that there are far more contentious issues at stake in the general education overhaul and they will need to be addressed first. No one wants to derail the train, including the writing board. So you sit by, pleased, concerned, and largely helpless.

Later, when the dust has cleared and the train has safely reached the station with the general education overhaul, you and the other members of the writing board attempt to intervene in the WID rollout. You quickly learn that you face a significant new obstacle: faculty and administrative resistance. You and your colleagues ask, "What is a WID course at our institution?" "What should it attempt to accomplish?" "Why?" "Who should teach it?" "How?" No one knows or wants to say. WID, you and your colleagues are told, is whatever each individual department decides it is. When you press for more information, an associate dean refuses to engage. "Will there be course caps on WID courses?" It's up to the departments. "What about outcomes?" Up to the departments. "What about classroom practices—revision?" "Peer workshops?" "Conferences?" Up to the departments and individual instructors. "Training for the faculty teaching WID courses?" Same. Same. Same.

You and the members of the writing board begin to get the picture: the new WID requirement is mostly none of your business. Departments will submit plans for how they will meet the requirement to the committee on general education. They will vet the plans, ultimately approve them, and move on. Everyone will strive for a low bar. You and your colleagues on the writing board start throwing around the phrase "check the box" because that, it seems, is what your new WID comes down to. At some later date, you learn that assessment will be discussed, but, since the outcomes of the new general education program are the first things that need to be assessed, assessment of WID will have to wait.

As Kurt Vonnegut would say: And so it goes. The scenario above is the WID failure that I am trying to learn from. So far, were you to ask me to name five things I have learned, they would be these:

1. Powerful faculty members on college campuses with intentions that may or may not align with your own do have the ability to make change happen.

2. These powerful faculty members may or may not care what you think or want to listen to you.

3. If you yourself lack status and/or clout on your campus, you will likely not be taken seriously or much listened to.

4. If you yourself are just beginning to understand the mechanisms by which your college or university operates, you'll probably be unlikely to advocate successfully for the things you care about.

5. Change is hard (I already knew this, but I'm learning it again).

Handing Over the Reins: Ownership, Support, and the Departmentally Focused Model of Communication Across the Curriculum

Chris M. Anson and Deanna Dannels
North Carolina State University

In 1999 we were hired to be the director (Chris) and assistant director (Deanna) of the newly established Campus Writing and Speaking Program at North Carolina State University. Just a couple of years old, the program had been led by interim director Dr. Michael Carter, a compositionist and WAC expert. Founded after widespread concern that North Carolina State students were not demonstrating adequate abilities in writing, oral communication, or teamwork, the program was designed to provide both generalized, university-wide support and consultations to individual departments and programs.

After the program was established, Mike began consulting with a few eager members in select departments in some of the university's ten colleges, including several in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines where writing was both underutilized in coursework and underpracticed. Mike's process (described in Carter, 2003) involved collaborating with several faculty in each department to painstakingly tease out and then formally articulate learning outcomes that included those for writing and oral communication. The outcomes would then drive implementation plans (such as helping faculty to design, teach, and assess more communication activities in their courses) as well as plans to assess students' progress on a course-specific and departmental basis. Further support came from the office of assessment, which was sympathetic to the need for increased attention to writing and speaking, and also highly respectful of the expertise that faculty in writing and communication studies brought to the process (see Anson, Carter, Dannels, & Rust, 2003; Carter, Anson, & Miller, 2003). It took Mike five years to complete the outcomes development process across the university.

The slowly transformative potential of this model cannot be overstated. Outcomes came from each department's own understanding of what strong graduates should know and be able to do, and how communication activities strengthened learning. Everything that followed—every approach to implementation, such as a portfolio system for majors, a "saturation" model that put communication into every course, and a miniature writing- and speaking-intensive course model—came from and was owned by each department. With our help, every decision

about assessment—every approach, focus, and type of data collection and analysis—was uniquely shaped by the department, molded to best fit its faculty, students, and curriculum (see Anson, 2006).

In addition to supporting individual departments' efforts to integrate writing and oral communication into their curricula, the Campus Writing and Speaking Program provides support on a more general basis. For example, its popular faculty seminar brings together up to fifteen faculty from across the university to revise an undergraduate course. Meeting every other week for a semester, the participants learn about strategies for designing assignments, supporting their development, and evaluating the results. A stipend provides incentive to produce a before-and-after report on the course improvements and the promise to share something of interest about the revisions during one of the program's noon box-lunch sessions the following year. Other programming includes campus-wide workshops, guest presenters, an "assisted inquiry" option (for faculty to get help running classroom-based research projects involving writing and/or speaking), and individual consultations. Meanwhile, the program's own research agenda, which usually involves graduate consultants who are doctoral students in the PhD program in communication, rhetoric, and digital media, provides material for ongoing support of various curricular initiatives and reports.

Over time, of course, departmental plans and activities can fall by the wayside. The program conducts "profiles" at the department level—expert consultations, similar to external reviews, designed to provide entirely formative feedback to the department about its status quo with respect to communication in the undergraduate curriculum (see Anson & Dannels, 2009). Through meetings with curriculum committees and individual faculty, analyses of documents, and various inventories of practices, we can gauge the level of activity in which a department is continuing to engage in meeting its writing and speaking goals, and offer suggestions as necessary.

Evidence suggests that North Carolina State was the first large institution to put into place an entire program focusing on individual departments' goals for communication. But slowly, the word has spread. The model now includes programs at both large universities, such as North Carolina State, the University of Minnesota, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and at smaller institutions, such as McDaniel College and Colby College. Surprisingly, however, the approach is still dwarfed by the ubiquitous WI model. The success of the WI model in spreading writing more fully across university curricula is often negated by the failure to sustain the effort, to encourage the program's ownership and development beyond the office that oversees it, and to yield a net increase in writing when everyone not teaching a WI course is forgiven for not including it (see Holdstein, 2000; White, 1990a).

The departmental model requires a kind of community activism that at once respects the autonomy and values of departmental cultures while

also providing them with new perspectives, knowledge, and strategies. As WAC or Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC) leaders, we must be willing to give over some authority and control of writing and communication to faculty in the disciplines, and see ourselves as supporting and advising their efforts, rather than, in the role of writing and communication tsars, "certifying" or "approving" their courses or faculty and condescendingly telling them what they can and can't do.

These vignettes illustrate contrasting approaches to building WAC programs within complex institutional structures and speak to the need for a systematic and theoretically informed framework for developing sustainable WAC. Michael Michaud described a WID program lacking in cohesion, oversight, and accountability that was created without consultation with the WAC director or campus writing board. Even though this WAC director followed advice often found in WAC guidebooks, there may have been additional steps that could have been taken to make WAC more sustainable. The WAC director and the writing board may have played a greater role in shaping the WID mandate if they had been positioned with more leverage within the institutional system and as a more central hub in the network of relationships that eventually led to the passing of general education reform. A theory of WAC program building focused on fully integrating into institutional structures might have helped the WAC director and the writing board gain more influence with the general education curriculum—more "clout," as Michaud put it.

A theory and methodology for building sustainable WAC programs could be centered on looking holistically at our institutions and working to change the culture of writing, as Chris Anson and Deanna Dannels described. Their vignette offers an example of a WAC program that was built over decades by leaders with expertise in WAC who were given adequate time and resources to make macro-level institutional changes. These changes were made in part through strategic alliances with important units in the institution's network and in part through highly visible and ongoing faculty development events sponsored by a central hub both in the system of the university and in national publications

on CAC: the North Carolina State Campus Writing and Speaking Program. But even a program as successful as North Carolina State's needs to ensure that it retains its leadership and visibility as the responsibility for teaching writing becomes integrated into departments, and it needs to continually assess and revise its projects and processes to ensure it doesn't stagnate. An approach for building WAC programs that have the systemic impact and the sustainability of the Campus Writing and Speaking Program at North Carolina State could help WAC directors act not solely on lore, but also on guiding principles, informed by theory, that can provide a methodology and a set of strategies that apply to a variety of contexts for building WAC. A systematic approach could also help WAC directors decide which initiatives might have the largest effects on the campus culture of writing and what steps to take to move smaller projects toward a fully integrated and sustainable program. Of course, many WAC programs begin with small initiatives—a workshop, a retreat, a book group—and a program doesn't need to be on as large a scale as North Carolina State's to be successful. However, as the two vignettes demonstrate, both small and large WAC programs could benefit from thinking strategically, from drawing on theories that address the complexities of institutions of higher education, and from planning for sustainability from the start.

Why Theorize WAC Program Development?

In WAC literature, theory tends not to focus on the complexities of higher education, but, rather, on the writing pedagogies that are at the heart of WAC programs. Exemplifying this point is Christopher Thaiss's (2001) chapter in *WAC for the New Millennium* (McLeod et al., 2001), "Theory in WAC: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going?," which provides a comprehensive review of the writing theories and instruction that have informed WAC practice, but does not touch on theories related to WAC leadership or program development. This is not an oversight by Thaiss, but is emblematic of a field that focuses more on theorizing WAC instruction than the administration of WAC programs.

This focus on pedagogy may be inherent to the ways in which the field of WAC has developed and defined itself. Russell (2002) attributed the success of the WAC movement to its focus on pedagogy, as faculty are asked to make a commitment to a "radically different way of teaching," a way of teaching that offers "personal rather than institutional rewards" (p. 295). This focus on pedagogy remains in current definitions of WAC. Thaiss and Porter (2010) defined WAC as "an initiative in an institution to assist teachers across disciplines in using student writing as an instructional tool in their teaching" (p. 538). The "Statement of WAC Principles and Practices" developed by the International Network of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs (INWAC) board of consultants, specifies:

> WAC refers to the notion that writing should be an integral part of the learning process throughout a student's education, not merely in required writing courses but across the entire curriculum. Further, it is based on the premise that writing is highly situated and tied to a field's discourse and ways of knowing, and therefore writing in the disciplines (WID) is most effectively guided by those with expertise in that discipline. (International Network of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs, 2014, p. 1)

In this definition, we see reference to two of the main pedagogies that are promoted by WAC programs, widely referred to as *writing to learn* and *writing to communicate*, as well as an emphasis on the sites of writing instruction—courses across the curriculum and across a student's academic career. However, we do not hear, in this definition, about the programs that promote these notions.

This continuing focus on pedagogy rather than program administration may result from the conceptualization of WAC not as a field but as an initiative limited to the scope of a single campus. As Barbara Walvoord (1996) advocated in "The Future of WAC," if we are to see WAC as a reform movement, as Russell (2002) later described it, then it has been a decentralized movement, existing on individual campuses in response to local needs and contexts, with a "plethora of goals and philosophies" (Walvoord, 1996, p. 62). Martha Townsend (1994) emphasized

this localized view of WAC in her entry in the *Encyclopedia of English Studies and Language Arts*, arguing, "No single method characterizes the movement, and wide variations occur in its practice" (p. 1299). The writing pedagogies WAC programs endorse tend to be consistent across campuses, but how WAC programs are shaped and structured is highly variable. This variability, we believe, has prevented a focus in the WAC literature on theorizing WAC program administration, for how does one theorize a process that is dependent on local needs, goals, and contexts?

Literature on WAC program administration thus tends to describe individual WAC programs and specific program elements, such as leading a faculty workshop or starting a writing fellows initiative. From each of these types of literature, new WAC directors are expected to adapt insights to their own institutional contexts. Examples of program profiles include edited collections such as Toby Fulwiler and Art Young's (1990) *Programs That Work*, which presents detailed descriptions of fourteen WAC programs across the United States, and Thaiss, Bräuer, Carlino, Ganobcsik-Williams, and Sinha's (2012) *Writing Programs Worldwide*, which offers descriptions of programs around the world. These profiles also include collections by faculty across disciplines within the same WAC program, such as Mary T. Segall and Robert A. Smart's (2005) *Direct from the Disciplines: Writing Across the Curriculum*, which recounts the development of the WAC program at Quinnipiac University from the perspectives of the program directors and disciplinary faculty who implemented WAC in their classrooms, and Jonathan Monroe's (2006) *Local Knowledges, Local Practices: Writing in the Disciplines at Cornell*, in which faculty from across disciplines describe approaches to writing pedagogy.

Literature providing advice to WAC directors is often based on seasoned WAC director experiences. One of the first of such guides was Susan McLeod's (1988a) *Strengthening Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum*, which includes chapters on moving beyond initial workshops, securing long-term funding, and evaluating the program. McLeod and Margot Soven's (1991) "What Do You Need to Start—and Sustain—a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program?" offers writing program administrators (WPAs) tasked with starting a WAC program advice on what to

consider before accepting the role, such as time for planning and resources for both the program and the director, as well as steps to take for initiating the program, such as forming and working with a planning committee, bringing in an outside consultant, and building in assessment from the start. McLeod and Soven's (1992) *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs* offers advice from WAC scholars and practitioners on such topics as getting a WAC program started, designing faculty development workshops, and creating WI requirements. McLeod et al.'s (2001) *WAC for the New Millennium* also offers advice from WAC scholars, and includes emerging areas not found in earlier WAC guides, such as the accountability movement, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, and electronic communication across the curriculum. The most recent guide is the INWAC "Statement of WAC Principles and Practices" (International Network of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs, 2014), the lead author of which, Michelle Cox, is also one of the authors of the present book. This statement presents WAC principles, guidelines for program development, advice on topics such as leadership and assessment, and a comprehensive bibliography of resources. All of these texts offer nuts-and-bolts advice for building and developing WAC programs rooted in experience, knowledge of the field, and writing theory and research—but not theory on writing program administration.

Literature on WAC program administration has also focused on challenges to WAC programs and steps WAC directors may take so that their programs persist. In their afterword to *Programs That Work*, Young and Fulwiler (1990) described six "enemies" of WAC: (1) the appointment of WAC program leaders who are not full time or tenure track or do not have background in WAC; (2) the positioning of WAC programs in English departments in which the orthodoxy may work against WAC goals; (3) the difficulty of maintaining a cross-disciplinary enterprise such as WAC within the compartmentalized structure of a university; (4) the traditional reward system that values scholarship over teaching; (5) the tendency for universities to move toward large class sizes in which assessment depends on testing rather than writing; and (6) entrenched attitudes held by administrators, faculty, students, and the public toward writing that undermine

the long-term institutional commitment needed to support a WAC program. Young and Fulwiler (1990) then pointed to the program descriptions included in their collection to argue that programs with "a more or less permanent structure whereby writing-across-the-curriculum advocacy is ever renewed and expanded" have a higher chance of survival (p. 294). In "WAC Program Vulnerability and What to Do about It," Townsend (2008) summarized the literature on threats to WAC programs, and then described the features of successful WAC programs at the institutional, classroom, and programmatic level, drawing from the literature, her own experience as a WAC program director, and her observations as a consultant. These features include strong faculty support, strong administrative support, ongoing faculty development, low student-to-instructor caps in WI courses, a well-informed program leader, and regular program assessment. The advice Townsend (2008) provided for achieving these features remains useful to WAC programs today. Notice, though, that the line of research in both lists above are still based in description rather than theory—describing challenges that WAC programs have faced and features of programs that have endured, but not analyzing the reasons behind the challenges or why these program features lead to longevity.

This focus on learning from the features of enduring WAC programs has also led to multiple surveys in WAC. In "Whither WAC?," Eric Miraglia and Susan McLeod (1997) compared survey data from 1987 and 1996 to describe features of WAC programs that have ended and those that have endured. They surveyed again the programs that had responded to their 1987 survey, and found that, of the 138 institutions that replied, a third reported that the WAC program had been discontinued (p. 47). In examining the survey responses, they determined that programs that endured had more faculty development components, had more curricular components, and engaged in more assessment than did the programs that ended (p. 54). They also pointed to the "strong and consistent program leadership" of the enduring programs (p. 55). A 2008 survey conducted by Thaiss and Porter (2010) led to further examination of the features of enduring programs. While this survey provided evidence of how widespread

WAC had become across the United States, with 64 percent of the responding US institutions of higher education reporting either having or planning to begin a program (p. 541), the survey also found that more than half the programs that were identified in McLeod and Shirley's (1988) survey no longer existed twenty years later. Thaiss and Porter (2010) speculated on WAC program sustainability and determined that, in longer-lasting WAC programs, the WAC directors were at higher academic ranks, directors reported to higher-level administrators, directors served in their leadership roles for longer periods of time, the WAC programs had strong connections to other services and offices (notably, a writing center and/or library), faculty development included a focus on the faculty workshop, and curricular elements included WI courses. Again, survey data have led to program features that WAC directors may emulate with the hope that the features themselves lead to program longevity.

In keeping with this trend of observing the features of enduring WAC programs, William Condon and Carol Rutz (2012) introduced a taxonomy for categorizing WAC programs according to their characteristics. Their work was partly motivated by the variability of WAC programs: "WAC as a phenomenon does not possess a single, identifiable structure; instead, it varies in its development and its manifestation from campus to campus" (p. 358). Despite this variability, Condon and Rutz (2012) felt it would be helpful for WAC programs to understand where they stood in relation to other WAC programs and what their next steps might be to strengthen the program. To develop their WAC program taxonomy, the authors led Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) session participants in brainstorming WAC program benchmarks, and then further developed these benchmarks based on their own experiences as WAC program directors and as consultants and on what they observed in the WAC literature. The four program types they identified—foundational, established, integrated, and institutional change agent—differ with respect to their primary goals, funding, structure, and degree of integration into the university (Condon & Rutz, 2012, pp. 362–63). Their taxonomy can be used as a practical tool for developing WAC programs, reflecting

on program goals, providing cross-institutional comparisons, and developing a grand narrative of program progress and success. However, like the earlier literature on enduring programs, Condon and Rutz (2012) did not attempt to explain the underlying reasons why WAC programs at higher levels in this taxonomy outlast programs at the lower levels.

The literature we've discussed thus far has been largely descriptive—describing WAC programs, steps WAC directors have taken to develop their programs, and features of WAC programs that have ended and those that endure. This kind of descriptive work is a necessary step in any field but stops short of providing a theoretical framework that can help us understand why programs are shaped in certain ways, why directors take particular steps to develop their programs, why challenges to WAC exist, and why specific features of WAC programs lead to program endurance. Understanding the "why" (theory) can help WAC directors make sense of the "what" (program descriptions) and the "how" (strategies for creating programs that will endure). Without this theoretical framework, WAC directors are left to mimic program elements of other programs and use a trial-and-error approach to program development.

A departure from this descriptive work is Walvoord's "The Future of WAC" (1996), which we see as the first attempt to theorize the vulnerability and endurance of WAC programs. Walvoord drew on social movement theory to analyze WAC's successes and challenges and develop approaches for WAC to persist not only as a movement on individual campuses, but also as a national movement. Drawing on the work of sociologist Benford (1992), she defined a *movement* as a "collective attempt to promote or resist change in a society or group" (cited in Walvoord, 1996, p. 58), and, relying on Benford and an essay by sociologists McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988), she described concepts important to organizations that promote a social movement that may be applied to WAC. Walvoord used social movement theory to analyze the development of the field of WAC and understand why WAC programs and the field at large have been vulnerable to such a wide range of challenges. In attempting to understand the variability of WAC programs, for instance, Walvoord (1996) argued that WAC has been largely decentralized, realized through

the development of WAC programs on individual campuses and spread through conferences and a group of "traveling workshop leaders" (p. 61), but never becoming a national movement through a national WAC organization—a fact that remains true at the time of this writing. Walvoord (1996) saw this decentralization as giving individual WAC programs strength, as it allows them to form their own goals in relation to their individual contexts, but also as leaving them "vulnerable to cooptation, becoming special interest groups, settling for narrow goals and limited visions, or simply being wiped out by the next budget crunch or the next change of deans" (p. 62). Indeed, the loss of so many WAC programs as indicated by Thaiss and Porter's (2010) survey is evidence of this continuing vulnerability.

An important concept from social movement theory that Walvoord (1996) used is the distinction between micro-level actions (such as "changing personal behavior") and macro-level actions (such as "changing structures and organizations") (p. 60). For instance, she argued that faculty workshops, long the "backbone of the WAC movement," are effective at the micro level, in that they "generate high energy and enthusiasm" for teaching writing among those who attend (p. 63), but do not lead to changes at the macro level, as they do not affect the wider campus culture or university structures. These workshops and conversion of individual faculty are the very features that Russell (2002) credited with the longevity of WAC in the United States. In other words, Walvoord's (1996) analysis leads to insights that directly oppose long-held beliefs in the field. She then turned her attention to the future of WAC and drew on strategies used by social movements to suggest approaches WAC directors could use to strengthen their programs, including macro-level moves such as coming to a deeper understanding of the wider campus and societal contexts within which WAC programs live, connecting to other institutional and national movements, and connecting to university missions and accrediting bodies' standards.

We see McLeod and colleagues' (2001) *WAC for the New Millennium* as a response to Walvoord (1996), in that the editors take up some of the strategies that Walvoord suggested. Walvoord urged WAC directors to better understand the challenges facing WAC from beyond our campuses, the macro-level landscape of

higher education. In "Writing Across the Curriculum in a Time of Change," their introduction to *WAC for the New Millennium*, McLeod and Miraglia (2001) traced threats to higher education "that could spell trouble for WAC programs" such as shifting priorities for state budgets, attacks on the tenure structure, increased use of contingent labor, and a loss of morale among faculty (p. 1). Walvoord (1996) urged WAC directors to connect to wider trends in higher education and collaborate with other offices and organizations on campus, which she described as macro-level strategies. McLeod et al. (2001) developed their collection focused on such trends and organizations (e.g., assessment, technology, service learning, learning communities, changing student demographics, and writing centers). However, while McLeod and colleagues drew on strategies suggested by Walvoord, they did not take up the theoretical work she began or the implications of her work for the field of WAC. Interestingly, while Walvoord encouraged WAC to focus more on strategies for program administration, McLeod and Miraglia's (2001) introduction to *WAC for the New Millennium* returned the focus to pedagogy; a final point they made is that "one of the strengths of the WAC movement has been its work at the [local] level, with individual teachers, on their pedagogical practice, in collaborative workshop settings" (p. 21). Indeed, though Walvoord's article has been widely cited, we do not see scholars taking on her larger claims or more pointed insights about WAC.

Our book, too, is a continuation of Walvoord's germinal work. We build on her goal of drawing on theory to better understand WAC program development within the complex and dynamic contexts of higher education. Like Walvoord, we aim for our work to be both theoretical and practical by providing WAC directors with strategies for developing WAC programs that endure. Like Walvoord, we keep our focus on program administration rather than pedagogy. As WAC program directors, we understand and value the power of WAC pedagogy on faculty, but we believe that WAC directors need to do more than train individual faculty members to transform a campus culture so they can create lasting change. Like Walvoord, we see the sustainability of individual WAC programs as connected to the sustainability of the field of WAC, and, in the final chapter of our book, we

take up Walvoord's question about the impact of decentralization on the field. However, departing from Walvoord, we find social movement theory inadequate as a framework with which to fully illuminate how WAC directors can develop transformational and sustainable programs. While it provided her with a useful lens for considering the vulnerability and suggesting strategies, social movement theory cannot provide WAC directors with a comprehensive theoretical framework, methodology, and set of strategies for launching, revitalizing, and reviving WAC programs, which the whole systems approach we develop in this book does.

An Overview of Our Theoretical Framework

We offer the whole systems approach for transformational change in order to provide a theoretical framework, a methodology, and a set of principles, strategies, and tactics for making change to campus cultures of writing and for building programs that are integrated, highly visible, and sustainable. Our approach brings together insights from complexity, systems, social network, resilience, and sustainable development theories. *Complexity theory*, which offers an umbrella framework, provides WAC directors a way to navigate large institutions with many moving parts and to build programs that can grow and adapt as the institution evolves (Norberg & Cumming, 2008; Taylor, 2002). Complexity theory thus compels WAC directors to think at both the micro and macro (institutional) levels if they want to build sustainable programs. Thinking at the institutional level about the way systems shape behaviors is the focus of *systems theory*, which is a type of complexity theory (Banathy, 1992; Checkland, 1981; Senge, 1990). Systems theory helps program directors understand how to integrate new university initiatives into the institutional fabric by identifying points of leverage within the system that will make the most enduring change, rather than only tinkering with parts at the micro level. Another way of thinking about systems is in terms of networks with nodes and hubs that WAC directors need to map to ensure their program is well connected with respect to location and influence. *Social network theory*—which, like systems theory, is a subset of complexity theory—provides

a methodology for mapping lines of communication in complex organizations, offering a visual map of the primary conduits through which information passes and thereby revealing efficient pathways and strategies for maximizing effective communication in complex networks. This framework also helps us to ensure WAC programs are hubs and not just nodes within the network (Cross, 2014; Merrill, Caldwell, Rockoff, Gebbie, Carley, & Bakken, 2008). *Resilience theory*, which derives from systems theory, helps us understand the nature of change in systems and the need for constant monitoring, intervention, adaptation, and transformation in order to maintain balance and longevity. In both systems and resilience theories, the emphasis is on making change at higher scales beyond just individual instructors or classes. *Sustainable development theory*—another outgrowth of theories of complexity—provides WAC directors with strategies for program longevity and tools (in the form of indicators and feedback loops) for assessing and improving WAC programs (Galin, 2010; Johnson, 2002; Meadows, 1998).

It is important to note that we are not the first to turn to theories emerging from the ecological sciences to understand writing programs. In *Ecologies of Writing Programs,* Mary Jo Reiff, Anis Bawarshi, Michelle Ballif, and Christian Weisser (2015a, p. 3) borrowed the concept of the "ecological model of writing" from Marilyn Cooper (1986) to discuss the interconnections among writers and texts and to imagine writing as part of a "network, a system, a web—an ecology." While these works invoke this theory as a heuristic, we dig into systems and sustainability theories to build an entire theoretical framework, incorporating a comprehensive set of principles, strategies, and tactics for developing, revitalizing, and sustaining WAC programs. While prior authors have invoked the metaphors of system, we provide a methodology for transforming the system.

Outline of the Book

In the first third of this book, we explain our theoretical framework. In Chapter 2, we bring together insights from complexity theory and the other theories we mention above, all of which

depend on principles of complexity. Within the context of these theories, we outline a set of principles that WAC directors can use as a foundation for building sustainable programs. The whole systems principles form the core of sustainable WAC programs, but, in order to help WAC directors move from theory to practice, in Chapter 3, we outline fifteen strategies for building WAC programs. These strategies provide WAC directors with guides for long-term strategic actions. The strategies are organized in the stages of our methodology—a process for program building that is reflected in the organization of the book. The methodology helps WAC directors put the whole systems principles and strategies into practice through a four-part process that encompasses *understanding*, *planning*, *developing*, and *leading*. In Chapter 3, we describe this methodology in detail and connect it to our theoretical framework. The methodology is meant as a tool and not a lockstep process that all WAC directors must follow, and the entire process is recursive in nature.

Chapters 4 through 7 each focus on a stage in the four-part methodology. We open each chapter with WAC program vignettes that allow us to talk in concrete ways about our principles and strategies. The vignettes are from a variety of types of institutions and kinds of WAC programs, and, although our principles and strategies can inform a sustainable approach to WAC program building at any institution, we recognize that the tactics used by WAC directors to work toward those principles and strategies will be context specific. To that end, in Chapters 4–7, we present a variety of short-term, context-specific tactics for meeting the goals of the more generalized whole systems strategies and principles. Throughout these chapters, we also refer to some of our own experiences as WAC program directors to illustrate our points. Michelle launched a WAC program at Bridgewater State University in 2007, which she directed until 2012. She is currently building a writing and speaking program for international graduate and professional students at Cornell University. Jeff initiated Florida Atlantic University's WAC program starting in 2004 after developing the University Center for Excellence in Writing and has directed both since their inception. Dan was hired in 2004 to develop a WAC program at California State University, Sacramento, which he led until 2015. He currently directs the first-year

composition program at University of California, Davis. We end Chapter 7 reflecting on the recursivity of the whole systems approach, emphasizing the importance of revisiting each stage of the process for sustaining WAC programs in the context of complex institutional systems that tend toward stagnation.

In Chapter 8, we conclude by reflecting on the significance of our whole systems approach for individual WAC programs and the field of WAC. This chapter includes a discussion of two institutions that have started using our theoretical framework as they launch WAC programs, future directions for developing our framework, and implications of our framework for WAC scholarship. We end Chapter 8, and this book, by using our framework as a lens to analyze how the field of WAC is organized and discuss implications for the field's sustainability.

How to Utilize This Book

Ideally, readers would draw from this book before a WAC program is even started, as the approach we introduce would influence decisions made related to the hiring of the WAC leader, how the WAC leader position is structured, how the program is positioned within the university system, and how the program is rolled out and developed. However, we realize that readers will come to this book at different points in their WAC programs' development and have a range of local constraints. While we advocate that you engage in each stage of our methodology, our approach may also be used flexibly, as a heuristic, with specific stages and strategies drawn on as appropriate. Too often, WAC directors are hired to launch and develop a program quickly, leading them to scramble to get a program off the ground and produce immediate results. We hope this book presents a persuasive argument for slowing down the launching and development process. It is possible to get a program off the ground quickly, but these quick-start initiatives can often lead to programs that fall apart quickly. Once a WAC program is tried and fails, it is difficult to start one again, as just the term *WAC* will leave a bad taste in people's mouths. If a university is investing resources in

starting a WAC program, it is well worth the time and effort to roll it out slowly and strategically, using the approach we describe here, as it would lead to more sustainable and substantial change.

We developed this book with four target audiences in mind: WAC program leaders, WAC scholars (or scholars in training), administrators seeking to launch or otherwise support a WAC program, and leaders of other kinds of higher education programs that seek to make transformative and enduring change. We imagine each of these audiences using this book in slightly different ways.

For WAC program leaders, who often have limited time to dedicate to reading scholarship, we imagine that the overview of the methodology and strategies for program development described in Chapter 3 would be of key interest. We imagine that these readers will next move back to Chapter 2 to gain fuller understanding of the theories that undergird the whole systems approach, and then forward to Chapters 4–7, focusing on the chapters that correspond to their campus's current point of program development. We also hope that the book, as a whole, allows these program leaders to better communicate to administrators the resources needed to launch, develop, and sustain a WAC program, with one of the key resources being time. We see our book as equally valuable to WAC program leaders new to WAC, program leaders launching new WAC programs, and program leaders who are revitalizing existing programs. However, we do not spend time discussing the writing pedagogies promoted by WAC, as many other resources do this well (see, e.g., Bean, 2011; Gottschalk & Hjortshoj, 2004; Young, 2006).

For WAC scholars, we imagine that the overall theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and operationalized in the rest of the book will be of the most interest, as this framework is substantially different from anything that has preceded it. As we do here, many WAC and writing scholars have turned to theories that originated outside of writing studies. As we mentioned above, Walvoord (1996) turned to social movement theory, and Cooper (1986) and Reiff et al. (2015b) drew on theories related to networks and ecologies in their work. Condon and Rutz (2012) invoked quantum mechanics, particularly the concept of the par-

ticle and the wave to outline the characteristics of WAC programs of various types and levels of maturity. However, as we explained above, these scholars tend to use these theories as heuristics or metaphors, but do not dig more deeply into the theories or use them to create a theoretical framework and praxis, as we do in this book. Further, our focus on theorizing program administration rather than writing pedagogy marks a departure in the WAC literature that we think will be of interest to WAC scholars. We also see Chapter 8 as being germane to WAC scholars because here we use our theoretical framework to analyze the sustainability of WAC as a field and consider its future. We imagine that seasoned scholars and those newer to writing studies will be interested in this framework, and thus see our book as contributing to graduate courses in composition studies.

For administrators seeking to launch or otherwise support a WAC program, we believe that the book's cross-disciplinary and practical approach will hold much appeal. We feel that the many vignettes by WAC directors in different programmatic and institutional contexts woven throughout the book will provide concrete examples of programmatic change that can be generalized to other institutional contexts. The overviews of our methodology and strategies in Chapter 3 will provide an administrator with a snapshot of the overall process of WAC program development and steps to take at different points in the process. Indeed, while writing this chapter, we imagined it being distributed to a university-wide writing committee, as well as upper administration stakeholders.

While our book focuses on WAC programs, the theoretical approach, principles, methodology, and strategies will also be informative to university leaders seeking to launch and sustain other kinds of university-wide initiatives. All of these programs exist within the same kinds of curricular ecologies, face the same kinds of challenges, and may use the same kinds of methods, strategies, and tactics to develop initiatives that create real change that endures. Indeed, other initiatives such as service learning programs (see Jolliffe, 2001), quantitative literacy programs (see Hillyard, 2012), undergraduate research programs (Chamely-Wiik, Dunn, Heydet-Kirsch, Holman, Meeroff, & Peluso, 2014), and graduate writing support programs (see Caplan & Cox, 2016;

Simpson, Clemens, Killingsworth, & Ford, 2015) have already drawn inspiration from WAC. The whole systems approach we develop here may provide both inspiration and a framework that leads to enduring change.

A 2008 survey of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs found that nearly half of those identified in a 1987 survey no longer existed twenty years later, pointing to a need for an approach to WAC administration that leads to programs that persist over time. In *Sustainable WAC*, current or former WAC program directors Michelle Cox, Jeffrey R. Galin, and Dan Melzer introduce a theoretical framework for WAC program development that takes into account the diverse contexts of today's institutions of higher education, aids WAC program directors in thinking strategically as they develop programs, and integrates a focus on program sustainability.

Informed by theories that illuminate transformative change within systems—complexity, systems, social network, resilience, and sustainable development theories—and illustrated with vignettes by WAC directors across the country, this book lays out principles, strategies, and tactics to help WAC program directors launch, relaunch, or reinvigorate programs within the complicated systems of today's colleges and universities.

Acknowledging that every WAC program grows out of a specific institutional context and grassroots movement, this book is a must-read for everyone currently involved in a WAC program or interested in exploring the possibility of one at their college or university.

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