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Issue Preview
Volume 12, issue 1

Administering TPC Programs in Times of Crisis

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This special issue of *Programmatic Perspectives* takes a moment to reflect on the extraordinary challenges of 2020, when technical and professional communication programs (TPC) faced ongoing and often simultaneous crises such as navigating decreasing enrollments and state budgets and the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. At the same time, following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, the Black Lives Matter movement brought renewed attention to the long-standing crisis of violence perpetuated by racism, systemic and otherwise, which are important to TPC programs.

In response to these dilemmas, the articles in this special issue address how programs in TPC may be encountering and/or addressing crises during this extraordinary time. What can TPC programs do to remain resilient in the midst of financial crises and budget shortfalls due to COVID-19? How can we look at systemic racism within universities and colleges and make recommendations on how programs can increase inclusion and promote antiracism? How can we be more conscious of well-being and work/life balance in the midst of a global pandemic that reshapes our work practices? These questions were discussed during the virtual CPTSC Special Event (October 2, 2020), and this special issue continues this discussion.

The issue includes two research articles, three commentaries,

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one program showcase, and three book reviews. The research articles, "Student and Faculty Suggestions for Recruiting Students from Diverse Backgrounds" and "Community Engagement in TPC Programs During Times of Crisis: Embracing a Pedagogy of Love through Chicanx/Latinx Feminist Practices" both focus on issues of diversity and inclusion. In Student and Faculty Suggestions for Recruiting Students from Diverse Backgrounds" Chris Dayley undertakes an examination of systemic racism in institutions of higher education through a qualitative study using interviews with TPC students and pre-tenure faculty members who identify as people of color. Dayley concludes with actionable strategies his research participants offered for battling systemic racism in the academy.

Nora Riveria and Laura Gonzales also focus on spaces of higher education. In their article "Community Engagement in TPC Programs During Times of Crisis: Embracing a Pedagogy of Love through Chicanx/Latinx Feminist Practices" the authors use *pláticas* and testimonios, methodologies and methods grounded in Latina/Chicana feminism, to "demonstrate how they navigate the challenges of the pandemic while also creating spaces for students to share, heal, and contribute to the activist work taking place in their communities."

The issue's three commentaries specifically focus on challenges that have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic and solutions to these challenges. In "Program Administration that Works During a Pandemic: Ecopreneurial Strategies and Lean Technical Communication Tenets," Teresa Henning and Amanda Bemer demonstrate how their administrative context relates to the pandemic and compare ecopreneur (EP) and lean model of technical communication (LTC) models of program administration to determine the usefulness of each model; whether we are operating in a pandemic or not. In his commentary, Charles Sides takes on the thorny issue of how to administer internship programs during a pandemic by offering his experience in the Department of Communications Media's Internship Program at Fitchburg State University as an example. Finally, in "Work/Life Balance as Key Driver for Program Development in Times of Crisis," Ed Nagelhout and Denise Tillery remind us of the lessons the pandemic have taught us about self-care and "offer three initial strategies for program development in times of crisis by addressing workload head-on, and the inevitable overwork that too often arises from uncertainty and austerity."

The program showcase for the special issue, "Assessing the Limits of Program Strategy: "Archi-Strategy" in an Age of Disruption" was written by Michael Ristich, Casey McArdle, and Jacqueline Rhodes from Michigan State University. It discusses the responses of two large

undergraduate programs and proposes an "archi-strategic" model for evaluating program decisions that encourages assertion of program values and missions, considers care of individuals in the department, and explores common ground within departments.

Our book reviews for this issue include Carrie Marshall's *Writing for Social Media,* reviewed by Jenna Morris Harte, and *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action*, authored by Rebecca Walton, Kristen R. Moore and Natasha N. Jones and reviewed by Yanar Hashlamon. The final review, by Meg Mikovit, is of *Lean Technical Communication: Toward Sustainable Program Innovation* by Meredith Johnson, Patricia Sullivan, and W. Michele Simmons.

R E S E A R C H A R T I C L E

Combatting Embedded Racism in TPC Academic Programs: Recruiting for Diversity Using Student-Informed Practices

Chris Dayley
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Abstract. Issues of embedded racism in the United States have once again been brought to the forefront by recent incidents involving violence against people of color. The systemic issues that make this type of violence possible are deeply rooted into American culture. Although colleges and universities are often seen as champions for social justice and racial equality, frequently stating their support for diversity and inclusion on their campuses, institutions of higher education are not immune to systemic issues that facilitate the poor treatment of people of color.

With the widespread difficulties brought on by issues of systemic racism, technical and professional communication (TPC) students, faculty, and administrators may feel that there is little they can do to combat these issues. TPC program administrators can begin to combat this embedded racism by focusing on increasing diversity and inclusion in their own academic programs.

This article reports the results of qualitative interviews with TPC students and pre-tenure faculty members who identify as people of color. In their interviews, participants were asked "how can TPC program administrators increase diversity and inclusion in their academic programs?" Their suggestions included 1. working directly with first points of contact at the institution, 2. creating local outreach programs, 3. facilitating a strong mentoring program, 4. including students of color in recruitment efforts, 5. creating clear and inclusive

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messaging, 6. focusing on relationships instead of numbers, and 7. changing department culture.

Keywords: Academic Programs, Diversity, Inclusion, Recruitment, Social Justice

Early in my career I worked as an admissions counselor at a large public university. In our planning meetings, we often talked about how we wanted to recruit a diverse class of students to our institution. We would hold events and create recruitment materials focused on specific groups of students trying to convince them to enroll at our institution. However, we never talked directly to students of color about their experiences, what made them decide to attend the institution, and what kind of exclusionary practices existed at the university. Having worked at several different universities, I have seen many recruitment events aimed at recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds, but I have seldom seen efforts from admission offices or program administrators to seek out the observations and opinions of students of color.

This article reports the results of qualitative interviews in which I asked TPC students and pre-tenure faculty who identify as persons of color about their suggestions for recruiting more TPC students from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds. Programmatic research regarding diversity and inclusion in technical and professional communication academic programs has gained increased attention in recent years (Dayley, 2020; Dayley & Walton, 2018; Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2014; Popham, 2016; Savage & Mattson; Savage & Matveeva, 2011). This increased attention reflects recent events that have once again brought to the forefront the embedded racism that exists in American society (Anderson, 2020; Tourse, Hamilton-Mason, & Wewiorski, 2018). Although almost all colleges and universities state their support for increasing diversity and inclusion, institutions of higher education are not immune to embedded racism (Karabel, 2005; Savas, 2014). Along with a lack of knowledge on the part of college administrators about possible cultural differences, outright discrimination still occurs on college campuses, and racial climate is a contributing factor in students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds leaving the academy at higher rates than white students (McClain & Perry, 2017).

It can be difficult to see how we as technical communication students, faculty, and program administrators can contribute to redressing issues of inequality in the academy. One way may be to focus specifically on the issues of racism and lack of inclusion in our own

academic programs (Dayley, 2020; Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2014; Savage & Mattson, 2011; Savage & Matveeva, 2011). This article seeks to answer the question, "how can TPC program administrators increase racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion in their academic programs?" To answer this question, I spoke with TPC students, pre-tenure faculty, and student influencers directly. I interviewed TPC undergraduate students, graduate students, and pre-tenure faculty members who identify as persons of color and asked them about their experiences in their TPC program and about what advice they would give program administrators regarding increasing diversity and inclusion. Their answers included suggestions for overcoming barriers to recruitment efforts, a focus on facilitating strong mentoring practices, centering marginalized students in recruitment efforts, creating inclusive messaging, and changing department culture.

Literature Review

Diversity, including considerations of race, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion, and nationality, "…has been defined broadly in attempts to incorporate multiple perspectives and viewpoints and include a variety of stakeholders and audiences" (Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2014, p. 133). However, the use of "diversity" as a catch-all term can be problematic in its lack of specificity in that often the word diversity has "at times, served as an insufficient stand-in for addressing race and ethnicity" (Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016, p. 215). For the purposes of this article, the word "diversity" refers specifically to racial and ethnic diversity.

Scholarly studies on racial and ethnic diversity in technical and professional communication programs are relatively rare; however, some research is available. Susan Popham's recent article regarding African-American students in TPC graduate programs points out many problems in technical and professional communication's efforts to increase diversity. She notes the lack of African-American participation in TPC programs as reported by Rachel Spilka in 2007 at the CCCC Conference (Popham, 2016, p. 73). Popham points out that current recruitment efforts, including offering minority students scholarships, seem to have little effect and that "recruitment efforts alone may not be enough to more suitably engage with the interests and needs of diverse student populations" (Popham, 2016, p. 73). Some of the reasons Popham points out for low enrollment by African American students in TPC programs include ignorance of the field's existence, the perception that TPC programs are highly stringent and demanding, requiring literary skills which some students may believe they do not possess,

and the technological divide which may exclude students from learning the technical skills necessary for a TPC degree program.

Gerald Savage and Kyle Mattson's 2011 article explores the perceptions of TPC program administrators regarding the state of racial and ethnic diversity in TPC programs. In their article, Savage and Mattson pointed out that "we need to do a great deal more than most of us have done so far to diversify student and faculty populations in programs and to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives in curricula" (Savage & Mattson, 2011, p. 43). They argue that the many benefits that come from program diversity are not necessarily achieved simply by increasing enrollment numbers of students of color. Program administrators need to also seek to diversify program faculty and thoughtfully examine program curricula to incorporate diversity in all areas of the program, the latter of which has been done to some extent in TPC academic programs. An example of this can be found in the Fall 2016 Program Showcase in *Programmatic Perspectives* in which Rebecca Walton, Jared Colton, Rikki Wheatley-Boxx, and Krista Gurko describe how Utah State University's Technical Communication and Rhetoric program redesigned their curriculum to incorporate social justice issues throughout academic programs (2016).

Gerald Savage and Natalia Matveeva explored TPC programs and curriculum at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as in Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) (2011). In their article, they point out that there may be opportunities to increase racial and cultural diversity in TPC through outreach and partnerships with HBCUs and TCUs, but urge caution: "HBCUs and TCUs exist because of social and cultural realities with deep roots in histories of colonization, slavery, and genocide" (Savage & Matveeva, 2011, p. 81). Savage and Matveeva encourage an ethical approach in which administrators avoid missionary style zealotry in hiring minority faculty and enrolling minority students just to enculturate them into becoming "just like us" (Savage & Matveeva, 2011, p. 82). They encourage embracing diversity and being open to change in all areas including pedagogies, course designs, curricula, knowledge, and even educational facilities themselves.

In 2014, Natasha Jones collaborated with Gerald Savage and Han Yu to update the field on the status of diversity initiatives in technical and professional communication. Jones, Savage, and Yu reported some progress, but stressed that much needs to be done to bring TPC research on issues of diversity up to the level of other English-related disciplines as well as other applied fields. In their article, they remind us that "the kind of work [they] are calling for here is going to be dif-

ficult" (2014, p. 147), and that to do this work, TPC scholars may have to adopt research methods that many in the field are not accustomed to.

Previous studies regarding recruitment efforts and the lack of diversity in technical communication programs, pedagogy, and faculty have pointed out significant deficits in technical communication as a whole in regard to racial and ethnic diversity (Savage & Matveeva, 2011; Savage & Mattson, 2011). As Felicia Chong and Aimee Roundtree (2021) stated, "Our field has expressed a need for and interest in recruiting more diverse students as industries diversify, globalize, and tackle social justice policies and issues" (p. 1). Through what little discussion has been had concerning diversity in the field, there seems to be a consensus that a problem exists. Some scholars have suggested actions that can be taken toward a resolution, such as participating in local community initiatives for diversity (Savage & Mattson, 2011); creating programmatic collaborations with community colleges (Savage & Mattson, 2011); encouraging diversity-focused service learning projects (Savage & Mattson, 2011); forming research, teaching, and service partnerships with faculty, students, and programs of historically black colleges and universities as well as tribal colleges and universities (Savage & Matveeva, 2011); increasing research based on participatory action and decolonial methodologies (Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2014); encouraging supportive peer networks (Popham, 2016); and more clearly defining the field to allow prospective students to be better able to find TPC academic programs and understand what they can expect from a career in TPC (Dayley & Walton, 2018; Popham, 2016). However, there has been little scholarship that directly engages with students of color to ask them what efforts may be effective in creating more diverse and inclusive programs. The present article seeks to begin to fill that gap in the research by directly engaging with students of color and asking them about their experiences. The article also reports the experiences of pre-tenure faculty members as they have completed a terminal degree and are able to look back on their relatively recent educational experiences with hindsight.

Methods

The following section describes the methods used for this study including participant recruitment methods, how data was collected, and the process for data analysis. This section also provides a brief description of the interview participants.

Recruitment

This study included participants who identified as a person of color and were an undergraduate student, graduate student, or pre-tenure faculty member studying/working in technical and professional communication. The initial student participants were identified from the participants of an IRB-approved online survey (Utah State University IRB General Review #7006) I previously conducted (Dayley, 2020) who indicated they are a part of a racial or ethnic minority group. Part of the approved IRB application included soliciting and conducting interviews with survey participants. Each participant electronically signed an informed consent document when they took the survey. They also gave verbal consent at the beginning of the interview. All survey responses were anonymous. Personally identifiable data for interview participants were kept in password protected cloud storage and deleted after the completion of the project.

After completing the survey, students were asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview. I contacted each student who identified as a person of color and indicated they would be willing to be interviewed. This resulted in three undergraduate and four graduate student participants. To increase the number of participants, additional student participants were identified through referral from student and faculty member participants. This increased undergraduate participants to five and graduate participants to six. Faculty member participants were identified primarily through referral as well as through personal knowledge of TPC faculty members of color. The number of pre-tenure faculty participants was five.

Participants

All participants attended or worked at public universities. Because of space limitations, four undergraduate students, five graduate students, and five pre-tenure faculty members are represented in the report of the data. Interview participants are identified by a pseudonymous first name or with the title "Dr." and a pseudonymous last name in the case of the pre-tenure faculty members.

As part of the study, participants were asked to name a person who was a major influencer in their decision to study technical communication or who was an important person in influencing that student to persist in a TPC academic program. Influencers were included in the study to learn if people who influence students of color are doing so purposefully and to what they are doing to influence students to study technical and professional communication.

Of the 16 participants, six identified an influencer and gave permis-

sion for that influencer to be contacted. Some quotations from these influencers are also included in the report of the data and are identified as such. Although students were not required to name an academic faculty member as an influencer, all identified influencers were faculty members at public colleges and universities. They are identified with the title "Dr." and a pseudonymous last name.

Undergraduate Students

The undergraduate participants whose responses are included in this article are:

- Charlotte, a woman who identifies as African American. She is an undergraduate student studying at a large southern university.
- Louisa, a woman who identified as a South Asian person from Palestine and attends a mid-size southern university.
- Mary, a Hispanic woman at a mid-sized western university. She works as a technical communicator at the IRS.
- Virginia, an African American woman. She is a student at a mid-size southern university. She also considers herself to be a non-traditional student as she is older than the average student.

Graduate Students

Graduate student participants represented in this article include:

- Abigail, a woman who identifies as Native American and white. She attends a midsize southern university.
- Alice, an African American woman who attends a mid-size southern university.
- Bill, an African American man who attends a mid-size southern university.
- Blair, an African American woman who attends a large southern university
- Mark, an African American man who attends a mid-size eastern university.

Pre-tenure Faculty

I interviewed faculty members who were early in their career to gain insights from their experience as students as well as their transition into a mentoring role. Pre-tenure faculty participants whose responses are included in this article are:

- Dr. Werner, a Hispanic man working at a mid-size southern university.
- Dr. Munro, a Hispanic woman working at a large western university.
- Dr. Joliot, an Asian woman working at a mid-size western univer-

sity.
- Dr. Lessing, an African Caribbean woman working at a mid-size eastern university.
- Dr. Curie, an African American woman working at a large southern university.

Influencers

Influencers were not necessarily people of color but were people who were identified by interview participants as the person who influenced them most in the field. Influencers were included in the study to give insights into mentoring students who identify as people of color. Students were not specifically asked to identify a faculty member, but all influencers who were identified were faculty members. Participant influencers included:
- Dr. Carson, a white man working at a large mid-western university.
- Dr. Franklin, a white woman working at a large western university.
- Dr. Elion, a white woman working at a large mid-western university.
- Dr. McClintock, a white woman working at a large southern university.

Data Collection

Participants were asked a set of questions focusing on several factors including how participants chose their college, how they chose a major in TPC, and what suggestions they have for administrators who would like to increase diversity in their academic programs. Because the resulting dataset was large, only answers relating to increasing diversity in academic programs are presented in this article. Interviews were conducted over the phone and the audio was recorded with permission. I created a list of 11 questions for students and pre-tenure faculty members; however, the number of questions varied depending on the information given by each participant. Influencers answered a set of seven questions. As with students and pre-tenure faculty members, some follow-up questions were asked of influencers based on the answers to each question. I recorded each interview and created a transcription of the interview from the recording.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, I used member checks wherein participants were asked to read transcripts of the interview in which they participated. I emailed each participant their interview transcript. In the email I asked the participants to read over the transcript and let

me know if any changes needed to be made so that I could make my reporting reflect what they were trying to say as accurately as possible. Any requested changes were made in the transcription document and that document was used for all quotations and analysis in this study.

As suggested by Crabtree and Miller, I used a spectrum of "prefigured" and "emergent" codes to analyze the data for emerging themes (1992, p. 151). The prefigured codes were based on the interview questions and emergent codes developed as the data in each prefigured code was analyzed. Each interview question, or a small group of interview questions, represented a prefigured code. Because of the large dataset that resulted from participant interviews, the present article only reports the results of one prefigured code "recommendations for recruiting more people of color into TPC academic programs."

I carefully read each transcription and highlighted the participants' answers to each interview question. After doing this, I created a summary of each highlighted quotation in a few words. After creating short summaries for each highlighted answer, I then grouped the answers to each interview question according to emerging themes based on my short summaries.

Coding participant answers within the prefigured code "recommendations for recruiting more people of color into TPC academic programs," resulted in five major emergent themes. Each section heading in the "Participant Recommendations" section of this document is one of the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

When quoting interview participants, I used exact quotations leaving in slang, alternative grammar usage, and so on. However, if an interview participant used "filler words" excessively such as "um," "like," or "you know," I removed those words. This was meant to allow the words of participants to be understood clearly (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Participant Recommendations

The following section reports on suggestions by interview participants, including students, pre-tenure faculty, and influencers about how to increase diversity and inclusion in TPC academic programs. Specific recommendations varied widely, but some patterns did emerge. Each subsection represents a major theme that emerged from coding the data. Each quotation comes directly from interview participants.

Institutional Barriers to Recruitment

One barrier to recruiting more people from marginalized backgrounds in TPC academic programs repeated frequently by interview participants, especially those who are faculty members, is that they have

little to no control over their recruitment initiatives. This is more pronounced in the recruitment of undergraduates than in recruiting graduate students, but in both cases program administrators can often feel like they have little to no power. The tendency for colleges and universities to closely guard their admission process can make trying to take more control of the process difficult for program administrators. Dr. McClintock said:

> I have to be careful with what I say. Not that it has anything to do with identity politics— just recruitment politics. If we had control over the marketing of our program… I don't know if you know about [our university], we have [small number] people in Professional and Technical Communication, we have [small number] people in [Rhetoric and Composition] ...They're great about hiring us but they're not great about letting us take control of our own programs. We can't advertise, specifically our own program. We have a graduate studies committee for the whole department in charge of that. So, we're sort of at the whim of whoever's running graduate studies. So, the short answer is no, we don't [do recruitment] because we can't.

At an institution like Dr. McClintock's, even if their intention is to include people from diverse backgrounds in their recruitment efforts, they may feel that their efforts are fruitless since the university has such strict parameters for what can and can't be done with regards to recruitment activities. Even programs that have more control over their recruiting efforts face challenges, especially at the undergraduate level, in controlling the efforts made in recruiting diverse classes of students. Dr. Elion remarked, "I think it can kind of be difficult [recruiting a diverse class of students] because you kind of rely on, for undergraduate students especially, the admissions office to bring you students." Traditionally, admissions offices are the ones going out and finding students for the university. Generally, they don't decide admission criteria, but they are the ones enforcing it by making decisions about who is being let into an institution. TPC programs not actively involved in recruiting are forced to trust that enough of the students who are admitted to the college or university will choose the TPC degree program or will switch to this major after discovering they're not a good fit for their original major choice. However, it is certainly not a guarantee that students will choose the TPC major after enrolling at a college or university, even at large noteworthy institutions. Dr. McClintock said, "There's this attitude [among faculty members] like, 'They'll come to us because we're [a large noteworthy institution].' I hate to break it to them but we're an engineering and agriculture school. That's what [our

institution] is known for—not English." Even if a college or university does have an English department that attracts undergraduate students because of its reputation, it seems as though very few students are choosing TPC programs as their initial undergraduate major (Dayley & Walton, 2018). This leaves program administrators to either work to persuade undergraduate students to leave their initial major choice or hope the student discovers TPC through serendipitous means.

In contrast with undergraduate recruitment efforts, interview participants indicated that TPC programs tend to have more power and control when recruiting graduate students. Dr. McClintock remarked, "You get more diversity in your grad programs, particularly because you get international students, but with undergrads it's not as easy." Faculty members who participated in interviews implied that recruiting graduate students from diverse backgrounds was easier because faculty have more control over the recruitment process. For graduate studies, faculty members and program administrators are generally the ones in charge of reaching out to prospective students and making admission decisions. This means faculty members decide whom they will try to recruit and how they will try to recruit them.

Dr. Carson talked about the success of their TPC graduate program in creating diverse classes and attributed their success to their head of graduate studies:

> I would say we have an admirably diverse [graduate] cohort. I would attribute a lot of it to [our] head of Graduate Studies for quite a few years. I served on the Graduate Committee with her several times. She had procedures that helped us really try to identify students of color and students with diverse student backgrounds. I think we bring in very diverse classes at the grad level.

Having a person dedicated to implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives in recruiting can make a significant difference in the success of diversity and inclusion goals. However, many faculty and staff lack the resources necessary to devote time to initiatives such as these. Academic departments are often stretched thin. As Dr. Carson said, "There's not a lot of time to go recruit. You don't really have someone who's got that on their portfolio as their full-time job." Some departments are looking into the possibility of hiring a specific person to focus on recruitment initiatives focused on diversity. Dr. Werner said of his department:

> We have, obviously, research faculty as I am who can't necessarily spend a lot of time with the service aspect of doing stuff like [recruitment], but as a team we want to identify lecturers,

> and one in particular, who would be a director of recruitment. That will take some time. We're making quite a bit of transition towards that. So, I would imagine, given that we have a new bachelor of science in tech comm, that's one of the ways we want to go is to have a lecturer do those kinds of things. In particular, we would be looking for a lecturer who has a recruitment or academic services background.

Creating specific service responsibilities of a single faculty member, as Dr. Werner suggested, may not be a realistic solution for all institutions. Dr. Franklin suggested that one way to get help with recruitment is to work with university staff members who are already involved in recruiting activities:

> We are going to create a fact sheet or a packet of some sort to give to all of the advisors at the University in the different colleges because if students don't know about our program, we're doubting that advisors maybe know enough about professional and technical writing to push students in that direction and say "Oh, you are technically-minded but good at communication, and you're interested in editing. Hey, there's this major that's perfect for you." I don't think [advisors] know that, so our next plan for recruitment is to try to get advisors aware and on our side and funneling students to us.

Admissions counselors, academic advisors, and other staff members are often key influencers when students are deciding which major to declare. This is especially true for colleges and universities that primarily serve local populations. Many students are place-bound because of financial challenges, family obligations, or any of a variety of issues that would prevent them from moving to a new location to attend college. This means that they must choose from among the majors offered by the local college they will be attending. The information given to students by influencers such as admissions counselors and academic advisors may be the only information the student gets about available fields of study.

Another suggestion from Dr. Werner was to take a proactive approach when recruiting new students. This includes working with local high schools.

> You can go to the high schools and introduce people to tech comm. I think there's a trend in some high schools, at least what we're identifying, asking English teachers to also teach what might be called a business writing course, but-but that never translates as "oh, there's a whole field of study that does stuff like this." I'm sure [students are] not necessarily stating "I'm

> gonna be a tech comm major," probably because they don't know what it is. I would suggest that it would play out if that was a goal of an administrator to just reach out to high schools and introduce them to tech comm majors. I think our program should make that a way to go.

As Dr. Werner pointed out, even if students are taking classes that teach technical communication skills, the students may not know that they can major in the subject in college and later make it into a career. When asked how TPC program administrators could better recruit students of color into a TPC major, Charlotte responded: "I think [TPC program administrators] would have to make a concerted effort to go to high schools in their area and let them know this is a thing. I mean, like I said, I didn't find out that the program existed until after I started school."

Facilitating Strong Mentoring

When asked if he had advice about how TPC program administrators can bring in more students of color, Mark responded "Yeah, employ more people of color." This frank response suggested frustration with the general lack of representation of people of color in academic faculty. Mark went on to say:

> I don't know, it's strange. It's almost like a hot topic: how can we increase diversity in our programs? Everyone seems to be talking about this but literally everyone on your faculty is white. So that sends a message to people applying that it's not really valued, you know? So that's, that's one thing. It's not to say that student doesn't show up because there's not faculty members of color. That may be the case and it might not, but increasingly those statistics are coming out that students perform better with teachers who look-look like them.

Along with Mark, several interview participants mentioned the importance of having diverse faculty members in a department. When asked about the importance of diversity in the faculty, Dr. Munro said:

> I think that's critical. I mean, I think it's critical for the rigor of the department. I think if you don't have diverse faculty members your way of life is going to be very, I don't know, traditionally white. I think it's important not for the sake of the diverse faculty member, but for the sake of the rigor and the strength of the program. I think it's also important if you have students of color within the program to have faculty members of color who they can talk to and relate to and speak to and learn from. I think it's important on several different levels.

Here, Dr. Munro brings up an excellent point. Without diverse representation in the faculty, your departmental culture is going to be very "traditionally white." This directly affects the inclusiveness of the program. A "traditionally white" faculty may not be as open to other ideas or ways of doing things.

When thinking about attracting a diverse group of students, Dr. McClintock said, "So I don't think there's a magic bullet. I think part of it is having a mentor, preferably a person of color. Someone who tells it like it is, you know?" Dr. Franklin takes her role as a mentor very seriously. "I really try to be a mentor. I think that is so important for students to feel like they have someone in their corner, like there's someone who cares about them, and so that's really how I approach all students is that I, like them, I want to be part of their lives. If I see that they're struggling, I'm always trying to make sure I go the extra mile."

Mentoring means support, and a good mentor will work to recognize what each student needs. When Dr. Carson mentors students of color, he recognizes that there may be some support he can't give them:

> So, I am a, I'm about as WASPy a white cis hetero male as you can get. You know, a 54-year-old white guy who grew up in a white town. So, I'm very aware that I have, I have significant limitations on how I understand the campus. I grew up on campuses as a white male so I never worried about getting around campus or being harassed on campus. So usually when I have a student of color, I will just sort of come out and say you know "Can I help you find a mentor? I know there's stuff that I just probably have no clue about and do you want me to help find other kinds of mentors?" And so, some students of color have said "Yeah, can we find-can I find an African American woman?" or "Is there a club of African American grad students so that I can talk about those issues?" and I've had some students who say "No, I mean, I-it's important, but it's-I'm fine."

When Dr. Carson made the preceding comments in our interview, I was impressed. He struck me as a wise and confident mentor. I followed up with a question, asking if he felt comfortable having a conversation about race with his students of color. He replied:

> No, to be honest. I fear that I'm going to do it wrong again. I'm aware of having grown up in a privileged setting, and that I'm trying to do it well, but that I may just be tripping over myself. I still think I'd rather make the mistake and try and help out. I'd rather talk about it anyway, even though I'm uncomfortable than to not talk about it at all and perhaps have someone miss

> an opportunity to gain perspectives that I can't give.

Even very experienced and confident mentors with a strong knowledge base regarding issues of diversity and inclusion cannot be all things to all students. Every student experiences their degree program differently, and each student will have unique needs.

In addition to helping students find support systems the way Dr. Carson does, mentors can also have a positive impact on the students of color they work with by observing talent and pointing it out. Being told by a friend or family member that you have talent is not the same as being told by an expert in the field. Louisa talked about being told she had an aptitude for English:

> When I entered University, I didn't have a major at all. I was undecided. When I was in high school, I was taking dual enrollment classes with another university. So, the professor at that university, she would complement my writing and she would tell me, "You should consider an English major." Then in middle school I also had some teachers comment on [my writing]... so it was just basically those two or three experiences, but because they were coming from teachers, academic specialists, I felt their opinion had value.

Another approach to recruitment faculty and program administrators use is talking about TPC programs in their general education classes. Abigail experienced this at the community college she attended:

> The instructor there at that community college who was teaching English who told me about [professional communication]. She was just talking to the class and she said, "If anyone really enjoys writing, or is good at it, and you want to pursue a really good degree at a great pay point—well, check this plan out." So, she was the one that told me about the technical communication program at [my university].

This type of encouragement can be especially important for graduate students or students considering graduate school. Dr. Curie wasn't initially planning on continuing onto a PhD program, but her mentor, Dr. McClintock, saw her aptitude for research and strongly encouraged her to move forward. Dr. Curie said, "Dr. [McClintock] was such a great mentor. You know, as a master student, she said, 'Okay, you need to go on for your PhD and plus you're gonna-you're gonna write this article with me.'" Dr. McClintock's encouragement helped give Dr. Curie the confidence to move forward in her education.

Unlike Dr. Curie, Dr. Munro already knew she was going to go on to a PhD program, but didn't know how well her research interests would fit with TPC scholarship until she spoke with her mentor, Dr. Carson:

> I was initially trained as a composition scholar and love composition pedagogy and teaching. Then I went to get my PhD at [a large midwestern university]. I thought that I was going to continue doing [composition] research but [Dr. Carson] actually invited me to apply for the CPTSC diversity scholarship. In thinking about that I was like super new to tech comm. I said, "Does my research on transfer fit in with TechComm?" He said, "Well, actually it started here. A lot of the transfer research started here." So, he gave me some readings about transfer in tech comm and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I had no idea I had been missing all these conversations."

Dr. McClintock and Dr. Carson influenced their graduate students through informal conversations. In contrast, Dr. Franklin's department has formalized the process of identifying potential majors and encouraging them to consider TPC:

> We actually do have postcards in the English department that all the professors have, and we're supposed to write notes to our students if we identify someone with talent, like in our intro classes, and give them to them and say, "Hey, you should be an English major."

This idea of reaching out to students and identifying students with an interest in technical communication differs somewhat from the traditional idea of mentoring in that it asks faculty members to be proactive in finding new students rather than just reaching out to students with a current TPC major declared or waiting for students to decide to reach out.

Centering Marginalized Students in Recruitment Efforts

Another technique mentioned by interview participants to recruit students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds was to have students from underrepresented backgrounds participate directly in recruitment efforts. However, this technique—encouraging students from underrepresented backgrounds to recruit other students from underrepresented backgrounds—creates a complex situation. Institutions of higher education often see the recruitment of diverse classes of students as a way to increase prestige. However, this can be dangerous because when administrators are working for diversity to advance their own interests, they do not have the interests of the people of color they are recruiting at heart. Administrators need to avoid using students as diverse faces purely to attract more diverse faces. As Dr. Joliot said, "Many [universities] put diversity and pictures of people of color on their recruitment materials. I don't want to be the Asian face.

Those posters are a lie. It's false advertising. It really bothers me. I was there. I was that person."

Students can play an important part in creating a more diverse and inclusive environment. Blair talked about what happened when her department empowered her to take ownership of recruitment efforts.

> I do the recruitment for our program. I go out to HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and I use my personal network to try to bring in other minority scholars to the program. I do a really good job in this position especially in that first semester of trying to make sure everyone feels welcome. I put people in contact with whomever they need to know while in the program. I call [recruitment practices] on the ground initiatives. And what that essentially does, it kind of takes a political approach to recruiting. I try to tell people "I know political typically has a bad taste in people's mouths when you hear it but the act of recruiting students is political." Students become stakeholders within the organization. They become constituents. So, it is a political practice. But in those on-the-ground initiatives it's all about you making personal connections with people. So, who do you know, why do you know them, and breaking down the institutionalized pipelines because sometimes those pipelines are only about recruiting, and you know the image of it but it's not about actually knowing those students. So, in my on-the-ground approach I've actually visited HBCUs. I go and talk to people that I know personally, I make sure people have my personal contact information. Even if it comes to the point where that person decides the program is not for them or they get there and they're like "look I don't like this," I still make sure that I fostered a relationship that they know they can still come to me either way. Granted it's labor intensive, but it does help with bringing diverse students of color into the program.

Blair's personalized approach to recruiting is quite different from the recruitment techniques traditionally used by colleges and universities. Blair focuses on developing genuine personal relationships, rather than trying to impress students with flashy recruitment materials or presentations,. Traditional recruitment techniques meant to attract people of color are not meant to benefit people of color but are meant to benefit the institution and the people at that institution. Conversely, Blair's take on recruitment practices puts the focus on the individual. Traditional recruitment practices have the potential to harm marginalized people by putting them into a position that might not be best

for them. By acknowledging the individual, Blair fosters a supportive relationship regardless of whether or not that student chooses her institution because the focus is on helping marginalized people rather than simply increasing diversity numbers. Even those with the best intentions may be doing unintended harm. Program administrators must recognize that they are not the experts when it comes to recruiting people of color. This is why including people of color in recruitment efforts is so important. Embedded racism often goes unnoticed by the privileged.

Mark's comments seem to support Blair's ideas of direct involvement in the recruitment of students of color. He commented on how prospective students having students of color to talk to during the recruitment process would be helpful, but he stressed that it's important to be able to speak with students who don't feel an obligation to say good things about the department. Mark would like students to have access to other students who don't necessarily have an official assignment with the department:

> It's also helpful to be able to actually talk to students and not necessarily, you know, the graduate assistant for the department. Because you're going to get a very specific kind of response from them. Just like having people of colors' emails, you know, like maybe there's a list of students of color who are okay with being contacted by prospective students of color. They don't necessarily hold a position on campus because when I was a graduate assistant, I felt comfortable being upfront with people and talking to them about my experience in the program, but you do feel like a kind of pressure especially if you're employed by the program to present a certain view of the program.

Similar to Blair, Mark spoke about the value of a sincere personal relationship in the recruitment process. Mark was not interested in the institutional message. He wanted personal contacts from people who did not feel obligated to speak positively about the program. Like Blair, Mark valued having a sincere personal contact who can be trusted whether or not the student decided to attend the institution. For program administrators, this may mean stepping back from the recruitment process and allowing students to develop genuine personal relationships with prospective students even if the prospective student chooses not to attend the administrator's institution. This also means managing the messaging of the department less and focusing on inclusivity more.

Creating Inclusive Messaging

Despite the recent growth of the field, technical and professional communication appears to still be relatively unknown to prospective students. Prospective undergraduate students most often seem to choose to study TPC only after discovering it at their college or university rather than enrolling at an institution with the intention to study it. This issue is especially compounded for students from marginalized backgrounds who often lack the influence from a mentor to point them toward a TPC program (Dayley & Walton, 2018). Alice talked about the need to clear up misconceptions about TPC as a field to appeal to the interests of prospective students:

> I guess it's really just trying to appeal to their interest. I mean, a lot of times if you don't enjoy writing or you don't have analytical nature about you, this field's not going to be something for you. But it's really just trying to figure out individual interest and focusing on that. A lot of times when I say "technical communications," people automatically think I'm in computers. They don't think writing, they don't think copy editing, they don't think about any of that stuff, so they don't-they don't get the field. But if you're able to kind of connect it to things within their lives and that might apply to them, it might garner interest. Using taglines like "do you enjoy persuading; do you enjoy creating lists" might stand out to certain people. I think you might catch a few people who hadn't really thought about, you know, this degree.

Mary also mentioned the need to clear up misconceptions and explain to prospective students what TPC actually is:

> I think my advice would just be to take the approach that [TPC] is not what you think. Don't let them fool you. It's not-it's not necessarily writing instructions and textbooks. It's not what you think. Really, you're-you're limited by your imagination. I mean, I could find a job pretty much anywhere by just explaining "Listen, this is what I can do for you and your customer base or your employees," or wherever they need help being able to explain what I'm capable of doing. I just don't think people know what it is.

Along with clearing up misconceptions about TPC, interview participants pointed out that program administrators should describe the advantages of obtaining a TPC degree. Charlotte said:

> I think specifically [my institution] should be going out there and saying look at us. Not only do we have this one-of-a-kind program here, but we've got an active alumni pool so they

> could literally go look for people who graduate from our department. [Graduates] get jobs. They get good jobs. So, you show [prospective students] that it's a career path and you show them that success, but you've got to go into the school. I think the other thing that tech programs could be doing is telling students the cool thing about technical communication, is a technical writer can be anything right now.

Louisa also said that administrators should talk to prospective students about real job opportunities they can have after graduation:

> I guess like mentioning some of the things you can do with your English major. I really wish, for me, I wish it was spoken about more, but I would definitely recommend that they mention what a person can do with an English degree. Like the articles I get, for example, for a car company or something. There has to be somebody writing articles about whatever it is. Maybe just like show how it applies to the real world.

Dr. Lessing echoed Charlotte's and Louisa's sentiments by also mentioning the importance of explaining potential job prospects to prospective students:

> I think tech comm is attractive to a lot of people of color because it's an area of liberal arts that provides us a marketable skill. I've gotta admit, I've been in the game a little bit. I'm gonna take some contract jobs during the summer because it's something that I can do. I think you look at African American history you'll see that it's something we've always been interested in—owning businesses. And so, if you're selling your program to people of color, it's cool to have the courses in diversity but you also need to tell them what they can do, what they can get out of the program. Not just to work in the IT industry or to work at Apple or Dell or wherever. They may want to start a business.

For most, going to college is mainly about a future career. This is especially true for students trying to move out of a lower socioeconomic group. Students who have had to justify their choice to go to college rather than immediately look for employment must choose a major with solid job prospects. By focusing messaging on potential career opportunities, TPC program administrators can highlight technical and professional communication as an attractive field for those who need financial stability after graduation.

Changing Department Culture

Each TPC academic program has its own culture and established way

of doing things. One example is the format of a master's degree thesis or PhD dissertation. These scholarly works typically follow a specific set of norms particular to each institution. There is little variation in the process and format of one thesis or dissertation to the next. When students want to do something out of this norm, they may be scolded or criticized. One suggestion from interview participants to increase diversity and inclusion in TPC academic programs was for programs to be willing to change the social norms and culture of their programs. Bill said:

> There's so much research that shows that oftentimes it's just an issue of culture when students of color or students from some kind of minority culture are in the classroom. They're often viewed as being at a deficit in some way. Oftentimes they just think in a different way or they bring some kind of other asset to the classroom or to whatever the rhetorical or classroom situation is. I think sometimes we get so stuck in our one mode of "this is what a good scholar does," whether that's a good tech writing scholar or a good scientist or whatever, that we fail to kind of see the ways in which students who think differently may be able to help grow the field or expand the ways we think about our field.

As Bill stated, students who don't necessarily follow typical academic norms are an asset in the classroom. Technical communicators need to be able to understand their audience to communicate effectively. The more exposure a TPC student had to diverse ways of thinking, the better they will be when designing communication to be effective for specific or general audiences.

Efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in TPC academic programs are not purely altruistic. As Bill said, making space for students from different backgrounds may help expand the way TPC students, faculty, and administrators think about contemporary issues in the field. Creating inclusive spaces for students of color will allow students to bring new ideas and new ways of thinking to TPC programs. To remove barriers for students from underrepresented backgrounds, some TPC programs are trying to implement strategies to increase inclusiveness. Dr. Carson described changes made to their graduate admission process to address inclusion in their program:

> We don't ask for GREs; we don't ask for certain things that... might turn off students of color because they seem rigged... which can be really intimidating especially for first-generation students whether they're students of color or identify as white first-generation students in grad school. It's extremely intimi-

> dating so we don't ask for some of these things that might cause students to select themselves out of the running who might not apply.

Removing barriers such as standardized test requirements is one possible way to make a program more inclusive for students (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Another way to increase inclusion in TPC programs is by including diverse scholarly voices in program curriculum. This means intentionally including the writing of people of color in course reading assignments and lectures. Maria suggested some introspection when program administrators create their program curriculum:

> What orientation or perspectives are your program privileging right now? Who's on your reading list for your comps? Is it all dead white guys? Whose voices are you including? That says a lot about whose voices and opinions you think matter.

Maria's suggestion to include diverse voices in program curriculum could be a good start for many programs; however, changing the curriculum can be difficult. Virginia related an experience one of her faculty mentors had when trying to change program curriculum to include diverse voices:

> I actually had a professor who wanted to create a class of children's literature but from African American writers or authors of color. She wanted to do that, but because [my university] wants to do things for the basketball team, the funding for the class was cut. I feel like there are teachers who try certain things, but with the university, other things come first and sports is one of them. So, I would say it's kind of like a losing battle almost. Because [this city] is such a sports city, the sports want something the sports are gonna get it, regardless of if they're cutting funds from other departments that actually need it.

Virginia's perception is that increasing diversity in the curriculum at her institution is very low on the priority list. Instead, she sees money put into things like athletics and not into the education she and the other students in her department are paying for. When ideas to increase inclusion are not supported in a department, students, like Virginia, notice—especially when other activities and programs seem to get more consideration, higher priority, and more funding. This lack of priority and funding seems to be an especially difficult problem for humanities departments, such as English, which is where most TPC programs are housed (Dayley & Walton, 2018). With more funding and higher status in the university, English departments and TPC programs could certainly do more to increase inclusion. However, there is little to no guid-

ance regarding ways in which program administrators can accomplish this. Future research projects on the status of English departments and their tendency to receive lower funding could prove useful not only for English departments and TPC programs in general, but also for efforts aimed at diversity and inclusion.

Another way interview participants suggested TPC program administrators can change the culture of a department is to shift focus away from simply bringing in a diverse group of students to focus specifically on inclusion within the current student body. In other words, increase inclusion in TPC programs by focusing on student retention and support. Dr. Munro mentioned this specifically:

> I think there's a lot of focus on recruitment in terms of diversity. So how do we get people of color into our programs? I think what administrators can do is focus on retention and support. Because the thing is, people of color in academia, there's not that many of us so we talk to each other. So, if I know that my friend has gone to a program who is a person of color and has not been supported, I'm not gonna want to go to that program. So, while people might focus on recruiting, I think focusing on support and retention so important. Supporting students when they get to the program. Supporting them as they do their project. Supporting them in their field. Supporting them when they graduate. Continuing that sort of sustainable line of mentorship can actually really help recruitment efforts because we talk to each other and when we identify violent places, we tell each other. It's not to say like all people of color know each other, but we have trained ourselves as a survival strategy to reach out to other people of color who are at places that we're thinking of going and saying "how this has been for you?" That really does influence the decisions that we make about going places. I think the biggest advice I would have is for administrators to focus on how they're supporting the people of color who are already there. Those people of color will talk to the people of color who are not there but are somewhere else and we'll know that your program is great about supporting people of color and therefore encourage other people to apply to that program. I think one of the arguments that people make is "well we just didn't have any applicants that were diverse," and it's like "well, support people who are diverse, support diversity, and those applicants will come because those things don't go unnoticed."

Dr. Munroe's advice regarding changing department culture to fo-

cus on inclusion and support ties into the previous section on inclusive messaging. As Dr. Munroe suggests, students who find inclusion, support, and success in TPC programs will ultimately talk to other people who may choose to come to a program because of its reputation of valuing people of color.

Recommendations

To give readers actionable takeaways from this research project, the following section contains recommendations for TPC faculty and administrators regarding the creation of more diverse and inclusive academic programs. These recommendations are based on the reported findings from the interviews in this study.

Recommendation 1: Designate a Recruitment Officer

If a TPC program is interested in taking the steps necessary to create an effective and targeted recruitment program, the first step is to designate someone to oversee recruitment efforts. Program administrators should either create a new position or designate a current faculty member as the program's director of recruitment. This should be a specific person with a specific assignment over recruitment and not simply a part of the job description of a current director or advisor. There are several ways this may be done. The program could hire a new staff member with a reduced teaching load and a specific job description outlining recruitment duties. Administrators could also identify a current faculty member and reduce their teaching load with the intent of spending extra time working on recruitment initiatives. If the intent of the program is to increase diversity and inclusion, program administrators should strongly consider hiring a person of color for this position. This person could coordinate recruitment efforts for the entire department and could also coordinate efforts with the admissions office and graduate college.

Recommendation 2: Create a Student Recruitment Advisory Council

Instead of directing recruitment efforts with no input from the type of students program administrators want to recruit and retain, administrators should intentionally solicit ideas, recommendations, and experiences of students of color already in their programs to create a supportive recruitment program that doesn't exploit or tokenize students to simply increase the number of students of color, but actively

seeks advice and council from students of color in an effort to create an inclusive program. This council should include a diverse group of students representing a variety of backgrounds and experiences. This council could be advised and facilitated by the program's recruitment officer.

Administrators should keep in mind that the students in this group should not be treated as monoliths and that their intersectionality will be a strength in the context of group decision-making. However, program administrators should also be wary of possible burnout of students of color who may be asked to do too much to support program recruitment efforts while also dealing with school assignments, work obligations, and more. A possible solution to this could be tuition waivers or even payment to students for their time rather than expecting students to volunteer their time as recruiters. This leads to a bigger issue: how do TPC programs pay for such efforts? When asking for money from department heads, deans, and upper-level administrators, program administrators are often told, "We don't have any money." Taking small steps at first and keeping good records can be key here. If a program administrator can get a few student volunteers to give a small amount of time and then show a positive effect from that effort, upper-level administrators may be more likely to give more money the next time they are asked.

All ideas regarding recruitment activities should be brought before the advisory council. For example, if a new recruitment brochure is being designed, the advisory council should be involved in every aspect of the design process. What will the brochure say? What will the representation of students look like? Who will the brochure be given to? This will help identify areas of interest convergence and help administrators understand cultural contexts they may not be aware of. The advice of this council should be taken very seriously. Program administrators should keep in mind that they have a very narrow perspective and that traditionally white middle- and upper-class values dominate the academy. Although not every idea presented by this council will work, trying new ideas brought forth by students of differing backgrounds fosters inclusiveness and will give students a sense of ownership of the program.

Along with assisting in recruitment ideas and activities, a diverse student recruitment advisory council could help program administrators identify areas where a program is not inclusive for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds

can help identify areas where whiteness is an oppressive norm and help break that norm to allow for other ideas, beliefs, and conceptions. Administrators should give over some of the property rights of their programs and allow for students from diverse backgrounds to leave their mark on the program, making it more welcoming for future students.

Recommendation 3: Community Outreach

With a recruitment officer in place, and a diverse and active student advisory council functioning, TPC programs can begin more effectively reaching out to prospective students. These are several ways this could be done:

1. Faculty and students can look for talented writers in entry-level courses and specifically invite them into the major at the university.
2. Recruitment officers can reach out to local high school teachers to inquire about strong writers who may be interested in a TPC major. Recruitment officers could then reach out to these students directly, similar to how fine arts professors search for talent for their ensembles or how college coaches reach out to athletes.
3. TPC program recruitment personnel can identify local companies and organizations that would benefit from educated technical and professional writers. A partnership could be formed to train employees through a TPC degree program.

Perhaps the most important part of an outreach program is to educate people about the existence of technical and professional communication as a potential field of study. Most TPC students do not know that a TPC major exists or what a professional communicator does before matriculating (Dayley & Walton, 2018). By simply getting outside of the confines of the campus, program administrators will be able to spread the word about technical and professional communication and its potential employment opportunities for strong writers and communicators. Recruitment officers and TPC administrators can specifically focus on geographic areas where they know there will be a higher concentration of people from diverse backgrounds. This may be difficult as administrators may encounter different values and norms in these areas than the ones they are used to. This is where a diverse student advisory council can be helpful. Administrators should keep in mind that different social and cultural norms are what they are looking for when trying to create an inclusive environment.

Recommendation 4: Don't Rely on Admission Offices or Others to Recruit Students

Especially for undergraduate students, TPC programs often rely on admission offices to bring in students and hope that some of them are interested in studying technical communication and that some of those students interested in the TPC program are from diverse backgrounds. For graduate programs, administrators seem to put in more time recruiting, but still largely rely on the name of the school and proactive students to bring in a new class.

Program administrators are remarkably busy. They likely have a full plate even without worrying about recruiting new undergraduate and graduate students. However, especially when thinking about diversity, neglecting recruitment can be detrimental. There are several things program administrators should remember when considering recruitment activities:

1. Prospective students are generally unaware of TPC academic programs. The same can be said of admission and advising offices. Taking the time to educate admission officers and academic advisors will empower them to direct students to the TPC program at their respective institutions.
2. When program administrators are not directly involved in recruitment activities, they remain unaware of which students are choosing their programs, why they are choosing their programs, and how their programs may be excluding individuals from diverse backgrounds.
3. If a TPC program traditionally has a very low percentage of students from diverse backgrounds, that is unlikely to change without direct intervention and effort.

Although some of the recruitment process is not controlled by TPC administrators, there are several things administrators can do if they are willing to put in the effort to recruit a diverse class of students:

1. Administrators can work directly with admission and advising offices to help admission counselors and academic advisors know what a TPC major can do for undergraduate students.
2. Administrators can also reach out to teachers and employers who work with potential students to educate them about degree program opportunities so they can direct potential students to TPC degree programs.
3. TPC program administrators should also not be afraid to find ways to reach out to potential students directly both at schools and

workplaces.

4. As mentioned previously, appointing a faculty member or hiring a specific staff member who does not already have an administrative assignment to specifically lead recruitment efforts may also prove effective.

Recommendation 5: Focus on Inclusion

Creating a more diverse academic program isn't just about recruiting a diverse group of students. A much greater problem in colleges and universities than lack of diversity is in retaining and graduating the students of color they already have. Getting students through the door is ineffective at best and actively harmful at worst if students are not graduating with a degree and mutually constructed competencies that go with it. A student advisory council can help begin to identify gaps in inclusion by pointing out areas where embedded whiteness has created an exclusionary environment.

Dr. Temptaous McCoy's recent dissertation is an excellent example of how TPC program administrators can think outside of the box and use inclusive practices to enrich their programs (McCoy, 2019). In her dissertation, McCoy uses African American Vernacular English in several places, and includes a digital chapter on the cultural phenomenon of TRAP Karaoke to show the value of black epistemologies in technical and professional communication. Because McCoy was allowed to bring her own cultural experience into her dissertation project, she was able to expand and enrich the experience of all involved and challenge established norms that may have limited other students of color.

As program administrators begin to encourage new ideas that challenge white cultural norms, some inclusive barriers will be lifted and more people will be able to participate in the scholarly conversation. Scholarship will be opened to new ideas, and these new ideas will lead to new knowledge. This type of inclusive behavior doesn't need to be limited only to a dissertation or thesis. Program administrators can expand this idea to every programmatic activity including developing curriculum, creating and refining degree programs, and even when planning departmental social activities.

When program administrators begin implementing inclusive practices, such as McCoy's previously discussed project, they will likely encounter challenges. For example, if a program has few faculty members from underrepresented backgrounds, there will be few or no faculty members familiar with topics, genres, or vernacular that students

may want to incorporate into a work such as a thesis or dissertation. Also, upper-level administrators may push back against new ideas especially when traditional ideas and behaviors have always been "good enough." Administrators can begin addressing these challenges by purposefully hiring faculty from diverse backgrounds. However, stubborn administrators that are not open to change may pose a greater threat. TPC program administrators may consider addressing this challenge by simply taking small steps forward and documenting progress and positive outcomes which can be presented to upper-level administrators as evidence of the benefits of inclusive practices.

Program administrators need to accept that students of color may not follow some of the cultural norms of the academy. Administrators who are interested in inclusion need to make a conscious effort to lead their programs and departments towards deliberately identifying the ways in which cultural differences are dismissed. Program administrators can do this by intentionally building coalitions with marginalized people associated with their TPC program and department. Program administrators should seek out opinions and advice from people with diverse backgrounds who are stakeholders in the program including students, faculty, staff members, and other administrators. This can take the form of formal advisory groups, electronic surveys, informal conversations, or any variety of communication methods. Program administrators should remember that seeking knowledge from marginalized people in TPC academic programs should not be a one-time activity but should be a regular occurrence that carries on indefinitely. Initially, such conversations may not yield significant results, but as trust is built over time, insights will likely be brought out that will change every aspect of the program.

Another way to foster inclusion is to hire faculty members who identify as persons of color and to support those faculty members. These faculty members can also help identify areas of exclusion as well as support students of color; however, this kind of work is labor intensive. Departments need to hire more than just one person of color (i.e., cluster hire) and should consider the work and effort needed to support students when assigning teaching, research, and service loads. According to Natasha Jones, Kristen Moore, & Rebecca Walton, TPC programs should seek "to forward a more expansive vision of TPC, one that intentionally seeks marginalized perspectives, privileges these perspectives, and promotes them through action" (2016, p. 214). In the context of strong mentoring practices for the purposes of recruit-

ing students of color, this means intentionally providing mentors that represent the student population, intentionally asking students what resources they need to succeed, and intentionally reaching out to students with a strong aptitude who may benefit from enrolling in a TPC program. To be clear, I am not advocating for coercive behavior. I am advocating for a proactive approach that prioritizes support for students to create a hospitable environment that promotes student success.

Conclusion

Because the recruitment of students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds is such a salient issue, it is important that TPC program administrators include the voices of people of color in their decision making. The current racial climate of the United States makes including people of color in our decision making even more important. TPC students should be able to find programs that offer an environment that values their presence and contributions. The suggestions in this article represent only a very small number of POC (persons of color) students and faculty members in TPC academic programs. As more research is done regarding the perceptions and insights of people of color regarding diversity and inclusion in TPC academic programs, researchers and administrators will begin to get a better picture of what can be done to combat the embedded racism in our programs and institutions.

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Appendix

Student and pre-tenure faculty interview questions:

- How did you learn about the field of TPC?
- Why did you decide to study TPC? (The answer(s) to this question led to follow-up questions that attempted to discover deeper insights regarding the subject's motivation to choose TPC)
- Who influenced you to study TPC? (If no one was credited, I asked follow up questions, such as "Did a teacher or friend or family member influence you?")
- Why did you stay in TPC? What keeps you participating in the field?
- As you pursue your education/career in TPC, who helps you?
- Did you face any challenges or barriers with finding TPC? With remaining in the field?
- What kinds of support got you to the field in the first place? What kinds of support keep you participating in this field, as opposed to leaving for another major/career, etc.?
- Do you think you support others in finding out about TPC? Why? How?
- Do you think you support others in staying in TPC? Why? How?
- How many students in a typical TPC class are persons of color?
- What are your career aspirations? What kinds of support would you need to achieve those aspirations?
- What advice do you have for recruiting more people of color to TPC as a field? For recruiting more people of color into TPC academic programs?
- Why do you think people of color are underrepresented in TPC? Why do you think there aren't more people of color in TPC?

Influencer questions:

- How do you see your role as an advisor?
- Do you purposefully seek out students to try and support them?
- Do you have students who intentionally seek you out? If so, why do you think the seek you out?
- How you ever influenced a student to study technical communication?
- Does your program, department, or institution have any diversity and inclusion initiatives? What are those initiatives and how do you implement them?
- Is it important to have diverse representation on the faculty?
- How can technical communication academic programs recruit more people of color?

Author Information

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Community Engagement in TPC Programs During Times of Crisis: Embracing Chicana and Latina Feminist Practices

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Abstract. Drawing on lessons gathered while teaching community engagement in technical communication courses during the COVID-19 pandemic, two Latina instructors, one in New Mexico and one in Florida, highlight the value that Chicana and Latina feminism can bring to technical communication pedagogies. The authors share course assignments and student examples that demonstrate their applications of Chicana/Latina feminist practices in technical communication. Through *pláticas* and testimonios, methodologies and methods grounded in Latina/Chicana feminism, the authors demonstrate how they navigate the challenges of the pandemic while also creating spaces for students to share, heal, and contribute to the activist work taking place in their communities. The article concludes by proposing a pedagogy of love as an approach for teaching technical communication through a Chicana/Latina feminist orientation.

Keywords: Chicana Feminism, Latina Feminism, Community Engagement, Testimonios

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Community engagement has long been incorporated into Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) pedagogies, as TPC researchers and teachers recognize the value of providing students with opportunities to serve their local communities while learning new TPC practices (Bowdon & Scott, 2002; Scott, 2004; Scott, 2008). As Tatiana Batova (2020) explains, community engagement in TPC "shows students the real-life impacts of their writing, teaches them how to navigate complex problems and engage in course materials more deeply, and encourages them to take more responsibility for their own success" (n. pag.). Recently, TPC scholars have begun writing about the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on community engagement TPC pedagogies, particularly when TPC courses are taught in condensed online modes during times of crisis (Batova 2020; St.Amant 2020). Kirk St.Amant (2020) proposes that "technical communicators can make important contributions to these situations by developing materials that meet local informational needs" (p. 211). Allowing students to experience the role of technical communicators as community-engaged practitioners helps them acquire important technical and soft skills needed in both their academic activities and their professional careers.

Drawing on these conversations, this research article outlines how we, two technical communication instructors, one in New Mexico and one in Florida, incorporated community engagement projects in our online TPC courses during the Fall of 2020. Using a testimonio methodology that foregrounds storytelling and collaboration (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Carmona, 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001), we describe our approaches to community engagement in TPC courses during times of crisis, and we then share collective strategies that can be applied in other TPC courses focused on community engagement. In the sections that follow, we first begin by tracing ongoing conversations about the role that community engagement plays in contemporary TPC pedagogies. Then, we describe how we gathered data, through a testimonio methodology grounded in Chicana/Latina epistemologies, from two TPC courses that incorporated community engagement during the Fall semester of 2020. In this discussion, we will address the topic of this special issue by noting how community engagement pedagogies in TPC both challenged students who faced pain and loss during the pandemic, and how these pedagogies also supported students by providing avenues for them to connect with each other and with their local communities during times of increased isolation and disconnection. We will then explain how we connected our courses to current research in TPC, and also how we embraced Chicana/Latina feminist

epistemologies in our community-engaged TPC curricula. Through examples of student projects, class discussions, and student feedback, we argue that a Chicana/Latina feminist orientation can help instructors intentionally and successfully incorporate community engagement into their TPC courses, specifically by 1) fostering a pedagogy of love in and outside the classroom, 2) establishing methods for securing reciprocity and respect in community projects, and 3) encouraging ethical collaborations among students and their community partners.

Community Engagement in TPC

As TPC practitioners and researchers continue to find ways to better apply user-centered approaches, community engagement is gaining ground. Emma Rose et al. (2017), for instance, explain that "community-based research projects are highly localized," and thus these projects have become an ideal approach to engage with underrepresented groups. As the global pandemic forces us to adjust to new realities, St.Amant (2020, p. 226) proposes that technical communicators engage with communities to provide meaningful contributions that address public health challenges. Further, Natasha N. Jones (2016) argues that community-based research positions the technical communicator not only as a mediator but as a community advocate by working collaboratively to address complex community issues. TPC practitioners can help address the needs of local communities during critical times by "developing materials for distribution via multiple formats" and working with organizations to "raise awareness of these resources within communities," as St.Amant (2020) points out (p. 219). Similarly, Batova (2020) argues that using community-engaged approaches in TPC courses helps students experience content in real life contexts. TPC scholars have also discussed how community engagement helps students in TPC courses become "active participants and co-decision makers" while producing technical communication texts, especially when working in user-centered projects (Scott, 2008, p. 382). Engaging with communities through TPC projects helps researchers, practitioners, educators, and students experience user-centered approaches at a deeper level. Therefore, community engagement is key to provide technical communicators with opportunities to experience their role as community advocates.

While there is a long history of community engagement research in technical communication, it's important to note that community engagement is a field of study in itself that has deep roots in communities of color. As such, when working to incorporate community engagement projects, lessons, and approaches in our technical com-

munication courses, we as authors of this paper wanted to be intentional in centralizing the work of activist scholars of color in both our methods and methodologies.

For example, Chicana feminist educator J. Estrella Torrez (2015) explains that there are vast distinctions between service-learning models in education and critical service-learning or civic engagement orientations (p. 3). As Torrez (2015) clarifies, "Service-learning is best understood as a pedagogical tool incorporating community service into classroom learning to expand the students' understanding of course materials (Mitchell, 2008; Rimmerman, 2009). Service-learning can also be used to empower students to solve issues within communities in which they may or may not be community members (Farber, 2011)" (p. 3). With this focus on the student and course objectives (and lack of focus on community impact), service-learning is different from what Torrez (2015) describes as "critical service-learning" (p. 3). "Similar to civic engagement," Torrez (2015) explains, "critical service-learning is a political project," one through which "students develop the critical awareness in relation to what gives rise to the dark social realities of the present as well as gain the desire to remake the social world for the lives of all people (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011, p. xi)" (p. 4). Thus, rather than focusing on "serving" a community, "critical service-learning project's expectations are to interrogate systems of oppression, work to dismantle social inequities, and forge authentic relationships between higher education institutions and the community 'served' (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011)" (Torrez, 2015, p. 4).

Drawing on Torrez's definitions, we embrace community engagement through a critical service-learning framework that pushes both instructors and students to consider their own positionalities in working with communities outside the university, and that actively works to redress oppression. At the same time, we bring together Torrez's discussion of critical service learning with work in technical communication that highlights an emphasis on community accountability, reciprocity, and collaboration in communication design (Rose et al., 2017).

Testimonio Methodology

In this paper, we introduce grounded examples of how we practiced community engagement in two introduction to technical communication courses, one in New Mexico (Nora) and one in Florida (Laura). Our goal in bringing our pedagogical approaches together is to develop transferable strategies and takeaways for incorporating community engagement into technical communication curricula, particularly during the pandemic and other times of crisis.

To bring together two models for practicing community engagement in technical communication courses, we practiced testimonio methodologies. As two Latina instructors navigating teaching, grief, loss, and family care amidst the pandemic, testimonio methodologies allowed us to be in community and in relation with each other as we taught our individual courses, coming together to engage in conversations, or *pláticas*, about our classes at multiple points in the semester.

Testimonio is a methodology commonly used by Chicana and Latina Feminist scholars (Delgado et al., 2012; Latina Feminist Group, 2001). A testimonio can be both a product and process that "challenges objectivity by situating the individual in communion with a collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression, or resistance" (Delgado et al., 2012, p. 363). It is a personal account that links a collective experience to promote social change (Rivera, 2020). And yet this important methodology continues to be underutilized in fields centered around technology, such as TPC. Using testimonio methodology fosters community praxes important to both educators of color and students of color in TPC courses. For example, Norma Cantú (2012) argues that testimonios help Chicanas connect with careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by allowing Chicanas to examine the roles of parents, teachers, and their community, and by reflecting on how these roles connect with their gender and ethnicity. Similarly, Laura Gonzales, Kendall Leon, and Ann Shivers-McNair (2020) used testimonio methodology to explore the need for more purposeful curricula development in Technical and Professional Writing courses within the context of HSIs. Testimonios have become a process of reflecting that promote resilience and solidarity through *pláticas* or dialogue (Flores et al., 2018). Reflective *pláticas* in testimonios, however, are not necessarily always external dialogues. Lisa Mendoza (2020) proposes testimonios as a methodology that can be used as a means to self-reflect on pedagogical practices which impact both the journey of scholars and the journey of students. Another important aspect of testimonios is its capacity for healing by releasing a *desahogo*, which is defined as a "cathartic act" that releases a "distressful sentiment that keeps a person on the brink of not being able to breath" (Rivera, 2020, p. 63). As Nora Rivera (2020) argues, through a *desahogo*, Latinas and Chicanas are able to restore ourselves and explore new possibilities amidst our ongoing struggles, including those faced during a global health crisis.

Testimonios are a valuable methodology that can help our TPC field by promoting both external and internal dialogues that reflect on individual experiences as they relate to our personal and professional

communities and to our advocacy praxes. We used this methodology to thread together stories about how we were navigating teaching during times of crisis, as we were also experiencing stress and loss. During the pandemic, our students and our communities are also experiencing stress and loss, so we embraced this project around the question: how do we teach and learn technical communication and community engagement through a pandemic? This is what testimonio allowed us to process and work through.

Methods

Embracing a testimonio methodology, throughout the fall and summer of 2020, we engaged in monthly *pláticas* or dialogue regarding our courses. In these discussions, we reflected on how our students were engaging with the community engagement elements of our class, how they were managing our course's workload given the stress and anxiety of the pandemic, and how we felt as we navigated our own institutional politics while supporting our families, students, and communities. These monthly *pláticas* also gave us a space for *desahogos*, which helped us rebuild our commitment to our practice and explore new ways of approaching the challenges of teaching in the context of a global pandemic.

During each *plática*, we took notes regarding the specific strategies that we were using to navigate the current pandemic while teaching technical communication courses. While we did not transcribe or systematically code our conversations, following a testimonio methodology meant that we engaged in a process of listening and witnessing each other's journeys through the semester, and that we then applied lessons from our conversations throughout our courses. We did not wait until the semester was over to code and analyze our conversations and apply findings to our course design; instead, we engaged in *pláticas*, which often included *desahogos* throughout the semester, took notes on our conversations, and then applied lessons gathered from the process of dialogue to our course design in the moment. We then processed these pedagogical adjustments and their effectiveness in the next *plática* as we continued our reciprocal process of sharing and adjusting to the current situation. This process was especially helpful in navigating the pandemic, where the health situation, university protocols, and our own individual circumstances were changing consistently and thus pushing us to adapt our teaching methods and processes accordingly. Our data sources include the *pláticas* themselves, the notes that we gathered throughout the semester, as well

as the embodied experience of navigating and adapting our technical communication pedagogies throughout the pandemic.

As two instructors who centralize community engagement in their research and service work, in our *pláticas*, we discussed how we could leverage our skills and those of our students to better support our surrounding communities. Given that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to racialized violence, we wanted to use our class time to engage in conversations about social justice with our students, and to provide an avenue for them to positively contribute to the advocacy work being done by technical communication practitioners in organizations within their local contexts. Throughout the semester, *pláticas* became spaces to process the state of the pandemic while also collaboratively developing common themes and takeaways about the possibilities and limitations of practicing community engagement in technical communication.

In the sections that follow, we first provide an overview of each course introduced in this article, focusing on the student demographics, the institutional context, and the specific course assignments and community partners. These materials reflect the changes we incorporated throughout the semester as we adapted our course plans throughout the pandemic and its shifting conditions. We share student sample projects from each course, before discussing how a pedagogy of love through a Chicana/Latina feminist orientation allowed us to teach technical communication effectively during the pandemic. These examples were central to our *pláticas* and thus represent how we collaboratively developed lessons, implications, and takeaways from our semester of teaching.

Nora's Course Description

As the global pandemic forced us to rely on digital technology, our new reality disturbed students' learning experiences and challenged our pedagogical practices at different levels. It is within this context that I designed a course aimed at providing meaningful learning experiences to students during the fall of 2020. Through my testimonio as a Latina educator teaching in a field where Latinx educators are largely underrepresented, I trace and interweave my individual experience with the collective interactions of students in and outside our digital classroom. I also show how our communal experience during the global pandemic taught me the various ways in which TPC classrooms can become more compassionate and inclusive spaces.

Like most educators around the world, I came to the fall semester of 2020 knowing that all my courses were going to be conducted ex-

clusively online. As I prepared for the classes, I considered the implications of what my curriculum might look like based on the backgrounds of my students. The university where I taught this course is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with a Hispanic student population of over 55%. Most undergraduates at this institution major in engineering and business areas, and my courses mirrored the school's demographics. As a Latinx faculty member in the Department of English of this HSI, it was important to provide students with a learning experience meaningful to their immediate context. Plus, as someone with industry background, I also wanted to give students real-world experience outside the classroom. Nonetheless, online learning amid the pain and loss that the pandemic brought to our community revealed a more pressing challenge. The pandemic brought an increased isolation that provoked serious apathy and depression among students, and thus I wanted my course to become a space for student engagement and collaboration.

My course had an emphasis on technical and scientific communication, and thus many of my students came from engineering majors. Knowing that this course was going to be conducted asynchronously, I wanted to provide a well-rounded survey of the field and its genres in a meaningful way, along with ample opportunities for students to interact with one another. To this end, I developed a syllabus that had at its core a collaborative community-based project, largely based on St.Amant's (2020) article "Communicating About COVID-19: Practices for Today, Planning for Tomorrow," which I will describe in detail in the following section. This course also had an individual project component that aimed at exploring technical communication from a problem-solving lens. Around these two projects, I constructed assignments and activities that gave students opportunities to interact through peer reviews and discussions. It should be noted that I was given two sections of this particular course, each consisting of 26 students, which I cross listed in my learning management system. Therefore, I will refer to these two classes as one single course of 52 students. Table 1 shows the specific structure of this course, as described in my syllabus.

Table 1: Nora's Course Assignments

Class Activities (10%)	The class activities are activities designed to make sure that all of us are on the same page. Some of these activities will also help you test online applications in order to prevent problems in future assignments.
Profession Exploration (15%)	The profession exploration assignments are designed as an opportunity to learn about technical and scientific communication in your field. You will look at career options in your field, conduct an interview with someone who works in your area of study, and familiarize yourself with an academic journal in your field.
Community-Based Project (25%)	The purpose of the community-based assignments is to learn to create relevant and meaningful technical documents for a specific audience while practicing essential collaborative skills. Kirk St.Amant (2020) believes that technical communicators can make meaningful contributions to local communities by creating materials that address their specific needs. Drawing on St.Amant's work, you will collaborate with your team to produce materials that help address the current public health needs of a specific community. You will create instructions for identifying a condition, steps for shopping strategically, protocols for assessing sources of information, procedures on how to care for others, and instructions on how to interact virtually. Your team will also conduct and record a video presentation using a screencast application.

Problem-Based Project (25%)	This project is designed to create an opportunity for you to enhance your problem-solving skills. Based on your personal interests, you will identify a product, service, or process with a significant problem which affects multiple individuals. You will reimagine the product, service, or process you selected and redesign a technical description, recreate its instructions, specs, and/or procedures, and write a research report.
Peer Reviews (10%)	These assignments are designed as opportunities to practice giving and receiving meaningful peer feedback. These assignments will also give us the chance to learn to navigate through collaborative cloud-based software features with which we may not be familiar.
Discussions (15%)	The purpose of discussion posts is to cultivate interaction while reflecting on technical and scientific communication scholarship in multicultural contexts. Discussion posts are not meant to be used as debate forums where participants point out errors and debate who is right, but rather as reflective dialogues where participants learn from one another. We will be expected to contribute with thoughtful and meaningful ideas in a professional and respectful manner.

Laura's Course Description

My course was an introduction to professional communication class themed specifically as community engagement in technical communication. According to the course description:

> "The purpose of this course is to engage in collaborative learning about what it means to study not only in a University, but in a community that extends beyond the walls of a single in-

> stitution. Learning and growth cannot happen amidst a global pandemic unless we take the time to reflect on the many communities that we as human beings, students, family members, and more are constantly influencing and are being influenced by. Rather than pretend the technical communication classroom can be abstracted from what is happening in the world, this class will help all of us create a collective space for learning and reflection by pausing and engaging with each other, with our histories and lived experiences, as well as with the multiple communities and histories surrounding us. Through collective reading, storytelling, listening, and collaboration, this course will provide you with an opportunity to collaborate with a community organization on various technical communication materials."

I taught this course at a public state institution in Florida that enrolls over 50,000 students per year. The course consisted of 25 students whose demographics echoed those of this predominantly white institution: 4 students identified as Black, with two identifying as African American and two identifying as Haitian American, 4 students identified as Hispanic or Latinx from Puerto Rico, Brazil, and Cuba, one student identified as a Chinese international student, and 16 students identified as white.

Students in this course read technical communication scholarship about community engagement paired alongside activist scholarship from various fields and disciplines. For example, students read *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by adrienne maree brown and "Suspending Damage: A letter to communities" by Eve Tuck alongside Natasha Jones' "The Technical Communicator as Advocate," and Kendall Leon's "'Chicanas Making Change': Institutional Rhetoric and the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional." To prepare for their community engagement projects, students also read about the racial disparities of their local community, specifically reading the documents "Family Separation and the Sunshine State" by Smith et al. , "Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County", and Common Data Set UF Enrollment Data 2017-2018. These links provided students with important context about their community. Since our university is located in what is commonly referred to as a "college town," many of my students had not spent time interacting with community members outside the university and its immediate surroundings. For this reason, it was important for students to learn about the racial disparities and racial histories of the city that often ignores these dynamics.

The course was divided into three major projects, each of which

centered community engagement while also providing students opportunities to practice common technical communication genres such as report and memo writing and technical documentation design. Table 2 includes the major project descriptions for the course as described on the course syllabus.

Table 2: Laura's Course Assignments

Community Engagement Positionality Statement (150 points total)	This is a major course project with several pieces that you will work on throughout the semester. In this assignment, you will write a memo in which you: 1) provide your own definition of community engagement drawing on scholarship we read in this course as well as on what you learned through our guest lectures; and 2) provide examples of your own community engagement work. This can include examples that you created in this course as well as those created in other contexts. Your reading reflections, community journey box, community mapping project, community collaboration project, and other assignments can be incorporated into this statement. The statement will include both visual and written components and will be submitted in a digital format (using a content management system like Squarespace, Wordpress, etc.). You will present your community engagement positionality statement to the class through a video presentation at the end of the course.

Community Mapping Project (100 points total)	This is a major course project that asks you to apply your research about our local community to create a visualization that provides your own illustration of a specific aspect of the community. Using resources such as the Native Land app, the "Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County" report, several local organization websites, and research on the History of Gainesville and surrounding areas, you will create a "map" of the community. This map does not have to be only geographical; it can include different resources, landmarks, institutions, organizations, spaces, and places based on your own research and on our collective conversations. You will want to zoom in and be specific rather than just provide a general map of the area. The map can (and should) be both historical and contemporary. For example, you can create a map of bilingual schools in Gainesville, a map of how the city of Gainesville uses prison labor, a map of youth-oriented organizations in Gainesville, a map of the different languages spoken in Florida, a map that illustrates racial and class disparities in and beyond Gainesville, etc. These maps will be research-based and include both writing and visuals. Consider using a digital mapping tool such as Coggle.

Rural Women's Health Project Writing and Design Collaboration (150 points total)	As part of a community engagement course, we will not only read about and discuss but will also contribute to community engagement efforts by working with a local organization, the Rural Women's Health Project, to design materials that will be useful to the organization's mission. This project will require you to practice your participatory design and research skills to learn about an organization, listen to and apply feedback, and reflect on how to improve your collaboration strategies based on a community's interests and goals.
Weekly mini assignments and reading reflections (150 points total)	Each week, you will submit a mini-assignment and/or reading reflection that will be a building block for the three major course assignments. See the course calendar for descriptions of each mini assignment.
Total Possible Points	500

As evidenced by the two course descriptions, each of our classes had individual assignments and course readings that illustrate our different approaches to teaching community engagement in technical communication. During our pláticas, we discussed how our students approached our projects, where students struggled, and how we were experiencing the course as we navigated the pandemic on personal and professional levels. We also shared specific examples of our students' work, in order to draw out collective implications and strategies for practicing community engagement in technical communication, particularly during the pandemic.

Student Sample Projects

In this section, each of us shares student examples to illustrate how our students took up the assignments of each course. Through the discussion of these examples, we highlight the lessons that we collectively discussed during our *pláticas.*

Nora's Examples

Because my course was designed as a survey course, students were introduced to a wide variety of technical and professional documents through different projects. In the community-based project (CBP), specifically, students worked in teams of their own choosing. Then, each group selected a local nonprofit to partner with throughout the semester. This project was framed around the increasingly important social justice scholarship of recent decades (Jones, 2016; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Rose et al., 2017; Savage & Agboka, 2015) and around the important work on testimonios as a research methodology by Dolores Delgado, Rebeca Burciaga, and Judith Flores (2012), which students read throughout the semester. Most assignments in this project were modeled after Kirk St.Amant's (2020) article "Communicating About COVID-19: Practices for Today, Planning for Tomorrow." The assignments had the following outline:

- CBP1: Proposal
- CBP2: Instructions for Identifying a Condition
- CBP3: Steps for Shopping Strategically
- CBP4: Protocols for Assessing Sources of Information
- CBP5: Procedures on How to Care for Others
- CBP6: Instructions on How to Interact Virtually
- CBP7: Video Presentation

In the proposal, students identified and described their collaborative guidelines and responsibilities, including a description of the roles of all members, an explanation of how members of the group were going to communicate, how promptly they expected members to respond to communication, and how they were going to handle conflict. Students also created a timeline of their project and provided a detailed audience analysis of the nonprofit organization with which they chose to work. It should be noted that some groups selected nonprofits because at least one member of the group had a personal or professional connection to it. Table 3 lists and describes the nonprofits with which each group worked.

Table 3: List of nonprofit partners

Group	**Nonprofit**
Group 1	El Crucero A nonprofit that provides affordable housing for low-income families and individuals that are either at risk of being homeless or have been homeless.

Group	Nonprofit
Group 2	Boys and Girls Club An afterschool program for children between the ages of eight and eighteen.
Group 3	Children & Youth Program (CYP) A program within La Casa, Inc. which focuses on the well being of children who have witnessed domestic violence.
Group 4	El Caldito Soup Kitchen An organization that collects food to provide meals for the homeless and anyone in the community affected by poverty.
Group 5	Aggie Cupboard A food pantry program, part of NMSU, that provides food for free to students in need.
Group 6	La Casa, Inc. An organization dedicated to help prevent domestic violence through housing, advocacy, support, and counseling to domestic violence survivors.
Group 7	Mesilla Valley Community of Hope A local shelter that provides housing for the homeless.

Each group created content based on scientific research and designed documents that addressed the needs of, and appealed to, the audience of the nonprofit with whom they worked. All the internal communication within the groups and the external communication with the organizations was conducted using different technology platforms in accordance with the social distancing restrictions in the state of New Mexico during the Fall of 2020. At the end of the semester, each group created a video presentation that explained the process of working virtually with organizations throughout the community. In the video, students also reflected on this collaborative experience which allowed them to work with one another and with the community in the midst of a global pandemic.

Group 1, for example, worked with El Crucero, a nonprofit dedicated to providing affordable housing for low-income families, to assist them with resources that could help their audience navigate the daily nuances of the global pandemic. As Group 1 explained, helping with accurate and updated information was crucial because "many normal day to day activities, such as shopping, have become so much more complicated. So, if we can make things a little more clear, that just helps anyone." Some groups worked with organizations they felt personally connected to. Such was the case of Group 5, who did not necessarily work with an organization but with a program, part of the university, dedicated to providing food services for students and staff members who have a difficult time paying for food. Working with this program within the university was important to Group 5 because, as they emphasized, during this difficult time "it's very hard for a lot of people to get everything that they need. A lot of people are losing jobs, a lot of people are having trouble with money. So, having this kind of thing is important, especially for people that we are associated with." Reflecting on the work they did throughout the semester gave students an opportunity to empathize with the audience with whom they worked and also provided an outlet for them to reflect on the communal experience of living through such challenging situations.

Students had to make decisions about the content and the design based on the audience analysis they conducted at the beginning of the semester. Nonetheless, choosing what type of information to add and how to place it in the documents was not always easy because some groups were working with an adult audience and some with young children. Explaining to children "how to tell if information is trustworthy" was a challenge for Group 2 as they wanted to show children how to identify reliable information while making a connection with them. This group relied on illustrations and pastel colors that would appeal to children. The group also chose to guide children through questions that this young audience could ask as they read information online. For instance, Group 2, suggested children to question everything they read related to COVID-19, "If the information is not coming from a doctor, make sure the website is a well-known one. Is the information biased? Even if the source is well known, try to look for reasons why they are writing the article. Is it to sell you something, or just to inform you?" Similarly, to promote safe habits when visiting the grocery store, Group 3 created an infographic that was "simple and efficient." In their infographic, this group gave important suggestions to their young audience, like "Try not to touch items that you don't want. Don't touch other people, and don't touch your face."

Although creating technical documents for children was not as easy as they thought, students focused on emphasizing that doing one's part would help everyone in the community to move past these painful moments.

All groups gave special attention to CBP5, the document that addressed how to care for others during the pandemic. This was a special topic because some of the students were going through painful experiences themselves. Therefore, some of the information was sensitive not only to their audiences but also for them. Additionally, students also had to adjust this sensitive content to their specific audience. Whereas Group 1, for instance, gave information about hotlines to call for suicide prevention, domestic violence, and child abuse, Group 2 made the following recommendations to children:

> Reach out to people you may know, and this will help cheer your mood. Another important thing to do is to be kind. Stay positive. Share positive news and acts of kindness with your community and family. [. . .] You can also donate and give back. Ask your parents to see if you can donate food for those in need.

Each assignment in the project gave students the opportunity to experiment with a new digital tool and/or with a new designing strategy. For example, in assignment CBP6, which focused on instructions on how to interact virtually, students created a video tutorial that explained to their audience how to use a specific digital platform in order to interact with loved ones. This assignment was grounded on theories of accessibility and usability, because, as one student explained, "it is important to apply these two concepts to digital media because they reach a wide range of audiences. These concepts were applied to my group's tutorial video by giving voice instructions and including captions in case some members of our audience had hearing problems." Another student pointed out that applying these concepts to digital compositions prevent others from "being left out" during this critical time.

Through this project, students were able to contextualize and internalize the importance of technical communication in these critical times. Group 1, for instance, emphasized that "the worst thing we could do as people is panic, and lack of information can cause it very easily." This project also provided students with the opportunity to experience the role of technical communicators as advocates (Jones, 2016). As Group 1 explained, "in times of a pandemic there are many unknowns, many we cannot answer ourselves, but if we can find information on some of them, it can ease the burden. [...] By provid-

ing these resources we are taking some stress off the unknowns." This community-based project allowed students to experience the role of technical communicators during unprecedented times. Students engaged with important social justice theories and applied newly learned technical skills to solve real communication problems that addressed the needs of their own community.

While students encountered challenges throughout the process of the project, some caused by technology accessibility and some by personal matters, focusing our technical skills and our class time on helping the community through this difficult time also helped us. This project allowed us to experience a side of technical communication that is not often seen by our students. It clearly was, as some groups pointed out, a time for kindness and selflessness.

Laura's Examples

For their community engagement project, all students in my course partnered with a health justice organization in our local community. Given the urgency of sharing health-related information with local community members, students in my course were asked to create materials that would help this local organization to better serve the local community. For this project, I gave students the option of working individually or in groups. Given the added stress and unpredictability of the pandemic, I did not want to require students to collaborate. However, in order to promote connection and community building during the isolation of the pandemic, I did incorporate multiple opportunities for students to work in groups during the class time itself, using Zoom's breakout group function to have students give feedback on each other's project and discuss how they are approaching the assignment.

Ultimately, all but two students chose to work in groups for the community engagement project, using this opportunity to distribute the workload of the assignment while also leveraging each other's skills. For example, one group chose to work on designing "COVID Consejos," a genre used by our partner organization to share COVID treatment and prevention information in short, bite-sized, and story-driven pieces. It's interesting to note that in learning about the language access elements of our partnering organization, students organized themselves and their groups to best leverage the language skills of the class. For example, the "COVID Consejos" group included two students who designed the *consejos* in English, one student who translated the designs into Spanish, and another student who translated the designs into Haitian Creole. By reading information about the language needs

of the local community, students learned that Spanish and Haitian Creole are both widely spoken in the region, and thus they chose to create trilingual information materials. It's important to note here that our course discussions about technical communication specifically mentioned the importance of translation as a critical component of designing accessible technical content. Thus, in their final course reflections, 16 students mentioned translation as part of the contributions that the class made to their community through the community engagement project. For example, one student described how she used her language skills in her community engagement project, explaining, "This year, students in our class teamed up with the Rural Women's Health Project to provide materials to help reduce the impacts of COVID-19. I worked with two other classmates to translate COVID-19 tips from English to Spanish and Creole. We had four different Conejos and each tip was paired with a comic and caption. For another portion of the project, I recorded COVID tips in Haitian Creole and they were broadcasted on a Haitian radio. This helped us provide accurate information about COVID that was also accessible to the community in our area and beyond."

In addition to the community collaboration project, students kept track of their evolving orientations to community engagement, which they reported in their "Community engagement Positionality Statement." In this statement, which they were to write in the form of a memo, students were to provide their own definitions of community engagement based on both the course readings and discussion as well as on their experience in their community collaboration project. For example, one student used her positionality statement to explain how the community collaboration project allowed her to apply the course readings in the design of accessible information for women with HIV living during the pandemic:

> "I've always felt drawn to reinventing the way we receive information. The times have changed and the way we process material has changed too. Alas, as I've ventured through traditional public schooling and university, I've found the methods of receiving material to be a little old fashioned. I want to bring a fresh new approach to the way information is given and received.
>
> So backing up... I've always felt this inherit need to bring in fresh new ideas to outdated learning materials, but I didn't know how to use this skill to others' benefit. While taking a community engagement course in college I read the most interesting textbook that pretty much saved my life. *Emergent*

> *Strategies* by adrienne maree brown was able to perfectly explain and advance my learning in how to look at life and how to look at change.
>
> This book strengthened me when working with the women of the Rural Women's Health Project. I wanted to bridge the gap between women living with HIV and a young adult audience that may be out of touch with stigmas, their rights and responsibilities as a patient, and the power of journaling. I wanted to share a more practical and direct approach to the issue that I knew would be more graspable to a wider audience."

As evidenced through this example, students like the one featured above were able to understand technical communication work beyond the scope of what is considered "in the field." Pairing texts written by community activist, such as adrienne maree brown, with more "traditional" work in the field provided students with multiple entry points to understand the importance of designing accessible, effective communication. In their community engagement positionality statements, students did not draw hard boundaries around what is considered relevant to technical communication work, instead moving fluidly across genres and areas of specialization to consider important takeaways for working with communities.

Limitations

While we present successful student examples of community engaged technical communication projects, it's important to recognize that no teaching semester can go completely smoothly, especially during the pandemic. As instructors teaching during these difficult times, we also faced challenges when working with community partners who also have very busy schedules. At times, it was difficult to coordinate how students could get feedback on their assignments. Furthermore, many students did not have the time or energy to revise their community materials the number of times it took to actually make these materials useful to the community. Thus, the examples we present here are limited in both number and generalizability, since they only reflect the approaches of two instructors and their students. Since there was no traditional coding of data, our examples are not generalizable, but instead illustrate how two Latina technical communication instructors navigated the challenges of the pandemic in their teaching. Through these experiences, we developed takeaways and implications that we believe can continue to inform how technical communication teachers teach community engagement, both during and beyond the current pandemic.

Embracing a Pedagogy of Love in Technical Communication Pedagogy

While there are many models and approaches for teaching community engagement in technical communication courses, the testimonio approach that we practiced in sharing our pedagogical stories as researcher/teachers for this project helped us frame important implications for other technical communication instructors. As Torrez (2015) explains, Universities often function through a meritocracy that maintains a student/teacher binary while also dehumanizing teachers by positioning us as members of the university without recognizing our humanity outside the institution. To this end, having a space for *pláticas* and *desahogo* helped us (re)connect every month with that vulnerable part of reflecting on our pedagogical practices and our own experiences as Latina educators in the midst of unprecedented circumstances. While these factors are always present in university contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still ongoing, highlights systems of oppression that continue to deeply impact the most marginalized members of society. It's important to recognize that the health crisis is happening alongside important racial uprisings across the world that denote ongoing anti-Black racism. Thus, while we as instructors experience the pandemic, our students and communities are also experiencing the impacts of this crisis on various levels inextricable from racial, gendered, cultural, and linguistic factors (among others). To practice community engagement in these contexts, for us as Latina feminists, means that we need to establish classroom spaces that push us and our students to acknowledge, process, and address our privileges, positionalities, and shifting conditions of our material realities.

From the brief student examples that we shared in this article, one can see that our students were able to recognize not only their own experiences within the pandemic, but also those of others. Students in both courses referenced learning about the struggles of marginalized communities who are experiencing additional needs during the pandemic, including access to food, housing, and to information in their heritage languages. As we think about how to continue practicing community engagement in technical communication courses, throughout and after the pandemic, we come back to Torrez's (2015) discussion of a "pedagogy of love," which she describes as teaching "in a way that claims the classroom, however obliquely defined, as a learning space founded in revolutionary love" (p. 103). Revolutionary love, in this sense, means building community with students beyond the instructor/student binary, and, drawing on the teachings of Chicana

feminists, "merg[ing] our knowledge from the home with the community" (Torrez, 2015, p. 102). This pedagogy of love resists the bifurcation between "school" and "community" that universities try to consistently uphold, showing students that engaging with the community is everyone's responsibility. This includes, for example, recognizing the community's needs as inextricable, rather than segmented from, the work of technical communicators. It also means that students were encouraged to bring in their home knowledges, including their heritage languages (e.g., Spanish and Haitian Creole), into the classroom, and consequently into the community. A pedagogy of love helped students see how skills typically deemed "non-academic" or "non-technical" could actually be of great value to their community projects. Thus, as instructors continue developing methods, approaches, and pedagogies for teaching community engagement in technical communication, we recommend engaging with the work of Chicana feminist mentors who consistently demonstrate how a pedagogy of love humanizes students, teachers, and our surrounding communities.

As part of embracing a pedagogy of love, we recommend that technical communication instructors encourage ethical collaborations among students in various groups and between students and their community partners. Community engagement projects should not just be transactional activities in which students create something for an organization. Instead, students should learn about the history and mission of the organization(s) they are working with, and should be guided to make valuable relationships and sustainable partnerships that extend beyond a single project or semester. In the case of the projects that we outline in this article, it was important for students in Nora's course to collaborate with organizations whose mission aligned with students' backgrounds and interests, so that the collaboration was grounded in reciprocity and respect fueled by genuine interest. For students in Laura's class, the community partnership took place in collaboration with an organization that Laura has worked with for several months, where students were welcomed to be in relation with a longstanding collaboration and friendship between their instructor and the organization's leadership. In this way, the partnering organization invested in mentoring students because there was an established trust with the instructor and an understanding that the commitment of this partnership would be long-lasting.

Conclusion

Despite ongoing research to streamline or solidify approaches to community engagement in technical communication, the truth is

that there is no perfect formula for fostering collaborations between technical communication students and community partners. In fact, static formulas and guidelines for community engagement often ignore or reduce the complexity of community work, particularly during a health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, what we provide in this article is not a set protocol for teaching community engagement in technical communication. Rather, our goal was to highlight how our collaborative reflective praxis, specifically grounded in testimonio methodologies and Chicana/Latina feminisms, helped us and our students navigate unprecedented times, while also allowing all of us an opportunity to engage with the crisis head on by contributing to the work our community members are already doing. Rather than trying to neutralize classroom spaces by ignoring what is happening in the world, community engagement projects provide students and instructors alike with the opportunity to share stories and experiences of struggle while collaboratively developing moments of joy, reflection, and hope. Certainly, our students' contributions were generally minimal in comparison to the work that our partnering organizations continue doing for various communities. However, the incorporation and centralization of community engagement in our technical communication projects allowed us the chance to discuss how the pandemic is impacting various communities in different ways, and how our skills as technical communicators can continue contributing to the important rhetorical, cultural, linguistic, and activist work happening around universities that too often ignore their surroundings. Thus, as we share these teaching experiences, we also encourage other technical communication instructors to look to the work of activists of color, including Chicana and Latina feminists, when seeking important models for engagement in times of crisis, joy, and liberation.

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COMMENTARY

Program Administration that Works During a Pandemic: Ecopreneurial Strategies and Lean Technical Communication Tenets

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Abstract. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on universities and colleges requires technical and professional communication program administrators and faculty to reconsider their approach to program administration. Faced with unpredictable enrollments and changing work conditions, program sustainability has become a major concern. This article compares ecopreneurial administrative strategies with lean technical communication administrative tenets and analyzes their usefulness when dealing with austere conditions. This analysis shows that while each administrative model can be used separately or together to make sound decisions, ecopreneurial strategies work best with indifferent audiences, while lean technical communication tenets are most likely to be successful with invested audiences. Most importantly, each model approaches administrative problems with optimism that can be valuable in these times of uncertainty and change.

Keywords: Ecopreneurial Strategies, Lean Technical Communication Tenets, Program Administration, Program Sustainability, Times of Crisis

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As administrators of an undergraduate Professional Writing and Communication (PWC) major at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), a small, public, rural, liberal arts, 4-year residential and commuter campus, we have always been particularly sensitive to the austere and sometimes politically uncertain context in which we work. The current pandemic has only made us more sensitive to that context as we watch our usually robust service courses struggle to meet minimum enrollment caps and our colleagues in philosophy and humanities lose positions and programs.

Even so, like Kathleen M. Coffey, Angela Glotfelter, and Michele Simmons (2020) we want to be "responsive" rather than "reactive" to such pressures lest we risk "opening our curricula" to "corporatization" (p. 139). In the past, we have found acting as an "ecopreneur" (EP) who is committed "to making a living while supporting the health of others through selective use of economic and sustainable practices" (Ivanko, 2008) has helped us stay responsive (Bemer & Henning, 2015). In that work (Bemer & Henning, 2015), we argue that a sustainable writing program responsibly manages resources and conceives of the program, university, and local context as a dynamic set of relations that should be developed and nourished as a whole. A sustainable writing program contributes to the ecosystem's overall health rather than competing for resources—a competition that ultimately no one can win (Bemer & Henning, 2015). We have become especially adept at using context-sensitive, EP strategies that include: bartering, rescuing, reusing, exchanging, recycling, sharing, and repurposing (Ivanko, 2008). Using these strategies we have found like John Ivanko (2008) that the EP has the potential to connect with others allowing for creativity, diversity, and cooperation.

While we are still committed to being EPs, the current pandemic has encouraged us to contemplate other administrative trends such as lean practices in technical writing program administration. We are attracted to the work of Meredith A. Johnson, W. Michele Simmons, and Patricia Sullivan (2018) who re-define lean to offer a "vision for technical communication program work that gives the field permission to unleash its creative, forward-thinking, teaching-loving tendencies in ways that ethically and sustainably shepherd programs into the future" (p. 3). The lean model of technical communication (LTC) is a "mindset" (p. 51) that theorizes about essential practices needed to keep programs going (p. 17). As EPs, we share many LTC values. As such, we ask:

- What aspects of LTC are promising?
- What aspects are less promising?

To answer these questions, our article will: describe our administra-

tive context and how it relates to the pandemic and other economic pressures, compare EP and LTC models of program administration, determine the usefulness of each model, and offer takeaways about how each model can aid in program administration—pandemic or not.

Our Administrative Context and the Pandemic's Impact

We administer a PWC major at SMSU that is part of the state funded Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) system. SMSU, located in Lyon County, Minnesota, is the sixth smallest of the seven universities in the system, so we tend to feel budget cuts more keenly than the other, larger campuses in our system. Also, prior to the pandemic, we were already well versed in the constraints of working for a small school. Specifically, our campus is so full-time-equivalent-(FTE) students-driven that our major is deliberately comprised of courses that serve our own and other majors. Moreover, we literally have no physical presence for our major—no program office or display cases and no computer lab or technology dedicated to our needs. We have become both adept and creative at meeting our program's needs by employing the aforementioned EP strategies.

Given the constraints we already operate under, the pandemic, oddly enough, has not changed much for us. While the pandemic has heightened our upper-level administrators' interest in FTE, because our program already prioritizes that concern, we have barely felt the impact of that priority beyond adjusting the number of service course offerings per semester. Compared to the other six universities and 30 colleges in our state system, SMSU has fared well in student enrollment, showing a loss of only 1.8% for both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment from fall 2020 to spring 2021. Also, the percent of positive COVID tests in Lyon County has often been under the statewide percentage. For instance, in weeks 4 and 5 of 2021, the statewide percentage was running between 3.4 and 3.6% while Lyon County was at less than 2% (Minnesota Department of Health, 2021, 18 February). In these instances, our identity as a small, rural university has helped us rather than hurt us.

Since most of the classes, at least early in the pandemic, shifted to online offerings, university resources for online learning have increased. Our university's Center for Online Learning and Teaching (COLT) supports faculty with resources that were already in place before the pandemic, such as the Media Creation Lab and faculty experts (Southwest Minnesota State University, 2021, 27 January). The major difference pre-and post-pandemic is that administrative support for online teaching is much more apparent. When earlier we had to search

for our own resources, they are now emailed to us weekly.

Also, since much of the instruction and all of the faculty meetings during the early stages of the pandemic were moved online, the lack of physical presence for our program is now less of a drawback. Students expect to see our courses online, and our presence there remains strong. However, we worry that the difficulty students have navigating to our program home page (or even remembering our program's name) may hinder the important act of "discovery" by sophomores and juniors that sustains our major. In this sense, the identity problem of technical communication (Allen, 1990; Carliner, 2012; Dobrin, 1983; Ecker, 1995; Hart & Conklin, 2006; Henning & Bemer, 2016; Jones, 1995; Rutter, 1991; Slack, 2003; Slack, Miller, & Doak, 1993) continues to pervade the campus environment, be it physical or virtual.

Perhaps the largest negative impact from the pandemic is how we interact with our administrators, colleagues, and students. Despite living in the same small town as our university, we are now all distance workers. Though we know that it is possible to have meaningful interactions in online environments, we miss the impromptu meetings our face-to-face presence on campus enabled, something Shahidha Bari (2021) refers to as the work that happens in "spontaneous encounters." There are no more chance meetings in the hallway that enable us to solve problems on the fly when we run into colleagues on the elevator or at the coffee shop. Due to our campus' small footprint, it was not odd to encounter faculty from any of the disciplines at our university on any given day. Without these spontaneous encounters, we have to more deliberately plan our meeting times. There is no more hanging out after a meeting to discuss an issue we forgot or a revelation we had. Once Zoom is closed, the encounter is over.

Overall, though, our experience working as EPs in an austere environment (Bemer & Henning, 2015) coupled with the limited impact the pandemic has had on us so far is allowing us to continue to thrive. However, the pandemic has also made us more cognizant of the tenuous nature of surviving and thriving at a small institution.

Relating Our Local Context to Larger Economic Pressures

So far we have discussed our program's local pressures related to economic austerity and the pandemic. Since local pressures can be unique to local contexts, it is important to consider how our local experience connects to larger pressures related to technical communication and the economics of higher education. In *The New Normal*, Denise Tillery and Ed Nagelhout (2015) discuss how "the economics of higher eduction too often become the driving force behind policy initiatives" and

"too often place the burden of fiscal responsibility on the most vulnerable" noting that "smaller institutions, small programs withing institutions, and less protected populations including both students and adjuncts and part-time instructors are all at risk during times of austerity" (p.3). Emphasizing this point, Barry Maid (2015) states technical communication programs are not safe from cuts just because "what we teach is easily seen as connecting students to careers" (p. 17).

Tillery and Nagelhout (2015) describe a range of economic pressues that are still applicable to most technical communication programs (including our own). These pressures from Tillery and Nagelhout (2015) are particularly relevant to the economic impacts of the pandemic:

- "pressures to increase students in degree programs" (p. 7)
- "pushes to move courses into cheaper, online environments" (p. 7)
- "increasing class sizes" (p. 7)
- "emphasis on quantifiable assessment data to measure student success" (p. 7)
- "funding formulas" where "student credit hours are a zero sum game, leading to less collaboration and a tendency to decentralize writing instruction" (p.7)
- leaving "empty faculty positions unfilled and relying on part-time and adjunct faculty" (p. 7)
- "increasing tenure standards" that "privilege scholarly monographs" (p.7)

These pressures combined with our local context are formidable and can easily lead any overworked writing program administrator to make reactive rather than responsive decisions. As such, it is important to consider how EP strategies and LTC tenets help us stay responsive.

Comparing EP and LTC Models of Program Administration

The rest of this article considers the merits and uses of EP strategies and LTC tenets of program administration. To compare the ways that EP and LTC relate to program administration and development, this section will more completely define these terms, detail the strategies and tenets associated with each, and discuss the ways each model allows for action.

The EP model focuses on sustainability theorizing that a program is part of an open system that imagines "our universities, departments, programs, students and faculty as part of an academic ecosystem" (Ashe & Reilly, 2010, p. 92). EPs find a way to support themselves by being "creative," "flexible," freedom minded," and "risk tolerant" enough to "not only transform the landscape but coalesce into a movement to

transform global problems into opportunities for restoration and healing" (Ivanko, 2008).

Like EP, LTC is also a "mindset" (Johnson, Simmons, & Sullivan, 2018, p. 51) that theorizes about essential practices needed to keep programs going (p. 17). To help administrators think lean, LTC offers "heuristics" that help administrators answer these key questions: How do we build and maintain a lean program and how do we know we are lean?" (Johnson, Simmons, & Sullivan,2018, p. 49). In answering these questions, administrators use both empirical and theoretical methods.

Both EP strategies and LTC tenets focus on sustaining a program meaning that they allow administrators to be responsive rather than reactive to a range of pressures including the austere ones that come with a pandemic. A good way to more concretely understand the ways LTC and EP connect and differ is to consider the strategies and tenets each model offers to the administrator. EP is agent-focused, specifying actions that an EP can take to make a living. The EP makes use of seven sustainability strategies—combined or singly—to address the risky nature of making a living. Specifically, an EP does:

1. Barter by trading goods
2. Collaborate by working with others
3. Exchange by trading services
4. Recycle by reprocessing a durable good or service for use
5. Re-purpose by giving an existing durable good or service a new aim
6. Re-use by using again a good, service, or physical space
7. Share by using something with others often contributing to its purchase and maintenance

In our experience, EP strategies work especially well with indifferent audiences. An indifferent audience is one who does not share philosophical values with the program administrator; in short, the indifferent audience does not believe that we have an integral program for our campus. EP strategies are effective with this type of audience because in lieu of asking this audience to support our needs because they agree with our goals, we can use ecopreneurial strategies to make supporting our needs beneficial to them and/or less hurtful to what they value.

For instance, bartering is effective with an indifferent audience because when bartering, the audience gets something in return for what they offer us—they then see the value in what they receive. In our previous work (Bemer & Henning, 2015, p. 43), we outline how Henning bartered with a graphic arts professor to obtain use of their dedicated computer lab in exchange for her assisting in the writing

of a new interdisciplinary minor using some of our writing courses. Somewhat differently, recycling, reusing, and repurposing are effective strategies for indifferent audiences because there is no visible drain on outside resources for the indifferent audience to care about. In each of these EP strategies, the indifferent audience either benefits or sees no harmful effect towards what they value.

LTC, on the other hand, is a theoretical and empirical model of program administration with seven tenets to drive inquiry. Like EP strategies, an administrator might use any LTC tenet or tenets in combination or singly. According to Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan, (2018, p. 15), LTC:

1. "Starts with value"
2. "Innovates and disrupts"
3. "Roots itself "in the unique needs of those served"
4. "Regulates costs"
5. "Engages in sustainability"
6. "Promotes efficiency"
7. "Enhances the visibility of programs"

In our experience, LTC tenets work particularly well with invested college administrator audiences. An invested audience is one who agrees that the writing program is integral to our students and university and sees the value of its learning outcomes, regardless of financial impact. Most of these tenets work best with an invested audience over an indifferent audience because they all relate to value in some way. For instance, as Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan (2018) note, enhancing visibility, LTC's seventh tenet, circles back to the first tenet of value. Enhancing visibility involves making the public aware of technical communication by emphasizing its relevance to society. This tenet works with an invested audience because that audience, again, values the program's relevance. If tenet one of "value not deficit" is not shared with the audience, the other tenets are not effective methods of program administration in an economically austere situation.

Additionally, invested audiences who value the goals of the program can easily see why doing practices in a new way is beneficial to the writing program, and they are less concerned with how this innovation or disruption (tenet two) affects other areas of the university. Innovation and disruption are actions that are most effective with an invested audience because as Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan (2018) explain, these actions are risky (pp. 20-21).

Focusing on the unique needs of those served (tenet three) is effective with an invested audience because the invested audience is supports this unique audience from the start due to their shared value

proposition. Regulating cost and promoting efficiency (tenets four and six) are mainly effective with the invested audience because this audience does not necessarily care about the ways this regulated cost or efficiency may hurt other parts of the university—for instance, limiting professor time spent doing a particular action may help the program, but it could hurt another program by leaving curriculum revision unfinished or making it take a long time.

Finally, tenet five, "engages sustainability as an impetus for innovation" (p. 15), is about being "attentive to the ecology of administrative decisions" (p. 27), which means considering how programmatic decisions affect other programs and administering a program in a way that supports others. This nod to ecology is similar to EP's stance on creating a thriving ecosystem and might be a way to create shared value instead of using a value proposition that must already exist. However, Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan (2018) complicate this tenet further by stating that they "see sustainable program development as rooted in social responsibility" (p. 27) and in their examples discuss supporting "vulnerable communities" (p. 93). In order for tenet five to work, an administrator audience must agree that social responsibility is a goal for the writing program. An indifferent audience who sees no direct benefit in sustainability or programmatic social responsibility will not be moved by this tenet. Hence, LTC tenets are more effective with an invested audience while EP works well with indifferent audiences because EP does not ask the audience to believe in or value the writing program.

Two Examples Using EP and LTC Models of Program Administration

To further clarify just how an administrator might use EP strategies or LTC tenets, we will now discuss how each of these administrative models allows for action. The first example considers how we collaborated with another major—Exercise Science (EXSC)— to increase PWC FTE. Our second example considers how we meet student needs for stability while completing college during a pandemic. We selected these examples because they describe activities typical to the maintance and sustainability of a writing program and as such we hope other administrators will find these examples relevant.

We used both EP strategies and LTC tenets to build enrollment for one of the classes in the PWC major by collaborating with SMSU's popular and growing EXSC major thus contributing to the PWC major's maintenance and sustainability. Part of the EXSC major's growth is re-

lated to its structure that allows students at nearby community colleges to start the first two years of the degree at the community college and finish the last two years online through SMSU. This programmatic structure is referred to as a 2+2 program, and its attraction for students is that such a program does not require students to re-locate to the SMSU campus to finish their degree thus allowing those with jobs and families a less disruptive path to a degree.

In the developmental stages of the 2+2 program, EXSC faculty expressed to the English department chair the need for an online writing course. The PWC faculty saw an opportunity to transform an existing class—English 360: Scientific and Technical Writing—for an online format that could serve both PWC and EXSC students. Table One articulates how we used both EP strategies and LTC tenets to make the most of this opportunity in a sustainable and lean manner.

Table 1. Using LTC Tenets and EP Strategies for Program Growth

Ecosystem (context)	PWC needs more students. EXSC needs an online writing class.
Inquiry	How can the needs of both majors be met in a mutually beneficial manner?
LTC Tenets	Visibility: Make EXSC faculty aware of ENG 360 Value: Propose ENG 360 be taken by EXSC students
LTC Praxis	ENG 360 is required for EXSC.
EP Strategies	Share: ENG 360 class space with EXSC Re-purpose: ENG 360 to serve an online audience
EP Praxis	ENG 360 offered online every semester.
Reflection	More students take a PWC class. EXSC gains a valuable online class. Flexibility of online class attracts students from other majors and schools.

As can be seen from Table One, combining EP strategies with LTC tenets allowed us to meet the PWC need for more students as well as the EXSC need for an online writing class. Moreover, this example demonstrates how we interpreted LTC tenets and EP strategies to take action. This example demonstrates that both LTC and EP are socially responsible, sustainable, and invite innovation. In addition, EP's focus on ecosystems (context) and LTC's focus on inquiry means these approaches are highly rhetorical allowing administrators to take advantage of kairotic opportunities as they arise. In this particular instance,

LTC's emphasis on visibility and value reminded us to make this PWC writing course visible and articulate its values to others outside our program, while EP's focus on "supporting the health of others," encouraged us to develop a solution that would be mutually beneficial.

In our second example, we use LTC tenets and EP strategies to better balance our time with our students' needs for real-time interaction during the pandemic. At the start of the pandemic, both students in our classes and student advisees in our major expressed a lot of panic, stress, and anxiety. Our students' reactions were pretty typical as Matthew Browning and colleagues (2021) note while all populations especially "socially-disadvantaged communities and individuals" have been psychologically impacted by the pandemic, college students "are among the most strongly affected by COVID-19 because of uncertainty regarding academic success, future careers, and social life during college" (p. 2). Their survey (Browning, et al., 2021) of 2,534 college students from seven U.S. universities found that 45% of students surveyed reported "high levels of psychological impact" while an additional 40% of students surveyed described "moderate levels of psychological impact" (p. 11).

In response to the psychological impacts related to the pandemic, our students and advisees wanted more attention and reassurance from us often insisting on meetings at any time of day or night. Moving all interactions to a virtual format via Zoom seemed to change both students' expectations and sense of boundaries. Since we were all working from home, students expected us to be available all the time. They also expected us to provide assistance with their lives in general and not just our specific class or our specific major. While we were thrilled that our students felt comfortable reaching out to us, our own sense of stability along with personal and professional boundaries were also in a state of collapse. We needed to find ways to care for our students and ourselves in a manner that would allow us to re-establish stability and provide more reasonable expectations and boundaries.

To re-establish stability, expectations, and boundaries, we used virtual strategies similar in kind to the strategies we used before the pandemic to meet with students. For students in our classes, we offered regular office hours several times a week via our individual personal meeting rooms in Zoom. Similar to physical office hours, office hours in a Zoom personal meeting room occur in the same place at the same link every time. Students simply need to access the link on the syllabus just as students might look up a physical office location on the syllabus. Of course, many students forget that the link (like the physical office location) is listed on the syllabus, so typically, we emailed this

information to them when they made a request for help.

Before the pandemic, we used sign-up sheets for advisees and for required student conferences since these meetings needed to happen at a specific point in the semester. During the pandemic, we used a virtual sign-up sheet that we shared via our campus's Microsoft Office OneDrive. Students signed-up for a time and then attended their meeting in our Zoom personal meeting room. As was true before the pandemic, we did need to repeatedly remind some students to sign up and provide information about the location of the meeting several times to those same students.

Table 2. Using LTC Tenets and EP Strategies to Respond to Faculty and Student Needs

Ecosystem (context)	Face-to-face interactions with students are unsafe. Students need virtual, real-time interaction. PWC faculty need a livable work/life balance.
Inquiry	How can the needs of both students and faculty be met?
LTC Tenets	Value: Faculty time is important Unique needs of those served: Writers need support and feedback
LTC Praxis	Use the personal meeting room in Zoom to hold weekly office hours that are published allowing students and other faculty members to "drop in" at will.
EP Strategies	Share: Time during work hours with students Re-purpose: The hard copy office door appointment sign-up sheet for a virtual environment
EP Praxis	Use the OneDrive to create an editable Word document allowing students to sign up for a virtual conference time.
Reflection	Both acts of praxis provide students with virtual access to faculty in a manner that allows faculty to maintain control over their time. Both acts of praxis require some compromise on the parts of both students and faculty.

As can be seen from Table Two, we used both LTC tenets and EP strategies for meeting our students' needs. Students who wanted to meet with us about our classes were an invested audience as they

sought us out via their own initiative. These students have typically learned the value of feedback while writing and did not need to be reminded to sign up for help. Having the ability to drop in during virtual office hours allowed these students to meet with us as needed without pre-arranging a meeting. As Table Two illustrates, the LTC tenets of value and meeting the unique needs of those served support the Zoom office hour strategy.

As Table Two also illustrates, EP strategies of sharing and repurposing lead to virtual sign-up sheet for student conferences and for advising. While not all students are indifferent to conferences and advising and would likely arrange such meetings on their own, the students who most need these interactions are often reluctant to initiate such meetings. The use of the sign-up sheet coupled with email reminders worked to make sure that those who most needed us received our help in a timely fashion.

Analyzing EP and LTC Models of Program Administration

Now that we have considered how we used LTC tenets and EP strategies in response to an opportunity for program growth and our students' needs for support, we will turn our attention to more completely answering the questions offered at the start of the article:

- What aspects of LTC are promising?
- What aspects are less promising?

LTC has several promising characteristics that we find valuable and will likely continue to draw from for our administrative work both during this pandemic and after. Specifically, LTC is optimistic, value-centered, rhetorical, and program-focused. While we find these aspects of LTC promising, we also have some difficulties with LTC that mean we will likely not completely abandon our EP strategies. In particular, we have some concerns about its value-centered approach and are not sure if the LTC tenet of disruption will be a tenet we apply to our program. It is important to note, however, that just because we have these concerns about LTC that does not mean LTC is necessarily problematic or lacking in some way. Rather, these concerns speak to the way we see administrative strategies working on our campus. To demonstrate how LTC has these strengths and possible weaknesses, we will discuss how the examples described in the previous section meet each one of LTC's seven tenets and how those tenets interact with the EP administrative model we typically use.

LTC tenet one is to start with value instead of deficit. In our first example, we recognize that English 360: Scientific and Technical Writing is valuable for both PWC majors and non-majors. The course's

focus on technical communication along with its use of a key science genre—the Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (IMRaD) format—provides students with experiences and skills that no other undergraduate writing course on our campus offers. Moreover, most EXSC undergraduates at SMSU plan to also attend graduate school in order pursue their career of interest as a physical therapist, athletic trainer, or occupational therapist making the addition of what some may perceive as an extra writing course a valuable asset in meeting that long-term goal. In our second example, the LTC tenet of starting with value reminds us that both faculty and student needs have value and that we are better able to meet the needs of our students and advisees if we also make sure our own needs are met.

Starting with value is inherently optimistic and fits well with our EP mindset. However, we would note that in each of our examples we had values that our audiences did not originally share with us. In the first instance, we had to educate others about the value the ENG 360 course has for EXSC majors. In the second instance, we had to re-establish stablilty, expectations, and boundaries with our students so that our time and professional boundaries could be preserved. Our concern here is that starting with value seems to work best when that value is shared.

LTC tenet two is that lean work can innovate and disrupt. This tenet was not one that we considered in either example. The concept of disruption is not one we typically value as surviving on a small campus depends heavily upon creating alliances and demonstrating how the work we do supports both the university's and state system's missions. EP's emphasis on connecting and supporting others—including the ecosystem itself—fits well with that ability to survive. We are willing to innovate, but we tend to frame that innovation in a way that fits into our environment. That being stated, some could argue that the fact that in example one our suggestion that writing is of value for a student population and major that typically values physical activity, sport, and exercise-based therapies is disruptive, but that disruption is not one we have sought to create nor is disruption something that EP strategies value. In example two, we also did not seek disruption since we were actively trying to re-establish stability for students whose lives were already experiencing too much disruption as they attempted to continue their studies during a pandemic.

Tenet three from the LTC model states that administrative work should be rooted "in the unique needs of those served" (Johnson, Simmons, & Sullivan, 2018, p. 15). This tenet is one we intentionally set out to meet in both of our examples, and it fits well with EP's commitment

to the health of others in the ecosystem. Specifically, our willingness to share and re-purpose the ENG 360 class to make it amenable to the unique needs of EXSC majors demonstrates our commitment to this LTC tenet. Similarly, our use of sharing and re-purposing to re-create stable ways for students to interact with us during the pandemic was driven by our desire to meet their needs. This tenet also strikes us as rhetorical in the sense that those we serve are our program's or class's audience. These audiences' needs may change throughout the pandemic, and this tenet reminds us to remain responsive.

In our minds, LTC tenets four, five, and six: "Regulates costs," "Engages in sustainability," and "Promotes efficiency" (Johnson, Simmons, & Sullivan, 2018, p. 15), are all related and align the most closely to the EP strategies we already use. As such, even though we may not have articulated these tenets in either example, our use of EP strategies along with our context helped us meet these tenets. In particular, moving ENG 360 online to accommodate the unique needs of 2+2 students who may not ever be physically present on our campus had a lot to do with our ability to regulate cost, engage in sustainability, and promote efficiency. Specifically, the online course made adopting an online, open, free text an easy change to make. In addition, moving this class online made it available to all Minnesota State system students meaning a larger gain in FTE than anticipated further reducing the cost of this change. Moreover, teaching online makes curricular work more sustainable and efficient because we can collaborate to both create one course shell and engage in revisions in response to assessment data and student needs in an efficient and timely manner. This efficient use of our time is particularly noticeable since March 2020—despite our fewer meetings, we have been able to discuss most new issues that needed attention while still revising online courses.

Similarly, example two demonstrates a commitment to LTC tenets four, five and six. While we did not directly mention these tenets in our example, the strategies used in the example do regulate costs, engage in sustainability, and promote efficiency. The use of Zoom and Microsoft OneDrive both capitalize on existing technology that students and faculty can access at no cost to them. Also, using this technology allowed us to stabilize expectations and boundaries, which in turn is efficient as it takes the guess work out of arranging meetings between faculty and students. Moreover, both of these strategies are sustainable requiring no more additional time than we would normally spend meeting with students. When we go back to holding regular office hours in a physical location, we can continue to use the Zoom option for students not on campus without adding to our work load.

LTC tenet seven—"enhancing the visibility of programs" —is a tenet that we used explicitly in the first example and indirectly in the second example. In example one, we needed to make the ENG 360 course and its learning outcomes visible to other faculty in another program so that they could see its value. In the second example, we used email to make virtual options for meeting with us visible to our students and advisees. This tenet is not something that is part of our EP administrative strategy. Additionally, for Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan, (2018), visibility involves more than our examples entail. The visibility Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan, (2018) discuss also asks administrators to consider how a change can be made visible to students and advisors and leveraged to promote the major through various channels of publicity such as social media, the university web site, and the university newspaper. In our instance, we did not take advantage of any of these outlets for publicity even though we have used these channels in the past to promote the PWC major and the online certificate. This tenet speaks specifically to our program's struggle with visibility on our campus, which the pandemic has perhaps further exacerbated by shifting our students' and prospective students' foci almost exclusively online, where our program is difficult to locate; we are housed in a multi-major department and our program's title is not in the name of the department. For those of us working in an FTE conscious environment, this tenet of visibility is one that is significant. It is certainly one we will add to the EP strategies we already use.

Takeaways from Our Analysis of LTC

Our analysis of LTC and its connection to EP suggests to us three takeaways for administrators to consider. Specifically:

1. LTC tenets and EP strategies can be used together or individually to make sound programmatic decisions.
2. LTC tenets work especially well with audiences who already see value in a writing program while EP strategies work well to transform indifferent audiences into stakeholders.
3. Both LTC tenets and EP strategies approach administrative problems with optimism making both invaluable in times of change and uncertainty.

Takeaway one that LTC tenets and EP strategies can be combined or used separately is demonstrated by our examples. In example one, we used two LTC tenets along with two EP strategies to successfully add to the FTE of a PWC course and serve the unique needs of an online student population. In example two, we used two LTC tenets along with two EP strategies to meet our students' needs for interaction

during the pandemic while respecting our own needs to re-establish reasonable expectations and boundaries. What we did not discuss, however, is the fact that these strategies and tenets can also be used separately with good effect.

In our past work (Bemer & Henning, 2015), we have discussed how EP collaborations with science faculty yielded resources from which PWC students benefit such as the campus's Natural History Museum, the science department's GIS printer, and the campus's Undergraduate Research Conference. EP strategies worked well in our small school context where these collaborations with faculty from other departments began as impromptu hallway conversations. We suspect that at a larger campus where these faculty would likely be in other buildings and not in hallways we regularly frequent that these collaborations would not have taken place as easily.

Johnson, Simmons, and Sullivan (2018) make a convincing case for relying solely on LTC tenets. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of their text offer a thorough discussion and analysis of three different cases in which LTC tenets were used to address issues such as classifications, standards and funding models, program facilities and computer infrastructure, and community-based projects. In each of these instances, the authors demonstrate through discussion and analysis that using LTC tenets for these administrative decisions allowed for sustainable innovations. It is also important to note that all these administrative decisions took place at universities much larger than our own and as such may have involved more complex rhetorical situations. While the size of the institution does not limit the use of EP strategies or LTC tenets, it is recommended that before using EP strategies and LTC tenets separately or together administrators take into consideration their unique administrative goals, needs, and rhetorical context.

Takeaway two is that EP strategies work best for with an indifferent audience and that LTC tenets work best with an invested audience. An indifferent audience, as stated previously, are people who do not believe our program is of benefit or value to the university. This indifference may be due to prioritizing other concerns over the program, including but not limited to financial concerns. In contrast, an invested audience shares a primary value with the program administrator—in our case, acknowledging that students gain strong writing skills by taking our classes making our program integral to the university. This is not to say that indifferent audiences do not care about students' writing skills, but that it is far down on their list of values, and we would need an exceptionally strong argument to allow them to value writing skills above their other values.

Given the devaluing of the humanities in popular culture, we can easily imagine a situation where we need to work with an audience who does not value what we do. Moving such an audience with only persuasion is difficult. In the past, we have had some success transforming the viewpoints of such audiences by sharing FTE with them. For instance, at the inception of the PWC major in 2007, Lori Baker and Teresa Henning (2010) discuss how the program's interdisciplinary structure that includes sharing six credits of FTE with Communications (COM) and six with Art is driven not only by their theoretical commitment to developing a major using their operational definition of rhetoric but also by the practical concern of "doing more with less" (p. 169) and building alliances with others to get a new program started at SMSU where all faculty vote on program approval. The alliance with COM was an important one in gaining faculty support for the use of the word communication in the PWC major's title. The sharing of FTE with COM helps maintain that alliance and care for them as stakeholders. Using both EP strategies and LTC tenets gives us more options for building alliances.

Takeaway three is that EP strategies and LTC tenets are both optimistic. This optimism, we believe, is self-evident in our examples and discussion of LTC tenets, but the need for optimism may not be as evident. It is important to recognize, as Coffey, Glotfelter, and Simmons (2020) note, optimism allows one to be "responsive" rather than "reactive" (p. 139) to challenging situations. Both EP strategies and LTC tenets are optimistic because they allow program administrators to discover the possibilities for innovation, growth, and survival in the face of challenges while allowing administrators to respect the unique needs of their stakeholders.

Conclusion

At the start of this article, we discussed how our already austere campus context, our use of EP strategies, and our low COVID-19 case count has allowed our program to survive and thrive. However, our satisfaction with that outcome is tempered by our sadness that others have not been as fortunate. We also recognize that our continuing survival as a program will always be tenuous and that to continue thriving we want to be in the position to respond rather than simply react to change. As we have attempted to demonstrate through our discussion of seven EP strategies and seven LTC tenets, both of these administrative models allow administrators to be responsive while working in a range of conditions including those related to austerity or to a pandemic.

Moreover, we see value in all the EP strategies and most of the LTC tenets. The EP strategies strike us as especially useful in collaborating with others in such a way that those we collaborate with become important stakeholders in our program. For our program, LTC tenets seem especially appropriate for use with those who already share some of our values. We also appreciate the fact that LTC tenets call attention to the need to enhance the visibility of our program. We suspect this is a need others have as well.

Overall, both EP strategies and LTC tenets are useful for program administrators. With rhetorical context in mind, each model lends itself to the successful resolution of administrative dilemmas and can foster program sustainability. The flexibility of each lends itself well to the uncertain nature of program administration during a pandemic or other unprecedented circumstances. As we noted earlier, a major impact of the pandemic was in our becoming distance faculty who have not seen each other in person for months. Through the use of EP strategies and LTC tenets, we have managed to sustain the major without overly taxing ourselves. Processes we put in place pre-pandemic are now benefiting us. The EXSC majors taking our ENG 360 class are still keeping up our FTE, and we now have more ways of meeting in real-time with all our students – not just the ones physically present on our campus.

Most importantly, the optimism that surrounds both EP strategies and LTC tenets keep the PWC faculty responsive in times of change making us better prepared to face the unknown challenges yet to come. We feel confident in that optimism as this current pandemic has demonstrated to us the worth of both of these administrative models.

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C O M M E N T A R Y

Work/Life Balance as Key Driver for Program Development in Times of Crisis

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Abstract. This commentary asks program administrators to consider workload (or overwork) for all stakeholders in our programs, as well as options for ways that we can take care of each other and ourselves. To do this, we will offer three initial strategies for program development in times of crisis by addressing workload head-on, and the inevitable overwork that too often arises from uncertainty and austerity. The primary goal is to establish a work/life balance for all stakeholders in our programs:

1. Establish concrete benchmarks for workload
2. Target workload through faculty development
3. Reflect regularly on workload as part of short- and long-term assessment

The stressors that faculty, students, and administrators have faced during the pandemic are myriad. Although there is no solution to eliminate all of these burdens, we are working to adopt an "ethic of care," which means we focus on what's under our control programmatically. And we can push back against unnecessary and traumatizing budget conversations. People's emotions and material conditions matter a lot. Sometimes, doing more with less is as simple as actually asking for less.

Keywords: Workload, Ethic of Care, Faculty development, Assessment

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The pandemic and economic turmoil of 2020 has sadly brought renewed relevance to our 2015 work on administering programs in times of austerity (Tillery & Nagelhout). Within our program and throughout our university, we're hoping that the lessons we learned will help us navigate the current crisis and spare our colleagues as much grief as possible. To the best of our abilities, we are being guided in our decision-making by an ethic of care, paying attention to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals in our sphere.

Nearly ten years ago, we began editing a collection on the damage done by austerity to technical writing programs at all levels of higher education (Tillery & Nagelhout, 2015). Our goal was to present a variety of ways that program administrators around the country were dealing with the precarious nature of "the new normal." Our own contribution to this collection (written with Julie Staggers) attempted to broach the topic of workload/overwork for writing teachers by describing our own 10-hour-per-week commitment to our (mostly) part-time and graduate student instructors (Nagelhout, Tillery, & Staggers, 2015). This commentary revisits the perniciousness of overwork, as well as teacher burnout, in technical writing programs by arguing for an ethic of care as a primary guiding principle for confronting workload.

In our original work, we identified multiple sets of stressors on academic faculty, and on technical communication faculty, in particular. These included decreased public support for universities, an increased pressure to publish to meet ever-increasing tenure requirements, and heightened expectations to keep up with any and all changes in pedagogical platforms and other professional writing software. A general call for public universities to seek other sources of funding also means that more faculty are seeking public and private grants. Our university recently achieved the highest level of research-intensive Carnegie classification, and to maintain that distinction, UNLV is under pressure to maintain and increase both doctoral production and undergraduate student achievement. Compounding these pressures is an atmosphere of scarcity and intense stress. Unfortunately, UNLV is by no means unique; a recent Australian Broadcasting Company story on the use of metrics to evaluate researchers shows that this pressure is an international trend (Trakakis, 2020). Similarly, a 2020 interview with sociologist Jamie McCallum illustrates that high-income workers are working longer hours for a variety of reasons, including workplace precarity, and the long hours have only intensified since the pandemic (Day, 2020). Against this backdrop, it is no surprise that faculty burnout has surfaced as a theme (Flaherty, 2020).

Faculty burnout has long been a concern in technical communica-

tion, as the work of Rebecca Pope-Ruark (2017) describes. Often, this burnout manifests in gendered terms, as mid-career academics balance care-giving roles as parents, caretakers of aging relatives, and increased service demands, and women often shoulder more of the responsibilities of caretaking both inside and outside the workplace. When the pandemic hit, daycares and schools across the country were suddenly closed or moved to remote delivery. Simultaneously, faculty had to transition their own classes to remote formats. This sudden shock hit faculty parents, particularly women, hard, according to Colleen Flaherty's 2020 article in *Inside Higher Ed.* Flaherty quotes Kevin McClure, an assistant professor at University of North Carolina-Wilmington, saying, "'it's literally not possible for people to complete this amount of work in a 24-hour day,' especially for those professors caring for others stuck at home. 'And so we have to actively figure out how to cut things out that we would normally have to do.'" To do so, we need to have an honest reckoning of all the demands the pandemic and its associated stresses have placed on faculty.

As we are navigating through this pandemic and its aftermath, we consider these questions through a framework of an ethic of care. Emerging from feminist philosophy in the works of Carol Gilligan (1993) and Nel Noddings (2013), an ethic of care centers morality on the needs and experiences of others, and is fundamentally relational, as opposed to centering ethical decision-making on abstract concepts of fairness, justice, or equality. Using this framework, we consider people's experiences as a whole, including all dimensions of workload as well as other factors that contribute to burnout such as previous negative experiences and unequal power relations within and outside our program.

This commentary begins with our definition for an ethic of care and how that aligns with effective program development. We then describe three strategies for promoting a work-life balance in technical and scientific communication programs: 1) establishing concrete benchmarks for workload in the program, 2) targeting workload through faculty development, and 3) initiating reflection on workload as a key component for both short- and long-term program assessments. We conclude by describing how an ethic of care promotes a work-life balance and creates more effective programmatic practices.

An Ethic of Care

To the best of our abilities, we are being guided in our decision-making by an ethic of care, specifically paying attention to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals in our sphere. An ethic of care demands

that we center relationships and attend to vulnerabilities and unequal power structures. John Warner (2021), for example, argues for an ethic of care that rejects electronic surveillance of students as a wellness tool. Warner suggests that campus decision-makers center the well-being of students and protect student autonomy and freedom. For our upper administration, an ethic of care was reflected in their decision to respect student choices regarding in-person class attendance, and, likewise, protect instructor autonomy, privacy, and dignity, by not demanding that instructors provide "proof" of vulnerability before being assigned remote teaching. This was a positive first step, as too often individuals are required to provide positive proof in order to get access to accommodations, and such proof not only requires individuals to disclose health status, but it is also contingent on access to health care, transportation, and other services. This decision also moves away from concepts like objectivity and consistency as a guide to ethics, as individuals could base their need for remote work on criteria including whether they lived with vulnerable individuals, or whether they are caring for children at home, instead of an individualistic measure of health.

But as we consider decision-making at a more localized level, the complexity of the information we need to consider also grows. For example, every instructor does not have equal technology skills; for some, the transition to remote learning was straightforward but for others it was much more daunting. Faculty development must be personalized and tailored to adjust for these differences. Workload requirements are similarly elastic; in this context, it is inequitable to demand that all faculty and students be "checked in" during regular business hours. Our ethic of care strives to center both faculty and students as individuals who are experiencing professional stresses of managing technology and adjusting to constantly shifting conditions, as well as external stresses including increased anxiety, grief, and loss associated with the pandemic, and financial pressures from the associated economic crisis.

As described by Richard P. Keeling (2014), key themes of an ethic of care include "paying attention; noticing with empathy others and their circumstances; accepting responsibility to act on what is noticed, which recognizes human connectedness and interdependence," (p. 143), as well as responding effectively and accepting that responding does not require reciprocity. The strategies we describe below are our way of noticing with empathy and acting on what we noticed: they are a way of paying close attention to the work faculty are asked to do, and responding to what we notice in a way that recognizes interconnect-

edness and interdependence.

Three Strategies for Confronting Workload

In "Working conditions, austerity, and faculty development in technical writing programs" (Nagelhout, Tillery, & Staggers 2015), we emphasized our commitment to a 10-hour (per course) work week for instructors working in our program, whether teaching a course online, hybrid, or face-to-face. Our intent was to describe how program administrators can help faculty manage the workload of a writing teacher given the constraints of time. As Dawn Culpepper, et al. (2020) point out, faculty (and, we would argue, administrators) struggle to manage their time effectively and too often search for strategies for making effective decisions about their time-use. But work-time decisions are just one part of the equation for striking a work-life balance.

In this section, we offer three initial strategies for program development in times of crisis to address workload head-on, as well as the inevitable overwork that too often arises from uncertainty and austerity. Moreover, these strategies adhere to principles for an ethic of care we outlined above. The primary goal for each strategy is to help writing program administrators re-value work, invoke an ethic of care, change the program culture by working in new ways, and formalize a work/life balance beneficial for all stakeholders.

The three strategies we describe include establishing concrete benchmarks for workload in the program, targeting workload through faculty development, and initiating reflection on workload as a key component for both short- and long-term program assessments. Each of these strategies can work in concert to help create new long-term and sustainable practices around workload in a technical and scientific communication program, a deep-seated approach for determining what counts as work in the 21st century and how we can implement these new practices without simply replicating the old ones. Moreover, building on an ethic of care in times of austerity, these strategies can help program administrators make key decisions about necessary human and material resources to enhance faculty development, explore alternative forms of workshops and training, encourage regular contact among faculty to cultivate a community of practice, build resource databases and networks, establish policies for workload expectations, and use program assessment in more creative ways.[1]

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1 Although focused on mentoring in web-based programs, see Hundey, et. al, 2020, for a more comprehensive set of recommendations to enhance faculty development.

Establish concrete benchmarks for workload

Establishing concrete benchmarks for workload in teaching courses in a program is the first strategy that we recommend for all writing program administrators. As we have pointed out, administrators have rightly been feeling the stress of program planning and decision-making in a context of scarce resources and extreme uncertainty. Although there is no one solution to eliminate these burdens, a key starting point would be articulating what counts as work in the program. This not only helps to clarify what teachers and administrators can accomplish in a normal work week, but also makes transparent the expectations for effective teaching in the program. As KerryAnn O'Meara, et al., (2019) conclude:

> departments with routine work practices and conditions that support equity (e.g., transparent data on faculty work activities, planned rotations of time-intensive roles, credit systems, commitment to fair workload, clear benchmarks and expectations) will report better faculty outcomes (e.g., greater faculty perception of fairness, greater satisfaction with teaching and service workload, and less intent to leave) than those reporting no or fewer routine work practices that support equity. (pp. 751-752)

To begin, based on the context and environment of the program, administrators need to honestly assess how much a writing teacher in a program can legitimately get done in a normal work week. Traditionally, many institutions across the country follow a standard percentage distribution: 40/40/20 workload distribution for tenure-track faculty and 80/20 workload distribution for full-time teaching faculty. As writing program administrators, we are well aware that these allocations are ambiguous at best and don't necessarily adhere with the most recent workload statistics (Snyder et al., 2016; Branch-Mueller, 2018). This ambiguity often leads to work that does not get counted in these allocations, especially if we don't confront the ways that idealism in teaching and "best practices" continue to exacerbate overwork conditions. In this way, as O'Meara, et al. (2019) point out, "the unique structure and culture of higher education workplaces, and the ways in which faculty work is taken up, assigned, and rewarded, also contribute to workload dissatisfaction and/or unrealistic assessments of who is doing what" (p. 745). More importantly, most administrators of technical and scientific communication programs must also account for workload relative to contingent faculty and graduate student teachers.

Since a writing program administrator can only be responsible, for the most part, with the teaching part of this distribution, one starting

point for determining teaching workload is 10-hours-per-week (per course). This uses the 40-hour work week for contingent faculty as an initial benchmark for a full-time teaching load of 4 courses per semester. A 10-hours-per-week benchmark therefore represents a first step in quantifying a teaching faculty workload. In "Working conditions, austerity, and faculty development in technical writing programs" (Nagelhout, Tillery, & Staggers 2015), we categorized teacher work by time in class, time in office hours, time preparing for class, time responding to and evaluating student writing, and time in teacher development. This aligns with Haminah Ujir, et al.'s (2020) description of teaching workload in the 21st century. But these may not suffice for all programs, especially those that may include a collective component. These programs may ask their writing faculty to participate in developing or updating syllabi, selecting textbooks, setting up the course in a learning management system, standardizing assignments and rubrics, contributing materials to course archives, and so on.[2]

All of these basic categories, of course, can be equally ambiguous, so it is important to define the categories in terms of workload and/or time spent performing the activity. Even a simple articulation of workload expectations for teachers will help with stress, time management, and work-life balance. These benchmarks can be determined by the program administrator alone or they can be determined collaboratively between faculty (especially contingent faculty) and the program administrator (Cohen et al., 2009). For our purposes, defining workload for teachers in the program collaboratively establishes a transparent and reciprocal model, which, in turn, "increases [a] sense of accountability and trust between members and leaders, facilitates perceptions of procedural and distributive justice, and leads to greater organizational commitment" (O'Meara, et al., 2019, p. 747). Moreover, defining workload collaboratively with faculty can build in opportunities for adjusting expectations over time and meet "changing instructional environments and institutional expectations" (Griffith & Altinay, 2020, p. 692) in the future. In many respects, it doesn't matter how the teacher workload benchmarks are defined, as long as ambiguous expectations or informal practices are replaced with more clearly delineated and transparent policies.

Building on an ethic of care, we recommend three key drivers for establishing concrete benchmarks in a technical and scientific communication program:

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2 See Hamlin, 2021, for an interesting conception for a distributed teaching workload model for graduate nursing faculty.

1. The process for establishing benchmarks for workload must be transparent. This is an expression of the theme of paying attention and noticing with empathy others and their circumstances (Keeling, 2014). All aspects of workload should be included in the benchmarks; as much as possible, we adhere to the principle of making invisible work visible and accounted for.
2. The benchmarks for workload must be concrete and agreed upon by the collective. These conversations should explicitly recognize that by agreeing on the benchmarks, administrators accept responsibility for acting on any potentially excessive workload requirements.
3. The benchmarks for workload should be dynamic, able to adjust to changing institutional contexts. By approaching these benchmarks with flexibility and contingency, we are responding effectively to what we've noticed, as well as acknowledging "the principle of differential vulnerability" (Keeling, 2014, p. 142). Changing institutional contexts should always be in conversation with individual needs.

Since many of the teachers in technical and scientific communication programs are either graduate student teachers or contingent faculty, these recommendations give voice to some of the most vulnerable stakeholders; more importantly, as O'Meara, et al. (2019) argue, "departments that make data visible . . . and replace informal processes with readily available systematized policies are likely to have more satisfied faculty" (p. 747). This leads to a greater sense of community and commitment to the program. As we will discuss next, an open and transparent process can also serve to target areas for faculty development.

Target workload through faculty development

Faculty development is a second key strategy for targeting faculty workload and addressing inequities faced, especially, by teachers of writing. Faculty development activities, whether they are workshops or staff meetings, can offer regular and consistent opportunities to improve the work/life balance for the teachers in our programs. This can be done by ensuring that faculty development is a part of a teacher's normal workload and that every faculty development activity targets some aspect of workload. Only in this way can program administrators consistently help vulnerable faculty navigate workload difficulties in their daily life more effectively and more efficiently. As we will describe, while faculty development activities could offer specific workload or time-saving strategies, the more important goals for faculty develop-

ment in technical and scientific communication programs is creating a collaborative and caring environment and community that promotes continuous learning.

Faculty development design should grow out of the local context and conditions, in consultation with, especially, contingent faculty and graduate student teachers who are expected to participate in the activities (see Zemliansky & Berry, 2017). Some time-based topics that might be explored as part of a continuous faculty development program in a particular program include (adapted from Culpepper, et al., 2020, p. 168):

- examining teaching responsibilities and priorities
- developing more efficient teaching practices (i.e., responding to student writing, evaluating student writing, preparing for class, monitoring discussion boards, responding to email, and so on)
- creating program resources through informal writing groups (DeFeo, Kilic, Maseda, 2016)
- conducting informal norming sessions (Jones, 2020)
- improving knowledge of actual time-use by individual teachers
- identifying common time saboteurs
- building strategies for changing time-use behavior in the short- and long-term

While topics are important, the real key, to us, is faculty development design as a community for continuous learning in a particular program. O'Meara, et al. (2017) identify three characteristics of continuous learning for faculty: "First, it is content specific . . . Second, scholarly learning emerges from within the individual but is deeply affected by interactions within one's environment . . . Third, scholarly learning is personal, best understood from the individual perspective" (p. 357). As importantly, they identify the value of a collaborative and caring environment and community for building a "strong intellectual colleagueship wherein one can learn new skills, try out new ideas or strategies, and obtain feedback" (p. 358), and they conclude that "faculty members' perception that they were continuing to learn as scholars and teachers and perceived support for their learning to be predictive of satisfaction, retention, productivity and career agency" (p. 371). For these reasons, we argue that faculty development activities can nurture the kind of environment that builds on an ethic of care to establish a strong learning community.

Again, as O'Meara, et al. (2017) state, "the research suggests that connections with colleagues build social capital and enhance creativity . . . , both of which are important to scholarly learning" (p. 358). More

importantly, a study by Alexandra Coso Strong, et al. (2019) suggests strongly that instructional faculty, including contingent faculty and graduate student teachers, have "a preference for models designed around community building" (np.). And research by Felder, Brent, and Prince (2011) states that faculty development models should encourage community building, or should present community building as a primary goal.

Finally, effective faculty development must be a part of a teacher's normal workload, an argument that we have made previously. Benchmarks for workload should include faculty development as an integral part of the equation. In other words, contingent faculty and graduate student teachers should clearly understand the workload expectations as writing teachers in the program and likewise understand the ways that faculty development fits into those expectations. This will help teachers in a program see clearly that faculty development is not an add-on or "extra work" and will, hopefully, convince them of the benefits to participate in the faculty development activities willingly and enthusiastically.

From our perspective, faculty development should place workload front and center, including considerations of time-use and time-management relative to teaching writing in a particular program. Sarah Winslow (2010) argues that time is the most important resource for faculty, and, we would argue, for contingent faculty and graduate student teachers. Long-term and consistent faculty development should, therefore, begin "by putting in place concrete strategies for managing time and identifying the most common ways time could become sabotaged, participants added structure to their time management routine" (Culpepper, et al., 2020, p. 175). By prioritizing workload, faculty can develop strategies to apply on a daily basis, as well as a way to make their long-term practices more efficient (and more effective).

Building on an ethic of care, we recommend three key drivers for targeting workload through faculty development in technical and scientific communication programs:

1. Faculty development must create a community of learning and support. Fostering communities of practice and building time for such communities into workload makes that work visible, and encourages faculty to value time management as a form of self-care.
2. Faculty development activities must grow from local needs expressed by faculty. Acknowledging needs, "paying attention," is a key aspect of the ethic of care.
3. Faculty development activities should focus on TIME. As the literature on faculty burnout suggests, time, or (perceived) lack thereof,

is a constant concern for faculty at all levels, but time-related stress is particularly acute for vulnerable populations. Highlighting that vulnerability is an important principle.

Part of overall program review and assessment should include the "continuous assessment of the faculty development work, through a variety of instruments" (Zemliansky & Berry, 2017, p. 315). As we will discuss next, reflections are effective tools for giving voice to vulnerable faculty and are a key driver for success.

Reflect regularly on workload as part of short- and long-term assessment

We believe strongly that students, faculty, and administrators should reflect regularly on the issue of workload, and the ways that we might take care of ourselves and each other in the context of a program. We have long applied the principles of reflection in our own classrooms, following the work, especially, of Kathleen Blake Yancey (see 1998, for example), but we also feel that faculty reflections are equally important in the context of a program, as described most prominently in terms of writing-across-the-curriculum programs (Bain, et al., 2002; Yancey, 2016; Moon, et al., 2017). In these ways, workload can be assessed in triangulation in terms of how it impacts all three groups (students, faculty, and administrators) within the context of a technical and scientific communication program. For example, on our campus, we can assess workload in terms of our institutional identity as a minority-serving institution whose students are primarily first-generation and inhabit multiple identities (student, family member, caregiver, employee). Like faculty development, faculty reflection should grow out of the local context and conditions, in consultation with, especially, contingent faculty and graduate student teachers.

For the purposes of this commentary, we define faculty reflection as a narrative learning tool for examining pedagogical practices, sharing ideas, assessing the impact of teaching on program development, and, most importantly, workload. In this way, faculty reflection offers a practical mechanism for continuous program improvement (Becker & Renger, 2017). Fundamentally, faculty reflection offers a dynamic, layered, and alternate perspective on the typical tools used in program assessment since the narrative nature of reflection can provide a certain depth and complexity to examinations of workload in a program. More specifically, a framework developed by Brantley-Dias, Puvirajah, & Dias (2020) describes features for reflective practice that emphasize "the complementary nature of professional competencies of knowl-

edge, skills, and disposition, and the interrogation of an incident through technical, contextual, and critical reflection as well as reflection-in, -on, and -for-action" (p. 1). Similarly, Walker and Oldford (2020) define elements of reflection as engaging with the "other," engaging with the "context," and engaging with "our ideas," such as "the way the world is, issues of power and justice, with an implicit understanding that the world could be otherwise" (p. 281). Taken together, faculty reflection has the ability to provide powerful contributions to program development and for improving faculty workload.

Our focus in this commentary is on faculty reflection as part of a larger program review and assessment plan. Basgier and Simpson (2020) establish a value for teacher reflection in these ways through, what they call, "narratives" in a writing program:

> Through narrative, we give faculty the opportunity to tell their stories as teachers of writing, regardless of discipline, to think critically about their experiences, and to reimagine the future by envisioning pedagogical changes. When we give merit to faculty's reflective narratives of experience, we allow for conceptual reconstruction, or, in a word, learning. (p. 21)

Following the lead of Brantley-Dias, Puvirajah, & Dias (2020), we believe faculty reflection in a program should provide a dual narrative that both describes an experience and examines that experience based on the writer's beliefs and actions. For them, the reflection framework is a design that "guides practitioners to choose and problematize specific events that they deem worthy of detailed analysis to generate thoughts and actions that deepen professional knowledge and skills" (p. 8). While their goal is to "deepen professional knowledge and skills," the narrative can be easily adapted as a part of program assessment, as well.

For example, a program administrator could provide a reflective prompt that focuses teachers in the program on workload implications for a particular assignment or its design or an underlying pedagogy or responding to and evaluating student writing, and so on. The reflection could then define this general prompt in the context of a particular moment in class that semester. This could be either a positive or negative experience. The reflection could then conclude with any insights or critical impressions gained by the teacher from this experience and the ways that this experience can help the program improve its workload expectations.

Or a program administrator could provide a reflective prompt based on one or more of the three broad categories defined by Basgier and Simpson (2020): 1) roadblocks that arise from teachers working

differently than they are used to or that force them to change their ways of thinking; 2) detours that apply new ideas temporarily to old problem or habits; 3) journeys that change thinking and "reflect integrative thinking about teaching difficulties" (p. 13). And the attendant workload that accompanies each of these categories.

Like faculty development, faculty reflection as part of program assessment needs to operate in a learning community that promotes collaboration and caring. But, at the same time, even in a caring environment, we must acknowledge that reflection, especially one shared with a larger community of peers and/or supervisors, has a certain element of risk, especially for contingent faculty and graduate student teachers describing their workload. Walker and Oldfield (2020) identify three thematic areas of risk in reflection: "(a) risk in social acceptability, (b) risk in job security and livelihood, and (c) risk to one's sense of self/identity" (p. 282). These are all important considerations for contingent faculty.

For example, responding honestly to a reflective prompt like those offered above would force teachers in a program to examine their own teaching practices critically, as well as their assumptions about teaching writing in the program. This could be uncomfortable for many since it opens them up to potential scrutiny and criticism from both peers and supervisors. This is why creating a learning community is so important: a caring environment, "whereby others open up, ask for others to reflect back what they see, sense, and hear, would thereby strengthen the critical reflection skills of the instructor" (Walker & Oldford, 2020, p. 282). The goal for reflection, therefore, is not oversight, not top-down, not patriarchal, but instead is as building blocks for a learning community that will make the lives of everyone better.

When faculty development and assessment, as a part of, and as consideration of, normal workload, are presented within a larger learning community, one built on collaboration and caring, contingent faculty can feel more secure with this kind of fruitful exchange, "including asking difficult questions, recognizing and allowing uncomfortable feelings, and as dependent on the environment" (Walker & Oldford, 2020, p. 282). Critical reflection as a part of program assessment offers an impetus for complex thinking about writing pedagogy, and provides a technical and scientific communication program the potential for recognizing "the shape and depth of the conceptual changes that may result from faculty members' learning" (Basgier & Simpson, 2020, p. 21). And when done regularly can lead to positive and programmatic changes that will benefit all stakeholders.

Building on an ethic of care, we recommend three key drivers for

reflecting on workload as an integral part of program review and assessment:

1. Faculty reflection must be a normal part of the program review and assessment process. Reflection is a way of paying attention as well as a way of accepting responsibility to act on what we've noticed.
2. Faculty reflection must be a normal part of a program learning community. There should be space to address all the different forms of work required by teaching writing, and to account for individuals' differing experiences with those forms of work.
3. Faculty reflection must be continuous and iterative. Iterative reflection allows the program to adjust to feedback, make changes, and then assess the effectiveness of those changes.

In this section, we have offered three initial strategies for program development in times of crisis to address workload head-on, as well as the inevitable overwork that too often arises from uncertainty and austerity. We have aligned these strategies with principles for an ethic of care, thereby giving voice to vulnerable faculty as a key driver for success. Our hope is that these strategies, incorporated in concert, will help writing program administrators re-value work, invoke an ethic of care, change the program culture by working in new ways, and formalize a work/life balance beneficial for all stakeholders.

Conclusion

These strategies adhere to principles of care we've embraced for students, faculty, and administrators. Although we cannot alleviate many of the stressors that faculty and students alike have faced during the pandemic, including financial strain and increased caretaking, we can confront their realities in our decision-making process. Administrators also feel the additional stress of planning decision-making in a context of scarce resources and extreme uncertainty; we must also acknowledge that increased stress in our own lives. Although there is no solution to eliminate these burdens, our goal is to maintain an orientation of care for our most vulnerable populations.

For us, adopting an ethic of care means we focus on what's under our control programmatically, working with faculty to streamline their job responsibilities to help them manage stress and maintain boundaries while meeting students' complex needs. And we can push back against unnecessary and traumatizing budget conversations. People's emotions and material conditions matter a lot. Sometimes, doing more with less is as simple as actually asking for less.

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Ed Nagelhout is a Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He received his PhD from Purdue University in 1996. He has co-edited three collections, published more than thirty peer-reviewed articles or book chapters, along with two open-access electronic textbooks, and presented more than one hundred papers on a variety of topics in a variety of venues. His research focuses on writing program administration, teaching in digital environments, digital composing, writing in the disciplines, and open-access literacy and learning.

Denise Tillery is a Professor of English and Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has published multiple articles and book chapters on environmental rhetoric, gender and rhetoric, and technical communication program administration, as well as a book, *Commonplaces of Scientific Evidence in Environmental Discourses*, an edited collection, *The New Normal: Pressures on Technical Communication Programs in the Age of Austerity*, and an open-access textbook. Her most recent work focuses on the uses of scientific evidence in environmental rhetoric in a variety of contexts and media, including Facebook and other digital formats.

Internships in a Pandemic

Charles H. Sides
Fitchburg State University

Abstract. The success of administering TPC programs in times of crisis, like all crisis management, directly results from actions taken before the crisis and in the early days of the crisis. This commentary describes a national-scope internship program in a professional department that prepares students for careers in professional communication, film & video production, graphic design, photography, theatre, technical theatre, and game design. The internship is a 12-credit, full-time, semester-long mentored experience occurring in the students' final semester as the capstone graduation requirement for all department majors. Takeaways in this commentary include aspects of design and management of the program in normal times, as well as adjustments made during the recent coronavirus pandemic.

Keywords: Internship, capstone, program design, program management, crisis

The Department of Communications Media internship program at Fitchburg State University was established in the late 1970s, decades prior to the campus internship office, established in 2020. The internship is a substantial commitment of time, personnel, and resources among students, the university, and internship hosts. COMM 4880 is a 12-credit, full-time, semester-long mentored experience occurring in the students' final semester as the capstone graduation requirement for all department majors: professional communi-

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cation, film & video production, graphic design, photography, theatre, technical theatre, and game design. Unlike many university internship programs, from the beginning ours was designed, with the approval of the then university president, to assign a senior faculty member as the Internship Director for his or her complete teaching load. In the early 2000s, a one-course reduction from the usual four-course load was provided to the internship director as department enrollments grew to over 500 students. As a state university, the Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies that a section of interns in COMM 4880 (as well as other internship courses across departments around the state) consist of 7-9 students. When semester enrollments exceed 27 registered interns in three sections of the course, additional sections are added and faculty assigned to them as part of their four-course load.

The internship director is responsible for developing and maintaining professional relationships with organizations (now numbering over 500), coordinating the Internship Qualification Program (explained in more detail later), encouraging faculty to volunteer to participate in portfolio reviews, recommending internships to qualified students, and providing feedback from internship sites to faculty regarding student knowledge and abilities in their disciplines.

As a professional department, it is vitally important for faculty to stay abreast of what organizations expect in the students they host as interns and hire as employees. The primary advantage of assigning responsibility for an internship program to a faculty member, as opposed to a mid-level administrator in a centralized office, is the ability to develop highly specialized knowledge of internship sites—even for a department as complex as ours. This is frequently mentioned on assessment forms sent to internship sites, along with positive feedback concerning our interns' knowledge, abilities, work ethic, and professionalism. Positive feedback about our students, we believe, is the result of programmatic design that involves students in professional-level courses from the freshman year forward and the rigor of the Internship Qualification Program.

Normal Times—Pre-Pandemic

The capstone internship occurs in a student's final academic semester, after all other university requirements have been met. It is a 12-credit course that takes place entirely within an internship host organization, designed as a transitional mentored experience between the academic and professional worlds. Internship hosting organizations must be willing to provide a mentor and appropriate entry-level tasks for the intern to perform and be evaluated on. Given that the experience is

still an academic one, with significant learning opportunities provided, we have developed a series of academic assignments to accompany and reflect on the mentored professional experiences—weekly journal, internship analysis report, journal summary of activities and learning experiences. Internships average between 32 and 40 hours per week for a 15-week semester.

Interns must qualify for the experience by maintaining a 2.5+ GPA in their academic coursework, excelling in the Internship Qualification Program, and receiving positive recommendations from the faculty who have taught them. Students who do not meet these minimum standards may take additional courses to raise their GPAs, rework their portfolios based on faculty suggestions, and in very rare occasions (fewer than one student per year on average) some may choose to take additional coursework and obtain a diploma in General Studies, rather than in Communications Media.

The Internship Qualification Program is held twice yearly; the fall program qualifies interns for the spring semester, and the spring program qualifies interns for both summer and fall. This program consists of mandatory attendance at a series of seminars that cover such topics as internship qualifications and regulations, portfolio and resume development, and professionalism. Much of what the seminars cover is straightforward and common to this sort of preparation at virtually all colleges and universities. The first seminar covers advice on preparing for the internship, particularly focusing on what is required during the qualification program. The second seminar covers resume design and development, as well as breakout sessions on portfolio and Vimeo reel design led by faculty within the disciplines of our department. An aspect of resume development that is tailored to our department and to our internship organization's expectations is the internship resume, because it includes a section labeled Academic Profile—a listing of courses taken that relate to a student's objective.

Figure 1. Sample Internship Resume

Student Name
Portfolio Link

Address
Contact Information

Objective

To obtain an internship in social media, marketing communication, and public relations that will utilize and improve my skills to pursue a career in the field.

Education
B.S IN COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
Fitchburg State University
Graduation Year: May 2021
GPA: 3.00

Academic Profile
Intro to Communication & Media Studies
Message Design
Interactive Media Project Design
Public Relations
Communication Law & Ethics
Intro to Social Media
Gender and Communication
Writing for Advertising

Work Experience
2016 – 2017
The Angler – Dishwasher – Westminster, MA

2017-2018
Olive Garden – Hostess – Leominster, MA

2018 – 2019
Happy Jack's – Server – Leominster, MA

2019-Present
Quabbin Regional School District – Extended Day – Barre, MA

Skills
| Social Media | Photography | Marketing | Advertising | Multimedia Design | Poster Design |

Accomplishments
- Dean's List {Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020}
- Member of the National Student Advertising Competition {Spring 2020}

Portfolios also differ according to major. Film & Video production majors create a Vimeo reel portfolio that contains short clips from film projects they have produced in classes or in some cases independently, as well as short descriptions of the clips and their roles in the projects. A link to their Vimeo reels is included on their resumes. Graphic Design and Photography students produce two portfolios—a standard physical portfolio that contains prints of their work, as well as an online portfolio modeled after professional examples available from internship sites and on the web. Professional Communication students (who in our department focus mostly on marketing communication) produce both a written and online portfolio. Links to these are also

provided on the internship resume. Game Design portfolios tend to be a merged example of what one would find in a graphic design portfolio and a Vimeo reel—both still-life work and animations. These, too, are modeled after professional examples. Theatre and technical theatre portfolios include video clips, headshots, and still photography of theatrical performances students have participated in.

Following the seminars, prospective interns present and defend their portfolios before a faculty committee, consisting of the internship director and production faculty (although these defenses are open to all department faculty). These sessions resemble what is common to a BFA program, in that the student presents and explains work created during their academic career (as well as any freelance work they might have created professionally). Technical theatre follows this example; theatre production includes live auditions before a faculty committee. Faculty provide critiques and suggestions. Students then revise accordingly until their final portfolio or Vimeo reel is approved.

Once all internship application materials have been approved, students meet with the internship director in order to obtain and discuss internship recommendations based on their qualifications and interests. As opposed to many university internship programs, we do not permit students to select their own internships. Instead, we provide carefully selected opportunities that the faculty and internship director have agreed to as appropriate for the student. We do encourage students to propose internship sites that would be new to our program. These are then vetted to see if the internship is appropriate to the expectations of our program and that the student would be a good match, again based on their qualifications. As the largest department on campus, we have had enrollments as high as 650+ yielding approximately 150 interns per year. Enrollment has decreased in the last few years, as college-age demographics change, but we still place approximately 100-120 interns every year, divided among our sub-disciplines: film & video production, game design, marketing communication, graphic design, photography, theatre, and technical theatre.

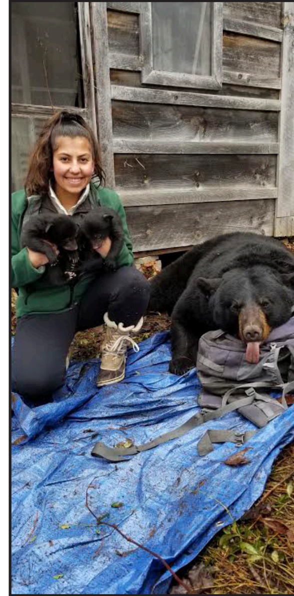
Our internship reach is national in scope, with occasional international placements when the legal challenges of students working and studying in other countries can be resolved. National internships particularly in the film and video major include Los Angeles film production companies, as well as content creators such as National Geographic, The Discovery Channel, The Smithsonian, and regional production companies. Graphic design national internships have included poster and promotional design companies for film and theatre in Los Angeles and New York City. Recently, a New York intern was invited by his

internship site to submit one of his movie poster designs among those designed by other employees to one of their clients—a major superhero film production company. The executives at the presentation session did not know until the end of the session that they had chosen the intern's design. His work has subsequently been seen in advertisements throughout the country. This experience led to the intern being hired on the final day of his internship. Photography national internships have included studios throughout the country. Game Design internships, because of the nature of the industry, can often be completed virtually, similar to the work of professional game designers. As a result, their internships have included many international placements, since issues of work regulations do not apply; these include primarily Canadian and European internships. Theatre internships are primarily in New York City and New England. Technical Theatre, our newest and smallest major, has developed mostly regional internships in the Northeast. Marketing communication, probably of most interest to readers of this publication, has included advertising, public relations, and social media internships throughout the Northeast as well as other locations in the United States and abroad.

Figure 2. Evelyn Island Mateo, Production Assistant Intern, KITV-4 News, Honolulu, HI (used by permission)

Figure 3. Anna Burch, Photography Assistant Intern, Aspen, CO (used by permission)

Figure 4. Brooke Teves, Videography Intern, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Annual Bear Census (used by permission)



After final approval for students to move forward to the interview stage of the process, they contact recommended internship sites, most of which we are able to provide them with an individual name, number, and email address. Students are required to reach out by phone first, the reason being that phone calls and voice mail messages are more difficult to ignore than email messages. Out of the 500+ internship sites we have relationships with, a few have established a NO CALL status, so for those recommended internship sites, the first contact is by email.

For many of our students, this will be the first time in their lives that they have done anything like this. While in the process of writing this commentary, a student emailed me to say that he was the first person in his family to go to college, and that he did not know how to contact an organization in a professional manner. Several years ago, I developed a script for prospective interns that addresses precisely this challenge and includes samples of cold calls and initial emails, as well as things to avoid (using "Hey" as their form of initial address in an email, for example).

On average, we provide three recommended internship sites for prospective interns to contact, ask if they are seeking interns for a particular semester (Fall, Spring, Summer), and if so, may they apply and interview for it. If all goes according to plan, students ordinarily obtain one or two interviews, and in almost all cases the interviews lead to one or two internship offers, most likely because we have personal and professional relationships with all of our internship sites as a result of our visitation policy, described below. On occasion, internship contacts are alumni who are in a position to "give back" to the university and department.

When an internship is confirmed, the department sends out internship documents to the intern and the internship sites. The most important of these is the Internship Contract. The state mandated a standard contract a few years back when they provided funding for internship liability policies. The contract explains the policy (in unfortunately turgid legalese) and establishes expectations for internship performance and educational objectives.

Figure 5. Internship Contract

Fitchburg State University
Department of Communications Media Internship Program
CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

Student Name: ________________________________**Semester:** ____________________________________

__________________________________, the Internship Site, has agreed to participate with the Department of Communications Media at Fitchburg State University in its internship program (for a complete description, see www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-departments/communications-media-dept/internships/).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY:

1. Plan for the educational experience of the intern.
2. Expect interns to comply with current policies and procedures of the Internship site.
3. Provide interns who meet all academic qualification standards, as established by their academic department.
4. Propose the internship start and end dates, as well as the internship's total number of hours.
5. Provide a specific faculty member who will serve as liaison with internship site personnel.
6. Provide and maintain records and reports necessary for conducting the learning experience.
7. Coordinate, with the internship site educational objectives, for the internship and curriculum content.
8. Withdraw any student or faculty member from the program when such student or faculty member is unacceptable or undesirable to the Internship Site for reasons of health, performance of duties, or other reasonable causes.
9. Procure and maintain, by the University, professional liability insurance coverage of **$1 million per occurrence and $3 million in the aggregate** covering all students and faculty who participate in the internship program. This signed form shall be provided to the Internship Site and filed in the Office of Academic Affairs as evidence of this provision. The university will notify the Internship Site in writing if coverage is changed or cancelled.
10. Require students to provide evidence of current physical examinations, including documentation of Rubella immunity, evidence of immunity to chicken pox (Varicella) provided either through a physician's note or proof of titer, a Negative (-) Mantoux Test, and Hepatitis B Immunity, if required by the Internship Site.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERNSHIP SITE:

1. Orient the intern to the physical facilities, policies, and procedures of the Internship Site.
2. Provide an experience (to the extent allowed by licensing and liability requirements) under the supervision of qualified personnel that meets the stated learning objectives as agreed to by both parties.

   Hours Per Week: 32-40 Semester Total: 450 hours, minimum

   a. Tasks and activities in which the intern will be involved over the course of the internship experience:

   ____
   ____
   ____

   b. Learning objectives for intern:

   ____
   ____
   ____

   c. Internship Site's support system (to minimize risks to the intern in situations that may require expertise beyond their current capabilities, if applicable):

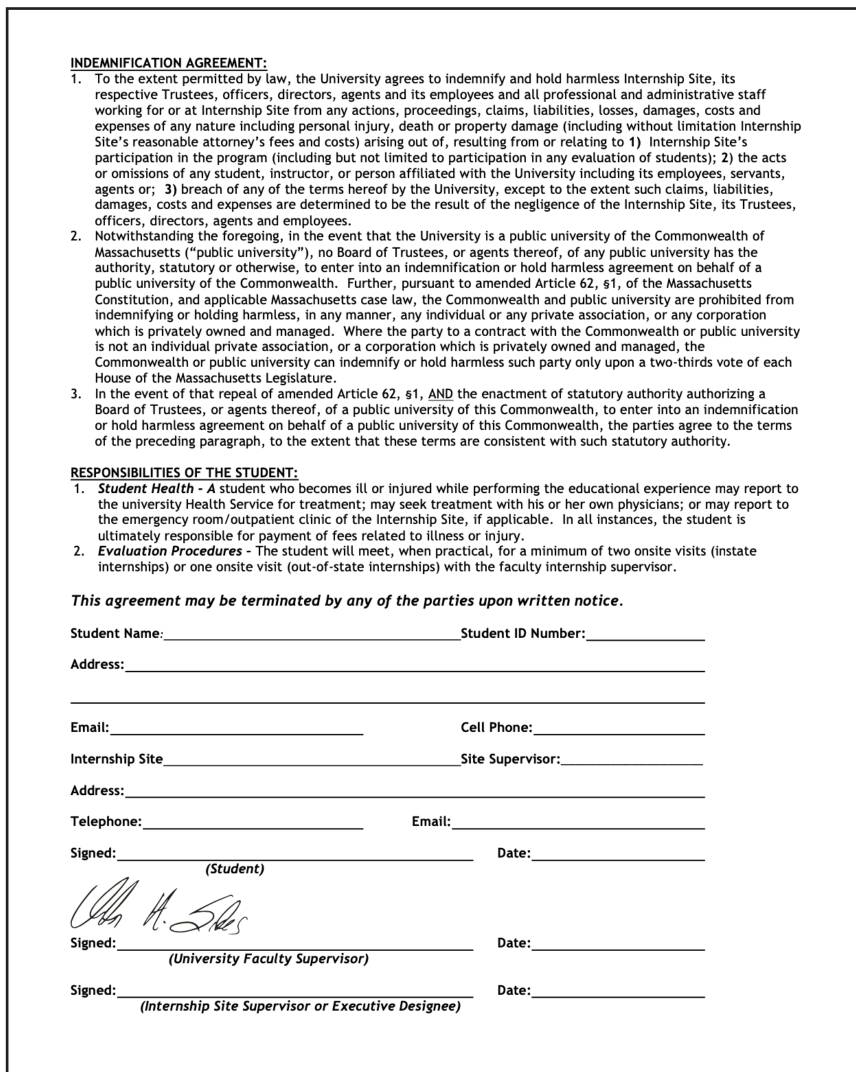
   ____
   ____

3. Evaluate the intern's performance at the conclusion of the internship (a form is provided for this).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOTH PARTIES:

1. No individual participating in this program shall be discriminated against because of race, color, sex, marital status, religion, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status.
2. To meet, as appropriate, and review the intern's performance and the internship program.

Figure 5. Internship Contract *(continued)*



INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT:

1. To the extent permitted by law, the University agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Internship Site, its respective Trustees, officers, directors, agents and its employees and all professional and administrative staff working for or at Internship Site from any actions, proceedings, claims, liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses of any nature including personal injury, death or property damage (including without limitation Internship Site's reasonable attorney's fees and costs) arising out of, resulting from or relating to **1)** Internship Site's participation in the program (including but not limited to participation in any evaluation of students); **2)** the acts or omissions of any student, instructor, or person affiliated with the University including its employees, servants, agents or; **3)** breach of any of the terms hereof by the University, except to the extent such claims, liabilities, damages, costs and expenses are determined to be the result of the negligence of the Internship Site, its Trustees, officers, directors, agents and employees.
2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event that the University is a public university of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ("public university"), no Board of Trustees, or agents thereof, of any public university has the authority, statutory or otherwise, to enter into an indemnification or hold harmless agreement on behalf of a public university of the Commonwealth. Further, pursuant to amended Article 62, §1, of the Massachusetts Constitution, and applicable Massachusetts case law, the Commonwealth and public university are prohibited from indemnifying or holding harmless, in any manner, any individual or any private association, or any corporation which is privately owned and managed. Where the party to a contract with the Commonwealth or public university is not an individual private association, or a corporation which is privately owned and managed, the Commonwealth or public university can indemnify or hold harmless such party only upon a two-thirds vote of each House of the Massachusetts Legislature.
3. In the event of that repeal of amended Article 62, §1, AND the enactment of statutory authority authorizing a Board of Trustees, or agents thereof, of a public university of this Commonwealth, to enter into an indemnification or hold harmless agreement on behalf of a public university of this Commonwealth, the parties agree to the terms of the preceding paragraph, to the extent that these terms are consistent with such statutory authority.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT:

1. ***Student Health - A*** student who becomes ill or injured while performing the educational experience may report to the university Health Service for treatment; may seek treatment with his or her own physicians; or may report to the emergency room/outpatient clinic of the Internship Site, if applicable. In all instances, the student is ultimately responsible for payment of fees related to illness or injury.
2. ***Evaluation Procedures -*** The student will meet, when practical, for a minimum of two onsite visits (instate internships) or one onsite visit (out-of-state internships) with the faculty internship supervisor.

This agreement may be terminated by any of the parties upon written notice.

Student Name:____________________ **Student ID Number:**__________

Address:______________________________

____

Email:__________________ **Cell Phone:**____________

Internship Site____________________ **Site Supervisor:**____________

Address:______________________________

Telephone:________________ **Email:**__________________

Signed:________________________ **Date:**____________
(Student)

Signed:________________________ **Date:**____________
(University Faculty Supervisor)

Signed:________________________ **Date:**____________
(Internship Site Supervisor or Executive Designee)

Readers who have taught legal writing courses—as I have—will immediately notice some of the shortcomings of this contract (primarily the overuse of unnecessary legalese as opposed to plain English), but this approved version represents my sixth revision of what was imposed on state universities. Everything that could still be improved was required to remain in the contract by the university administration and its lawyers.

There are two additional hallmarks of our internship program. The first, already discussed, is that rather than the program being managed

from a university office and by a mid-level administrator, it is the sole teaching responsibility of a senior department faculty member. The second is that while students are at their internships, faculty supervisors conduct onsite visits, typically once or twice per semester, depending upon the internship's location (the majority are within driving distance of the university). We do have a reasonably generous travel budget and conduct visits to frequently used locations throughout the country (primarily New York City and Los Angeles), though usually only once per year for these. These visits include meeting interns and their supervisors, reviewing work, evaluating their preparation for the internship, and answering any questions the intern or the supervisor might have. Despite the fact that this is labor intensive and costly, to date we have been able to preserve it, and it is one of the most frequently mentioned aspects of our program, when we conduct programmatic reviews.

Challenges in Normal Times

The university and the department, similar to other institutions across the country, are increasingly confronting a student population that is less prepared for the rigors of university work. Our university has long been an educational resource for first-generation students, students from newly immigrated families, students from historically underrepresented populations, students from families and homes in which English is not the first language, students facing a wide range of socioeconomic challenges—including poverty and even homelessness. It has been our mission to seek these students out, recruit them, and provide them with an education that enables them to compete successfully in the knowledge economy of the 21st century; we continue to do it well.

As a result, the department's curriculum—as a professional department—has been structured for nearly 50 years in such a way that all coursework looks forward to and targets the required full-time capstone internship in the final semester of students' senior year. Each of the department's disciplines includes a balance between required communication theory courses and professional production courses. The focus is consistently on education rather than training alone, so that our graduates can become lifelong learners and adapt to changes that are inevitable in any highly technical knowledge-based profession. As a result, the internship continues to be an experience in which students can reality-test their passions, skills, knowledge, and abilities to determine if their chosen career is right for them.

For over a decade, online, qualitative, Likert-based assessments

have been used throughout our internship program to assess portfolio qualities (completed by faculty participating in the portfolio defenses) and intern preparedness (completed by internship site hosts). In addition to the standard 5-category numerical forms for individual questions or characteristics, each assessment form includes additional space for observations by faculty and internship sites. For overall program reviews, we also conduct surveys of frequently-used internship sites to specifically assess the qualifications of our interns vis-à-vis organizations' expectations of entry-level employees. The most important question in these surveys (and included in the assessment form sent to internship site hosts each semester they host an intern) is: "If an entry-level position became available in the intern's specific area of expertise, would he or she be competitive for it?"

Internship Program modifications, as well as curriculum modifications, are consistently based on the results of our assessment program. A case in point: recently, there has been some discussion at the Dean and Provost level regarding providing part-time internships as an alternative to the capstone, full-time internship, for which our department has been known for nearly half a century. I conducted a survey of 35 long-time internship sites which frequently take multiple interns per year.

Figure 6. Internship Preference Survey

INTERNSHIP PREFERENCE SURVEY
Department of Communications Media
Fitchburg State University

1. Has your organization hosted both full-time interns and part-time interns? If so, is there a preference between the two?

   _________ Full-time

   _________ Part-time

   _________ No preference

2. If your organization has hosted both full-time and part-time interns, please list one-three differences in your experiences with each type of intern.

3. After 45 years of requiring full-time internships as the capstone academic experience in the Department of Communications Media at Fitchburg State, some have suggested that this model be abandoned in favor of part-time internships for our students.

   If this were the case, would interns from the Department of Communications Media at Fitchburg State University be as competitive as interns from other universities?

   _________ Yes

   _________ No

   _________ No Difference

4. Other thoughts? (optional)

Thank you for your time, and thank you for your ongoing support of our interns. May we identify your organization in our discussion of survey results?

________ Yes

________ No

The survey is ongoing; at the time of this writing (late May), the results are tabulated in the following Excel spreadsheet.

Figure 7. Internship Preference Survey Data (to date)

INTERNSHIP PREFERENCE SURVEY Surveys Sent: 35 Surveys Returned: 12					
	Full-Time	Part-Time	No Preference	Yes	No
Internship Duration Preference	9	1	2		
Internship Characteristics	Easier Scheduling (2) Better Experience (7) Enhanced Learning (5) Student Commitment More Likely to Hire (2)	Better for Small Orgs. Lmtd. Exposure to Work Harder to Schedule			
Internship Competiveness	Yes (2)	No (5) Yes (1)	4		
Other Thoughts			2+ Days per Week Minimum		
Permission to Share				12	

Due to, I think, the rigorous preparation provided to students prior to the internship semester, the encouragement provided for them to attain professional standards in academic courses, the carefully designed Internship Qualification Program to ready students for their internship experiences, and faculty support while they are on internship, the Internship Program has successfully provided a transitional experience to careers for decades. Or, at least that is how things are designed to work.

And Then the Covid Pandemic Occurred

On Thursday, March 5, 2020, I had completed two weeks of portfolio defenses with faculty colleagues representing the department's six disciplines (film & video production, marketing communication, game design, photography, theatre, and technical theatre) in preparation for summer and fall internships, when every faculty member and student received notice from the university president that, following spring break—the next week—the university would convert to a completely virtual teaching environment in response to the growing COVID-19 pandemic. This included the 48 students enrolled in COMM 4880, Internship. Interns were spread across the country from the Los Angeles film industry to New York City media headquarters to smaller organizations throughout New England.

One week to make this happen—smoothly, if possible.

What We Did

Step One

I contacted each of the 48 internship sites and discussed with the onsite internship supervisor and other management whether or not the work they do with interns could be converted to remote work, as this was being required by the university. 40 internship sites, including small and large organizations (even our most prestigious film company internship sites, if the internship was in a non-production part of the industry), agreed to do so. The remaining 8 involved experiences, mostly television production, that would be impossible to do any way other than in person; in addition, the eight firms hosting these internships are owned by large media parent organizations which cancelled all internships across the country. For these internships, we accepted that they were concluded (at 11 or 12 weeks out of the normal 15) and added a significant academic assignment to the end of the course—an extensive final paper to analyze this unique experience, its effect on the internship, and the student's career prospects. As will be seen later in this commentary, the result of major media companies cancelling their internship programs was significant.

Step Two

During spring break, while working on converting current internships from onsite experiences to remote experiences, I decided—based on daily news reports—that summer internships would most likely need to be remote, as well. Following portfolio defenses, our process is to then provide internship recommendations to students who contact sites to set up interviews. I chose to recommend only internship sites that I thought could develop remote internships, from among the over 500 organizations we work with regularly; I contacted each site I planned to recommend, in order to confirm whether or not this would be possible.

As a result, by the end of spring break, most of the current internships had transitioned to remote work, and I was already steering summer interns to organizations that told me they could provide virtual internships.

Step Three

But this did not resolve the challenge of what to do with our largest group of interns—film & video production students—the most qualified of whom have aimed their academic careers toward the Hollywood film industry, independent documentary production, or television at major commercial stations. To compound that challenge,

toward the end of March I received an email from the Associate Vice President informing me that all summer internships would be required to be virtual. I was pretty certain that would "virtually" assure that almost no student from our largest major—film and video production—would be able to obtain an internship, and that our summer internship enrollment could be significantly reduced from our average of 30-35 interns.

At about this time, however, as Massachusetts was shutting down with stay-at-home orders proliferating, the governor provided a detailed list and explanation of "essential services" that would be permitted to stay open, since the work done was vitally important. I knew this included all of the medical industry, where we do have internships in marketing communication, graphic design, and photography. Wondering what else might be in the list, I downloaded the publication and read all 40+ pages. Journalism outlets (print and broadcast) were deemed essential to the state during the pandemic.

Since our university is a state institution, I wrote to the associate vice president and suggested that the state university should not have a standard for internships that conflicted with the governor's standard for the state, and that, as a result, students should be permitted to intern at any organization deemed essential by the governor, including television stations, newspapers, etc., provided that interns adhere to the safety precautions being required by those essential services. My reasoning held, and those internships were approved for students.

Nonetheless, major television outlets owned by national media consortiums decided to suspend their summer (and fall 2020, spring 2021, and summer 2021) internships; no decision has been made yet about fall 2021. But our state has local access television stations in almost every city and town. Many are managed by alumni from our department, including those who worked in the film industry and after several years (and often after having families) decided to return to the state for jobs with salaries and benefits, rather than continue in the gig economy of their discipline. As a result, I was able to place almost all of the film and video production students into community television internships. This provided valuable, hands-on production experience (in many cases more so than would be obtained at the major television outlets throughout the region and elsewhere), and most importantly, it did not hinder students' progress toward graduation. In addition, the university added a Covid Contract Amendment that would be required for the summer and fall internships.

Figure 8. Covid Contract Addendum

Fitchburg State University
Internship Program
Contractual Agreement
Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Addendum

The standard required Internship Program Contractual Agreement was updated in June 2020 for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters in response to COVID-19 requirements. This addendum should only be used if a fall 2020 or spring 2021 internship contractual agreement has already been submitted to the University.

This addendum serves as a supplemental document to previously submitted Internship Program Contractual Agreement for fall 2020 and/or spring 2021 for the following student.

Semester: ____

Student Name: ____

Student Program: ____

Responsibilities of the Internship Site

New Contractual Language

This internship site adheres to the current state COVID-19 directives as well as the CDC guidelines.

Please indicate by checking below if this internship position will take place on site; be conducted remotely; or both on site and remotely.

On-site________________ Remotely____________ Both on-site and remotely_______________

Name of Organization: ____

Organization Contact Information: ____

____

Name of Internship Supervisor: ____

Signature of Internship Supervisor: ____

Internship Supervisor Email: ____

Date Signed: _________________________

The result was that the summer internship semester placed 24 students into professional internships within their disciplines, down about 8-10 from the average number of summer interns.

Looking ahead to the fall semester, it began to appear that additional internship sites were going to be permitted to host onsite interns, as the state made progress against the COVID-19 virus and began to open up. The exception continued to be major television outlets owned and operated by national corporations, such as Hearst, Viacom, NBC Universal, and Nextstar. Internship placement, as a result, rose to 30—the highest fall enrollment in three years.

For the fall semester, the university had decided to open the

campus, permitting faculty to choose among three teaching options: completely virtual, hybrid involving in-person classroom instruction and online learning, or total in person classroom instruction. The question was how should the Internship Qualification Program fit into the scenarios.

Understanding that everything could change by the time the program began in early October or midway through it, we decided to convert the qualification program to one seminar held on campus that would cover all aspects of preparing for the internship (livestreamed as well as videotaped for students who might not be on campus). Portfolio defenses would be scheduled through Google Meet or Zoom, and internship placement meetings would also be provided virtually. This turned out to be a good decision, since many parts of the country, including New England, were experiencing a second surge of COVID-19 cases. As a result, the campus closed the weekend before Thanksgiving and converted once again to virtual learning. Fortunately for the internship program, and a result of focusing on essential services, as well as the associated success of protecting students from covid during the spring and summer semesters (only one intern out of 72 caught the virus, and he caught it from his mother, a nurse), the conversion to virtual learning did not affect current internships in the fall semester. In fact, students on internship turned out to be much safer than students on campus, where the incidence of covid infection, though good, was higher.

Despite ongoing internship placement challenges, most significantly the fact that major media organizations had decided not to host internships until fall, 2021 at the earliest, we were able to place 48 students into internships for the spring semester, 2021, the same number as spring 2020, pre-pandemic. Some of these placements included our most prestigious internship sites—major Los Angeles film production companies who had converted their own internship programs to virtual experiences.

As I complete this article during the early summer semester, 2021, COVID-19 cases are decreasing nationwide, and vaccines are being distributed. We had decided to operate the summer/fall Internship Qualification Program, scheduled for early February through early May, the same way we did the spring program, which ran from late September through early December: one large seminar that was held on campus, livestreamed and videotaped (with Google Meet as a back-up plan if the university shut down completely again), Google Meet portfolio defenses, and Google Meet internship placement meetings. My hope was that we would be able to attain our average number of summer

internships (30-35) for the summer semester, 2021, and a similar number for fall. We exceeded that goal with 40 interns, the largest number of summer interns in the history of our department. Admittedly, some of this was attributable to a small number of students who decided to postpone fall, 2020, and spring, 2021, internship to the summer or fall.

What We Learned

During a global pandemic, it has been possible to preserve a demanding 12-credit, full-time, semester-long, capstone internship program that has been the most important characteristic of the Communications Media Department at Fitchburg State University, since the department's founding in the 1970s. There are several reasons why we were successful.

Take Away 1
The preparation for these challenges began long before the pandemic. In our internship program during normal times, supervising faculty conduct in-person visits to state-based internship sites twice during a semester. Out-of-state internship sites are visited once, including internship sites in New York City, Los Angeles, and other locations. Consequently, we have built professional relationships with important media organizations throughout the country—relationships that enabled us to continue placing interns, often in virtual experiences, during the pandemic. These negotiations were relatively easy, since both parties knew each other professionally and often personally. For example, internship site contacts, including vice presidents and presidents of the organizations we work with across the country, regularly contact us to see if we will be recommending an intern to them in the ensuing semester.

Take Away 2
We were proactive in converting internships to virtual or hybrid experiences, in cooperation with our internship organizations. Students received valuable professional experience, perhaps in ways they never expected, but in ways that provided new skills that may turn out to be important in how organizations run themselves in a post-pandemic future.

Take Away 3
We were flexible in providing our largest cohort of students (film and television production majors) with community television experiences that had been deemed essential in for the state. These experiences

were in all cases more direct and permitted more student participation in actual production activities than students could have experienced prior to the pandemic at national media organizations, particularly stations that are unionized and have restrictions on the activities permitted by interns.

And interestingly, throughout this time, we continued to receive requests from additional organizations desiring to participate in our internship program, based on what they had heard about the qualifications of our students and the design of our program.

Looking Ahead

I am convinced that society will not be "returning to normal" following the global COVID-19 pandemic, even post-vaccine. Many organizations have learned that they can be successful in a virtual atmosphere; Google Meet and Zoom are here to stay, with technical and performance-enhancing improvements being rolled out regularly. Universities, as a result, may decide to forego travel funds that support in-person internship supervisory meetings. I have long argued that such a decision is unwise, because it eliminates the opportunity to develop the personal professional relationships with management at the organizations who host our students in internships, and for which our program is highly regarded. It also prohibits the faculty from evaluating the internship site, as well as the intern. Virtual meetings, as all of us know by now, permit managing what a person sees and doesn't see. Understanding and witnessing—on an in-person basis—what internship sites provide to students is worth investing in. Nonetheless, if universities decide not to make that investment, proactivity and flexibility will enable internship programs to continue to offer valuable experiences as part of their commitment to educating the next generation of communication professionals.

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P R O G R A M S H O W C A S E

Assessing the Limits of Program Strategy: "Archi-Strategy" in an Age of Disruption

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Abstract. This program showcase discusses the responses of two large undergraduate programs at a large R1 land-grant university to the challenges posed by Covid-19. After the suspension of face-to-face learning in spring of 2020, the administrative team of our department asked three guiding questions: 1) What do we need right now, in this moment of great disruption? 2) What do we need to know or learn to better respond to and support our community? 3) How can we best live up to and honor the work of our students, colleagues, and department mission? In reflecting on these questions, as well as the ensuing actions, we propose an "archi-strategic" model for evaluating program decisions. By demonstrating how short-term, crisis-driven decisions can support program strategy and expand a program's mission, we invite educational leaders and administrators to fully assert their values and mission, balance program mission with individual care, interrogate department commonplaces so as to lay the foundation for sustainable, equitable, and transparent programs.

Keywords: program assessment, crisis, leadership, strategy, Covid-19

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Program assessment is "the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (Palomba and Bantam, 2015, p. 4). However, when a system encounters great uncertainty, actions within that system both take on added weight and are rendered almost impossible. While some disruption–our country's reckoning with its racist past/present–is necessary and welcome, other uncertainty–Covid-19 and its concomitant budget crisis, recent attacks on the democratic process–is not. In the case of both positive and negative disruptions, programmatic goals and assessment strategies within technical and scientific communication programs become untenable. Put simply, it can't be business as usual, nor should it be. Consequently, administrators are left searching for ways to advance the mission of their program and support its stakeholders without the reliable architecture that robust assessment and strategy provide. From a programmatic perspective, being forced into constant reaction (tactics unmoored from strategy) can seem akin to bailing water from a sinking ship. Yet, these short-term actions geared towards immediate survival and support can, and often do, serve important strategic goals. In fact, as Lawrence Freedman (2013) argues, "So what turns something that is not quite strategy into strategy is a sense of actual or imminent instability, a changing context that induces a sense of conflict" (p. 611).

As a group of faculty who work closely together in administrative positions within the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures at Michigan State University, we found ourselves bearing witness to an incredible set of challenges and successes since the start of the Covid-19 global pandemic. Consequently, as we will discuss below, we, along with our department colleagues, program directors, associate chairs, graduate students, and undergraduate students [1], were left grappling with a set of questions about how to meet the mission of our department and individual programs during a time of great disruption to teaching, learning, and institutional processes: 1) How does the department carry on its "normal" day-to-day business? 2) How does the department support its stakeholders? 3) How can we work to create a better future for our programs and stakeholders?

To provide some context, in addition to our First-Year Writing and Graduate programs, our department has two undergraduate pro-

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1 While we might be the authors of this piece, none of the work outlined here or our reflections on the work would be possible without our amazing colleagues and students. We thank them for their tireless efforts and commitment to our collective work.

grams: Professional and Public Writing (P2W) and Experience Architecture (XA). Over the past two years, both undergraduate programs have undertaken extensive assessment and curriculum redesign through the examination of course materials, collaboration with community and industry partners, faculty expertise, and student reflection. Such assessment is at the core of both programs as we develop systems that can lead (rather than follow) professional spaces. However, conversations about assessment, strategic planning, teaching, and department governance that would normally have been conducted via retreats and day-to-day collaborations around teaching, research, and service, were rendered nearly impossible. In fact, the "day to day" work during a pandemic is unsustainable and can create, reveal, and/or exacerbate challenges for students, faculty, and staff.

In seeking to offset these challenges, support faculty and students during the Covid-19 pandemic, and carry out a set of programmatic initiatives, we engaged in what we call "archi-strategic" decisions that echoes Freedman's observations about the changing nature of strategy in the face of instability. If we understand "archē" to mean a starting point or origin of action, which includes a set of values or mission, and "strategy" to mean the actions that stem from an archē, then we propose here an "archi-strategic" perspective that asks administrators not only to reflect on and articulate how their strategic decisions follow from a set of values or mission statement, but also how those actions can expand the capabilities or uses of the values and mission statement. As a result, an archi-strategic perspective reveals that the improvisational creation of new processes, supports, or goals, when added to existing processes, supports, and/or goals, can elevate and extend the original processes, supports, and goals and provide administrators with new perspectives on and solutions for (a)typical challenges associated with running programs during moments of crises or disruption. Archi-strategic decisions, in other words, are decisions that extend individual and programmatic capabilities, despite their seemingly improvisational or impromptu nature.

By way of a "program showcase," we offer here a set of descriptions and reflections, resulting in what we are calling an "archi-strategic" approach to decision-making. It is our hope that our reflections here, and the approach we advance, will allow program leaders and administrators to see the decisions they made during the Covid-19 crisis as essential for (re)building sustainable programs where students and faculty alike can thrive. To do this, we will provide an overview of our institution's response to Covid-19 before describing a series of interventions and decisions to support faculty and students–interventions

and decisions based on our experience and survey data we collected from both populations. Afterwards, we will elaborate on what we are calling "archi-strategic" decision-making. We will end the piece with a series of takeaways for program leaders and administrators.

Institutional Context & Disruption

Like most U.S. colleges and universities, MSU made a series of "pivots" as a result of COVID-19. After the first coronavirus cases in early March, Michigan's governor declared a state of emergency on March 10, 2020 and began coordinating with local governments to mitigate the spread of the virus. On March 11, MSU shifted all courses online with the hope of returning on April 20, 2020. On March 12, the governor closed all K-12 schools until April 5. On March 14, MSU cancelled commencement ceremonies and extended remote/online learning through the rest of the academic year. Acknowledging the difficulties caused by the virus and the sudden shift to online teaching and learning, MSU offered a "pass/fail" grade option to students on March 27, 2020 ("Timeline: Coronavirus spread in Michigan, reaction of public and government officials", 2020). Michigan had 6,517 COVID-19 deaths by August 31, 2020 (Michigan Data). And, as of this writing, we haven't stepped foot into a classroom in over a year.

Our university spent much of summer 2020 preparing for a presumed return to campus that would feature 50% online, 25% hybrid, and 25% face to face instruction. On August 18, 2020, however, two weeks prior to the start of the semester, MSU President Samuel L. Stanley--an infectious disease researcher--sent a letter to the campus community outlining a new plan. He wrote:

> ... given the current status of the virus in our country — particularly what we are seeing at other institutions as they repopulate their campus communities — it has become evident to me that, despite our best efforts and strong planning, it is unlikely we can prevent widespread transmission of COVID-19 between students if our undergraduates return to campus.
>
> So, effective immediately, we are asking undergraduate students who planned to live in our residence halls this fall to stay home and continue their education with [redacted] remotely. While a vast majority of our classes already were offered in remote formats, we will work the next two weeks to transition those that were in-person or hybrid to remote formats (Stanley, 2020).

Stanley also noted "the university is focused on making the transition to virtual learning opportunities. We will have more communica-

tions in the coming days regarding university employees, remote and telecommuting options" (Stanley, 2020). Subsequent communications extended the timeline of remote learning and outlined professional development opportunities for faculty teaching online.

After the shift to online teaching and learning in spring 2020, the university developed a series of online education training programs and brought in an external provider for additional support (Professional development). As Table 1 illustrates, MSU offered a host of robust learning experiences that served a variety of needs. Despite the innumerable and valiant efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators to plan and prepare for the fall 2020 semester, the university's sudden shift to remote learning, the general anxiety of a global pandemic, and the labor conditions of most faculty, seemed akin to a scattershot approach to problem solving.

Table 1: University Online Training Program Offerings

Name	Description
SOIREE (Spartan Online Instructional Readiness Educational Experience)	synchronous workshops and interactions with support staff to help ease faculty into teaching online
ASPIRE (ASynchronous Program for Instructional REadiness)	a self paced asynchronous course embedded in our campus CMS that was designed to help guide faculty through the problems and issues of developing an online version of their f2f course
#iTeachMSU Commons	a social space for faculty across campus to share insights, articles, research, stories, and artifacts associated with their pedagogy
QM (Quality Matters)	a nationally recognized, faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses

To explain, these trainings were by and large offered over the summer of 2020 and demanded sizable time commitments at a time when the majority of faculty are not on contract. One program, for instance, included a synchronous component of 20 hours over the course of a week. This was even more complicated by the fact that many faculty, up until August 18th, had been preparing to return to face to face

teaching. Suddenly having to transition two or three classes to a set of online learning experiences–and develop the capacity to do so–meant that many faculty were left starting from scratch a few weeks before the start of classes. Faculty, staff, and administrators were also concerned about the possibility that many students would simply not show up in the fall, which would result in fewer course offerings, something we as a department had not had to grapple with in recent history.

It was clear that the unprecedented events of 2020 would result in an unprecedented set of challenges for us as a community of teachers and learners oriented towards social justice. The fact that the federal administration at the time decided to let hundreds of thousands of people die rather than coordinate a response to Covid-19 (Rupar, 2021), while also advancing illiberal and anti-demoratic policies and actively working to prop up white supremacy in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, heightened anxieties to a level that we struggle to characterize and represent here. We cannot seem to find the right words and resist representing the experience of others. Understanding that we needed to advocate and make space for people from minoritized communities and others who might be taking care of family members who may have been infected or lost their jobs, we were keenly aware of the mental and emotional strain that was being placed on our immediate and extended community. The thought of preparing for courses in the fall was minimal compared to the national and global crises. We had to develop solutions to ensure that whatever the university decided, the transition for faculty and students had to be as seamless and as supportive as possible - this included working with the other administrators in the department and in the college.

Statement of the Problem

Tali Sharot (2017) reminds us that “When we are stressed, we become fixated on detecting dangers; we focus on what can go wrong,” and “[t]his creates excessively pessimistic views, which, in turn, can cause us to become overly conservative” (137). In the face of great uncertainty and disruption to the day-to-day business of teaching, learning, and administering programs, we, along with our colleagues, asked three foundational questions:

1. What do we need right now, in this moment of great disruption?
2. What do we need to know or learn to better respond to and support our community?
3. And, finally, how can we best live up to and honor the work of our students, colleagues, and department mission?

Asking these questions allowed program leaders to "reframe the message to highlight the possibility for progress, rather than doom" (Sharot, 2017, p. 107). Instead of focusing on all that went wrong, could go wrong, and would go wrong (which was a long list!), asking these three questions allowed program leaders to the crisis into a moment of inquiry and curiosity paved the way for a three-fold response: (1) emphasizing high-priority tasks and working to provide the necessary support to help in carrying-out those tasks, (2) collecting data on the experience, such as student and faculty surveys, and (3) leveraging our department and program mission statements to guide decision-making.

Taking Stock: What's Happening?

While Covid-19 created a series of pressing challenges that warranted immediate response, it also compounded the difficulties of conducting rather routine day-to-day work such as curriculum revision, developing internships for students, and room scheduling, to name a few. Taking stock and assessing the landscape allowed us to identify new problems, better understand old challenges, and better prepare for future challenges. Conducting a rather thorough analysis of the moment allowed department administrators, faculty, and staff to better coordinate and respond to the host of challenges. Though largely preliminary, working towards a common understanding of the challenges has important ramifications for shaping responses. As Steven Sloman and Philip Fernbach (2017) note:

> Sharing attention is a crucial step on the road to being a full collaborator in a group sharing cognitive labor, in a community of knowledge. Once we can share attention, we can do something even more impressive--we can share common ground. We know some things that we know others know, and we know that they know that we know (and of course we know that they know that we know that they know, etc). The knowledge is not just distributed; it is shared. Once knowledge is shared in this way, we can share intentionality; we can jointly pursue a common goal (p. 115).

Below, we detail a series of archi-strategic actions department leaders made in order to identify and share important knowledge about challenges, which laid the foundation for future action and developed a sense of common action–shared intentionality.

To explain, immediately following the president's shifting of the campus online in the spring, we made moves of our own to respond to the most pressing issue: scheduling courses and ensuring access to preparation and training. First, we emailed faculty and students to see

what resources they needed to move back home, teach from home, and have access to necessary hardware and software. It is perhaps no surprise that, given the sudden nature of the president's statement, very few people responded to our emails. At the next curriculum meeting for both programs, we agreed that whatever resources we had for the remainder of the year, and for the entirety of our being online, would be devoted to student experiences: internships, jobs, awards–anything that might alleviate the uncertainty of the situation. At the departmental level, while budget constraints led to a freeze on faculty travel funds, those funds were sometimes redirected to student support. After this agreement, we continued to email students, but again, the hectic nature of the semester's final days made it difficult for students to stay connected.

As we continued to communicate with faculty, students, and administration across campus, we found that with only a week left in spring semester and with no real information to go on, we needed to ask faculty to prepare over the summer for three possible scenarios for fall 2020: 1) teaching entirely online, 2) teaching entirely in person, or 3) teaching hybrid courses. Understanding the urgency of providing training and resources in the event of remote work, we developed PD workshops over the summer. To inform these workshops, we created and then sent out a Google document that listed each class and column where faculty could fill out resources needed for hardware and software. When the university finally gave us some direction as to what we might expect for the fall, we added a column for the new University Covid Identification acronyms that would be used by our Registrar to list classes for fall. Faculty could then list their preference for teaching either asynchronous (COA), synchronous (COS), or hybrid (COH). We chose a Google document instead of a survey for two reasons: first, we wanted to see what faculty needs overlapped–so that if enough asked for certain types of hardware or software, we could make the case for resources to be funded by the college; second, we wanted those people teaching the same course to see what the other was doing in an effort to coordinate resources, funds, community partners, lesson plans, and so on. The goal was to gather information and to give those of us in administration the opportunity to find the resources faculty needed to be successful in the fall, but also allow faculty to see one another as a resource as well.

While there are several of our courses that require certain types of software and hardware, our document design courses require the use of Adobe Creative Suite, which is usually found in our computer labs where these courses are taught. But with the shift to remote learning,

students lost access to those labs and we realized we had to purchase accounts for students for the remainder of the spring semester. We were lucky that the hardware students already had at home were able to run Adobe, but students in other courses had hardware breakdowns and we had to loan out Chromebooks from our own department hardware library. Also, as all of our faculty lost access to our labs, we petitioned the college to secure software licenses for faculty who needed the software for publishing obligations.

While polling faculty via email, we soon realized that a number of our faculty were comfortable teaching online because of past experience. On the other end we found out that some had little to no experience and that faculty in both groups rarely used the campus CMS (D2L). The summer workshops we developed for faculty were hosted by Sarah Gibbons, a department colleague with extensive online teaching experience, and Mike Ristich. While our faculty were off contract for summer, Jackie Rhodes paid the workshop hosts to build the topics around prospective gaps in faculty skills and confidence regarding teaching online. As the workshop hosts were being paid, faculty attending these workshops were off contract and volunteering from their time off to learn. This was a massive undertaking by the workshop organizers and the department as a whole. Faculty who normally take the summer off to work on external projects, write, conduct research, or travel to inform their scholarship, were suddenly pulled back and told to rethink how they might offer their usual face-to-face course in an online environment.

We also realized that the normal workflow channels of discussion and knowledge sharing were disrupted. The office space, normally a central hub for dialog and conversation, evaporated when the campus was closed and everyone was sent home to work remotely. Trying to get people together who were off contract to even check emails was difficult, as the bulk of teaching faculty in our undergrad programs are taught by NT faculty. Consequently, a series of older initiatives–leaning into antiracist teaching and learning and the establishing of a new minor in writing–were made all the more difficult.

At the urging of our graduate students and direction of the department chair, both curriculum committees worked to develop anti-racist teaching materials and diversity learning goals for our programs. This work was, and continues to be, informed many scholars, some of whom have been published in this series, but we cannot list them all here. As noted in *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn*, "Social injustices require coalitional action, collective thinking, and a commitment to understanding difference that is not necessar-

ily demanded by other technical communication problems" (Walton et al., 2019, p. 1). Over the semester, committee members divided the work and decided to read texts and report back to the main committee on what had been found. The data showed that our programs were lacking in terms of anti-racist teaching materials and diversity learning goals. We also found that by having solid program learning outcomes via both major curriculum overhauls in the past two years, both programs were ideally positioned to make change. The pandemic and the events of 2020 have moved us to take action and develop a new strategy for how to combat racism within institutional structures, but we know we have more work to do.

In parallel to this effort, we were developing a minor in writing that we believed the university needed desperately. Given the documents coming out of our own university's communications, the miscommunication on pandemic details coming from the federal government (treatment, precautions, and more), we knew that the world could use more socially conscious, caring, and intelligent writers. While yes, ideally, we want them to major in our own undergraduate program, we know that a minor in writing that offers new courses we developed around writing in corporate contexts, medical writing, and government policy, can help extend our mission of using writing to change the world for the better.

Taken together, these short-term responses to immediate needs, as well as our ongoing department work, set the table for a more focused response to Covid-19 crisis.

Collecting Data on the Experience: What Do We Need to Know?

After assessing the landscape and responding to the most pressing problems, we sought to collect data on the experience from both students and faculty via surveys. Understanding, of course, that there would be new challenges in the coming weeks and months, we viewed the faculty survey as an opportunity to uncover and document experiences from spring 2020 that would inform decision-making as programs finalized plans for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. Simply put, we knew there was much we didn't know, and we needed to better understand the situation of our students and colleagues.

The faculty survey was deployed mostly through emails and constant queries. The director of the program repeatedly shared a Google doc for fall 2020 online course support with faculty in an effort to see if there were any updates or problems that were arising. You can see this

Google doc in Figure 1¬–it is an updated variation of the one that was deployed in the spring to get initial feedback from faculty about their needs for professional development over summer.

Fall 2020 P2W XA Online Course Support

Fall Courses	CMS Support	Hardware Support	Software Support	Covid Identification (COA, COS, COH)
WRA 202	D2L, Google		MS Office, free/open source design software	COA COS
WRA 210	AWS support		Free web editor (Atom or something similar)	COA . COS
WRA 225	Google Classroom	Film lab in Wells - 6th floor: they will pick up and drop off the equipment there.	We are looking into editing softwares. Ideally, it would be premiere but we'll look at free ones too.	COA
WRA 260	D2L, MSU Google drive		MS Office	COS COA COS
WRA 325	D2L, Google			COS COS
WRA 330				COS
WRA 331	D2L, Google		MS Office, Google, Canva, Adobe (?)	COS
WRA 360	D2L, MSU Google Apps	(Have everything I need.)	Adobe CC (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), MS Office	COS
WRA 370	D2L		MS Office, Google	COS

Most of the feedback returned via email from faculty showed they were doing well in terms of pedagogy, hardware, and software. The real struggles were with workload and mental and emotional health. Both programs struggled with trying to find ways to get faculty engaged without overloading them. Other departments within the college decided to suspend their curriculum and advisor committees, but both of our programs still held curriculum meetings every two weeks to continue the governance of the programs, develop anti-racist teaching materials and diversity learning goals, and develop the new minor in writing.

While the curriculum committees continued to work and faculty began to collaborate and support one another, we wanted to get a larger picture of the work students were doing in and out of the classroom. We developed an end of the fall 2020 semester survey for students on both programs to help us make informed and strategic decisions for spring 2021.

Out of 194 majors between both programs, we had a response rate of 18%. We understood the number might be low given the current nature of the world and how the last thing anyone probably wanted to do was take a survey, but we gathered the data and found it to be helpful to better understand the experiences of our students.

While many of the questions in our surveys requested information about internet access, learning goals, and workload, when prompted by open-ended questions, students revealed experiences that centered the importance of relationships, observation, and reflection. In regards to learning during a pandemic, one student observed:

> It was humbling. I felt fear in a way I had never felt before. Understood the fragility & fleetingness of life so close to my heart in a way that I hadn't before. Seen so many people vulnerable and sad and trying to take care of themselves in a way that I hadn't before. It's changed my perspective on people. Professors, parents, friends - everyone is so human. With all of the uncertainty, anger, ambiguity, and questioning. I stopped and really thought about what I valued in life.

It is important to understand that our decisions impact more than our Zoom cameras can capture. We have a lasting impact on the learning and growth not just of programs, but of faculty and students. Learning that an undergraduate student had stopped to think about what they value in life during the pandemic reminds us why we built our program the way we did: we want to center reflective moments that inform and construct a lens to see the world and engage it for change. This quote is an inspiration and a reminder of what happens when we rely on our programs' missions to guide and make decisions.

Leaning into the Mission: How to Honor the Work of Students and Faculty?

As mentioned earlier, both programs underwent significant curriculum revisions, giving us solid artifacts to lean on and turn to while thinking through and making decisions. Revised learning outcomes and mission statements directed our decision-making. Brené Brown (2018) notes, "If we want to be value-driven, we have to operationalize our values into behaviors and skills that are teachable and observable. And we have to do the difficult work of holding ourselves and others accountable for showing up in a way aligned with those values" (p. 216). Harnessing our values and learning goals in this way allowed our programs to work through options and make decisions about teaching online and developing support systems for teaching online, which strengthened our confidence and resolve to use such a kairotic moment to advance our goals and values by putting them into action.

The mission statement from our Professional and Public Writing major notes that we are "to provide experiences, relationships, and

resources that help students become more versatile, inventive, empathetic, and engaged writers." Likewise our Experience Architecture's mission statement notes that "We believe that people deserve to engage with usable, accessible, and sustainable spaces." By asserting these values, being mindful of the needs of individuals and the program, and reexamining the commonplaces guiding our day-to-day work, we have sought to make good on the promise we make to our students. What we found in terms of our actions directly related to our revised program goals. In both programs we talk and teach social justice, open access, empathy, design, and much more. We offer classes in project management, social justice, design thinking, research methods, digital rhetoric, technical writing–we found these topics to be valid reminders that as we teach these subjects, we are also practitioners. We were headed towards a better program, but this crisis accelerated the process, and we were suddenly reminded of our own skill sets and began to once again model what leadership can look like. This modeling is crucial, for it shows students how to lead in spaces beyond the university. Being archi-strategic emboldens an agile approach built on a solid foundation laid by well researched and supported program goals. It means you can pivot, change, and rewire parts of your program so that the primary hub of inspiration does not change, but the manner in which it is enacted is *able* to change.

With data in hand, we both used our mission to interpret the data and used it to better articulate our mission, especially as we had to make and communicate programmatic decisions.

In the survey at the beginning of the spring 2021 semester, the first question we asked students was "How would you describe your feelings when you learned that your courses would be online for Fall 2020?" Of the total number of respondents, 62% said that they were relieved, happy, or neutral.

The survey also asked students to rank what issues they found to be "most challenging, somewhat challenging, or not challenging at all." Students ranked "Staying on top of all the assignments," "not having the 'college experience,'" and "concern about their safety and the safety of their loved ones" as being most challenging and somewhat challenging. The director of both undergrad programs reminded faculty on several occasions via email, and in curriculum meetings, to directly share support and resources with students. While he sent many emails to the listservs for both programs to students, such as mental health initiatives on and off campus as well as reminders to contact advisors, the director, and their instructors, it was clear that students wanted to hear from their teachers.

Perhaps not surprising, as our students are mostly sophomores, juniors, and seniors, students also said they found "learning new technologies" as "not challenging at all." While both of our programs are cutting-edge in terms of topics and pedagogy, we still reiterated to faculty to use simplified systems that students would already be familiar with, such as D2L, the university CMS. One student noted that this had begun in fall 2020: "I really appreciated the professors who took the time to lighten our course load and check in with us frequently. These were the same professors who made sure we knew it was okay to ask for extensions if needed. These professors made online learning feel manageable."

However, the experience of utilizing several different course management systems and communication tools over the course of the semester left some students feeling overwhelmed:

> Please. For the love of anything. Institute SOME sort of consistent guidelines for professor-student communication regarding work that needs to be done. D2L, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, Email, I've seen all of them and it was a nightmare and a half trying to keep up with it all. My biggest stressor this semester was the constant worry that I had forgotten to check some random tab and thus was unaware of some giant project due that night.

As MSU is a large R1 institution where students, faculty, and staff are engaged across campus via different information streams and technologies, this type of disconnect occurs regularly and is something schools might view as an embarrassment of technology riches, but it can also lead to confusion and frustration. The assessment of our programs in the previous year revealed how diverse our faculty are when it comes to deploying various technologies in our courses. While options are great, simple problems and issues that could have been explained or fixed by faculty in a face-to-face setting were exacerbated in the online space. The student quote above revealed these issues and surfaced a new problem for us that we need to think hard about as we continue to align our values and actions. Going forward, we may offer multiple PD opportunities for faculty to learn new technologies to enhance their pedagogy, but they will need to be done in a way that minimizes complications regardless of the modality.

While some responses gave us new lines of inquiry, several confirmed what we already knew to be true: our colleagues had done amazing work to support students during an unprecedented moment. Several students noted the help and comfort they received from faculty aided in their ability to stay afloat in the course and beyond. One

student noted: "The XA/WRA professors were really helpful and understanding, I wouldn't have been able to make it through this semester without them." In fact, students indicated repeatedly that faculty were generally available, empathetic, and flexible.

While faculty supported students, department colleagues banded together to support each other, too. The college generated a COVID relief fund, which sparked faculty in our own department to pool together their professional development/travel money to support one another. A number of faculty (both non-tenure-track and tenure-track) donated their funds to the department relief effort and helped others secure hardware, software, ring lights, and ergonomic office equipment in order to teach effectively from home. In essence, our department offered its own professional development workshops to facilitate the skills needed to successfully teach online, and in turn faculty donated their own professional development funds to continue that mission.

What is more, a particularly salient example of aligning our actions and values, is the revision to our department's annual review process. The normal annual review process was too complicated even under the best circumstances, and the crises led us to proactively change. The president of our university had made it clear there were to be no merit raises for the 2020 review year, except for the unionized NT faculty who had a contract with the university that guaranteed a pool of money for raises. The entire union agreed to forgo any ranking and split the merit funds evenly–every person in the union got the same amount. Tenure-line faculty and academic specialists, who were not in a union, were not going to receive a merit raise. This simplified everything since annual reviews are separate from merit review anyway, so we could just focus on review. We revised our by-laws to make it easier to submit documents for the review committee: a Google form was created for people to submit two things.

1. Curriculum vitae
2. Two narrative reports, combined into one no-more-than-4-page document
    - Narrative 1 focused on teaching
    - Narrative 2 focused on discussing effort and how it fits into our ongoing work

While simplifying the process, we also created opportunities for faculty to include artifacts that were more representative of their work and teaching. Whereas the earlier annual review process asked most faculty to submit teaching materials (syllabi, course documents,

rubrics, and so on) and student evaluations, the new process allowed for faculty to be more flexible in what they included. Faculty could now include external letters of commendation, peer-observation reports, exemplary student work, presentations related to teaching and learning. In short, faculty were invited to think creatively about their work and tell a different story than the student evaluations and syllabi could tell during Covid-19. The revision of these deliverables meant that the review committees could focus more on offering feedback and suggestions to faculty for finding resources to help and support them in their time of pedagogical and emotional need. This approach was supported by the creation of a process document for transparency by the NT review committee. The document contained all of the committee's meeting times, notes, topics, and action items. At the end of the document, the committee suggested that the department do more than just send a letter to faculty congratulating them on a great year. It was suggested that the narratives and stories submitted by faculty in their reviews be voluntarily submitted and collected so that 2020 would not disappear into the annals of history, but could be collectively celebrated for the amazing accomplishment by our faculty, staff, and students.

And to continue to spread the good will, both undergraduate curriculum committees, in keeping with our pledge from spring 2020 to invest what funds we had in student initiatives, decided to split the large monetary prize of our Outstanding Senior Award into three Outstanding Senior Awards: three for each program. We did this specifically to find ways of bringing a spotlight on the amazing student work, and in doing so, promote them with artifacts and acknowledgments that might catch the eye of prospective employers. We also did this to help aid students who might have lost their job, be taking care of friends or relatives who are sick, or are sick themselves and are unable to work. We reinvested in our students.

Decision-making as Archi-Strategic

Crises both foreclose and create opportunities. What they foreclose is often painfully obvious while the opportunities remain opaque. In this way, program stakeholders can readily detect the limits of program strategy. The perennial question "What is to be done?" can all too easily be met with a hopeless shoulder shrug. Yet, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we know many faculty, administrators, and leaders have made important decisions that have supported their students, colleagues, and programs. And, while those decisions might have seemed (or continue to seem) to be "one-time" decisions made in the face of great uncertainty, we encourage our colleagues to view those decisions and

actions as archi-strategic. As we'll elaborate below, archi-strategic decisions have three parts:

1. They allow a program to fully assert its values instead of fearing what might be lost as a result of some crisis.
2. They provide administrators the opportunity to balance the program mission with individual care because a shift towards one endangers the other.
3. Finally, in asserting values and supporting program goals and the individuals who give to the program, administrators can interrogate commonplaces and orient towards a better programmatic future.

Taking advantage of these three opportunities results in increased program transparency and sustainability.

To illustrate what we mean by archi-strategic, we draw from the language of woodworking. An important part of woodworking is the ability to envision, design, and use "jigs." These are "custom made" and "solve a one-time chore but, more often, it becomes as permanently useful as the tool on which it was designed to be used. Many times, the project enables you to extend the applications of a tool beyond its basic functions" (De Cristoforo, 1999, p. 6-7). For example, table saws are designed for long straight cuts. However, through the construction of a simple "taper cut jig," a table saw will be able to cut long tapered pieces of wood. The jig doesn't in any way alter the machine itself; it expands the saw's capabilities. While a novice woodworker, in a situation that calls for a tapered piece of wood, might attempt a tapered cut on a table saw without the aid of a jig, they will have to do so without the protection and guidance of the table saw's fence (a piece of the machine that guides the wood as its cut to produce clear straight cuts). While the resulting piece of wood might suffice for a given task, this method results in cuts that are imprecise, unpredictable, and nearly impossible to replicate. Too, without the use of a jig or the tool's own safety features or equipment, woodworking becomes drastically more dangerous. Expert woodworkers, on the other hand, can envision, design, and employ simple "jigs" that expand the capabilities of the machine, thereby producing more accurate cuts and replicable pieces of wood, all while making the saw itself more responsive, reproducible, safer, and easier to use. By providing a new foundation for the saw's performance, jigs, we might say, are examples of archi-strategic decisions and performance. Such archi-strategic decisions are profoundly rhetorical, in that they demand that one recognize the "available means" in order to make ongoing adjustments to a given situation.

As administrators and faculty begin to reflect on the various disruptions of 2020-2021, we argue that administrators view their actions and decisions as archi-strategic. Doing so will allow them to uncover and articulate how their actions may or may not have stemmed from their program's mission, as well as how their actions may have expanded the capabilities of their program's mission. To give an example, our department, like many other departments across the country, faced questions about the faculty annual review process. The shift to online teaching in both the spring and fall of 2020 presented enormous and unique challenges to students and faculty alike, and thus there was much confusion about how the annual review process: Would the annual process be waived? How could the important work be captured and represented in the annual review process? What materials could faculty present in their dossiers? As we made our way through these problems, collectively in department meetings and as members of an ad hoc committee, it became clear that not only could we revise the annual review to better respond to the Covid-19 crisis, but also to better align with our department goals and values.

As a result of the ongoing conversations and inquiry about the effects of Covid-19 on annual reviews and faculty evaluation, the department rewrote its bylaws to account for a revised annual review process, allowed faculty to select and include a wider variety of artifacts in their dossiers, simplified the writing process, and revised the merit review committee's guidance documents. The revised annual review process provided a foundation for how faculty members represent their work, relay student learning, and document continued professional growth. In turn, the revision allowed the departmental merit review committee and department leadership to better reward those very things. What began as a crisis-driven response to support individual faculty ended up supporting and advancing the department's values and goals, which also contributes to the former. In other words, what started as a solution to "solve a one-time chore" became "as permanently useful as the tool on which it was designed to be used" and "extend[ed] the applications of a tool beyond its basic functions." Consequently, the revised annual review process provided a new f0undation for our larger strategy and goals; they become archi-strategic.

Key Takeaways

After reflecting on this situation and the above list of actions and decisions, we argue that seeing these decisions as archi-strategic allows for three important takeaways for program directors and administra-

tors. Such archi-strategic actions allow programs to fully assert their values and goals and avoid focusing on the potential losses a crisis might provoke. The actions we have described above, best exemplified through the revised annual review process, allow departments to articulate and demonstrate their commitment to student learning and effective teaching. The actions of the department to modify and revise the annual review process was motivated not just through the immediate needs of faculty during Covid-19, but also through a desire to make sure the revisions aligned with our broader program values and goals. Because our department has the good fortune of having a well-defined set of programs and a clear mission statement, programmatic decisions ended up as both immediate and crisis-driven, as well as part of a larger ethos and mission.

Takeaway #1

While it is certainly easy to focus on what might be lost during times of great upheaval, such moments provide program leaders an opportunity not only to support the people who make up the department, but also to make the department operate better than before, which, in turn, also supports the department's stakeholders and community. In other words, we found that paying attention to the health of individual programs was an essential part of caring for people. Departments and programs provide, apart from employment, pay, and opportunity, a mission, a sense of belonging, and a community. Recognizing the impromptu and improvisatory nature as archi-strategic means orienting leaders towards what Beronda Montgomery (2021) calls a "groundskeeping" model of leadership. She writes, "this distinct form of leadership is sense driven and environmentally adaptive; it attends to individuals at the same time as tending the ecosystems in which these individuals exist (p. 149). The Covid-19 crisis revealed to us the need to recognize the symbiotic relationships between individuals and the departments/programs in which they invest their time and energy to support the growth and functioning of both.

Takeaway #2

This means, of course, working against the drive to retreat into the familiar and well-worn spaces and being open to revisiting and revising departmental commonplaces, even amidst great uncertainty and precarity. We recognize with Anna Tsing (2015) that "Thinking through precarity changes social analysis. A precarious world is a world without teleology. Indeterminacy, the unplanned nature of time, is frightening, but thinking through precarity makes it evident that indeterminacy

also makes life possible" (p. 20). While, as a department, we had been interested in revamping our annual review process, the efforts were incremental and piecemeal. However, Covid-19 meant that the annual review process, as well as our approach to revising the annual review, had to change. While the annual review was familiar to everyone within the department, it quickly became clear that familiar wouldn't work in the context of a global pandemic. Indeed, it also became clearer that the process might not have really supported faculty achievement and program assessment the way many thought it did. The familiar, in this case, far from providing the respite and comfort we hoped it might provide, would have compounded the anxieties commonly associated with the annual review process, as well as produced new worries about how teaching and learning were documented and rewarded during the pandemic.

Takeaway #3

Finally, by recasting programmatic decisions made during the Covid-19 crisis as archi-strategic, leaders and administrators can contribute to fostering a culture of transparency and sustainability within their departments and programs. Because archi-strategic decisions invite leaders and administrators to declare and align actions with values (which means supporting the individuals *and* programs) and interrogate governing commonplaces, crises like the Covid-19 pandemic open the door to transparent decision-making and sustainable programs and support for stakeholders. Because these decisions take place at the limits of program strategy and goals, they are undoubtedly public; the effects of such decisions will be seen and felt by stakeholders across the programs.

Consequently, we encourage leaders not only to communicate decisions, but to communicate how those decisions will lead to more effective and supportive programs as a whole. This requires hard, but open conversations with faculty, and invites discussion about past, current, and future initiatives. Essentially, this foregrounds a rhetorical response–one grounded in ethical praxis–to a crisis situation.

Conclusion

Because Covid-19 has upended the day-to-day work of programs and rendered program assessment and planning nearly impossible, which has, consequently, obfuscated how decisions are made, viewing decisions as archi-strategic opens the door not only to leading effectively through an age of disruption, but to stronger, more transparent, and sustainable programs. Indeed, upon reflecting on the previous year

and the continued challenges of Covid-19, seeing the programmatic decisions as archi-strategic has allowed us–administrators, faculty, staff, and students–to articulate and model our programs' mission and values.

Lawrence Freedman (2013) observes, "A strategic plan, relating available means to desired ends through a series of steps which if followed carefully and in sequence produces the desired outcome, suggests a predictable world, with cause and effect known in advance." However, "such plans struggle to survive their encounters with an awkward reality." At the same time, "the unexpected and the accidental can be managed if provision is made from the start to accommodate them" (p. 622). By offering a way to account for the decisions that happen at the limits of program strategy–archi-strategic decisions–we hope program administrators and stakeholders have a "provision" for dealing with an unpredictable and "awkward reality," as well as a way to advance their programs towards more sustainable and supportive futures.

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Appendix

Professional and Public Writing Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide experiences, relationships, and resources that help students become more versatile, inventive, empathetic, and engaged writers. Such writers comprehend that rhetorics, technologies, and cultures constantly shape each other and that writers must adapt to this interplay if they are to do good work in the world. We believe that writers who can flourish within this constant interplay prove invaluable as employees, colleagues, and citizens.

Professional and Public Writing Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate attention to rhetorical contexts.
2. Students will compose for and with diverse audiences.
3. Students will identify their responsibility as communicators and community members.
4. Students will collaborate with attention to project management and citizenship.
5. Students will create with attention to their own positionality as well as the cultures and communities they create for and within.
6. Students will make research-based arguments that are supported by clear claims and evidence.
7. Students will learn how to learn in professional and public writing contexts.

Experience Architecture Mission Statement

Experience Architecture (XA) is a cross-disciplinary User Experience (UX) degree that makes its essential focus staging improved and just experiences in the world. It is a values driven program engaging UX as a vehicle for future change agents. We believe that people deserve to engage with usable, accessible, and sustainable spaces. We position XA students to engage these spaces, and contribute to designing a world in which they would want to participate.

Experience Architecture Learning Outcomes

1. Students will emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, community, and justice in their design and research processes.
2. Students will evaluate how their own experiences and positionality influence their design and research processes.
3. Students will reflect on experiences in order to monitor continued learning and growth.
4. Students will integrate knowledge of culture and partner communities into their design and research practices.

5. Students will apply user-experience research techniques such as card-sorting, usability-testing, expert reviews, etc. into their design and research processes.
6. Students will analyze how technologies influence human action and decision-making.
7. Students will explain the practices and knowledge associated with working in fields associated with XA (including user-experience, user research, artificial intelligence, computer science, content strategy, accessibility, etc.).
8. Students will create projects through iterative and recursive processes that include inquiry, research, feedback, reflection, and revision.
9. Students will generate projects across a variety of media, such as websites, mobile apps, and text-based reports.
10. Students will evaluate the steps and processes involved in executing multi-step and iterative projects.
11. Students will utilize a variety of modes, including writing, speech, sound, graphic design, programming languages, etc. in their design and research processes.

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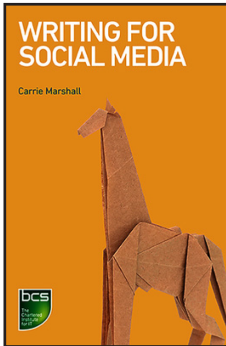

Writing for Social Media
Carrie Marshall, Author
United Kingdom
The Chartered Institute for IT
2018. 74 pp.

Reviewed by Jenna Morris Harte
Georgia State University

Whether we work in marketing, own a business, or simply want to keep up with friends and family across the globe, most of us find ourselves contributing to the chatter of social media on a daily basis—and many of us are motivated to do so by the number of "likes" we receive on our posts. Though she does not promise to make your social media account a viral sensation, in *Writing for Social Media*, Carrie Marshall provides a gloss for how to enter the online conversation most successfully. This volume is part of a series developed by Marshall, which includes *Business Writing for Technical People* and *Technical Writing for Business People*. Accordingly, Marshall approaches this piece on social media with a sense of "boots on the ground" expertise, using her twenty years of experience in professional writing contexts to contribute to the discipline. Marshall's work as a freelance writer allows her to speak with authority to those who want to elevate the discourse of a personal or business social media account. As such, this book functions as an excellent introduction to how social

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media and its algorithms work, in addition to demystifying how and when to deploy successful content. Though Marshall's target audience is business owners, this book would be useful in a technical and professional communication program that offers an introduction to marketing or social media writing as one of its learning objectives.

In some ways, the tone and structure of *Writing for Social Media* implicitly models Marshall's explicit suggestions for creating social media content. Chapter Three, "Big Idea in Small Spaces," encourages brevity in content production, which is something Marshall also accomplishes in the correspondingly short chapters of the book itself. Additionally, Marshall provides "eleven and a half ways" to create shareable content, while pointing out that people are likely to click on odd-numbered lists. Along the same lines, Marshall confidently uses humor, making note in her bio that her self-published novel allowed her to buy a car—not a "great car, but still: a car!" (p. 9), while she simultaneously cautions readers against "trying to be funny when you're not funny" (p. 42). Indeed, Marshall's use of humor works best in Chapter 10, "Everyone is Offended," in which she dedicates space to infamously controversial social media posts made by major companies such as H&M and US Airways. These posts, ironically, almost always caused a stir because the social media writer made a joke in bad taste. Here, Marshall uses others' failed attempts at humor to her benefit, providing entertaining commentary on social media flops while still showcasing the studies for her didactic aim of proving what could go wrong when online writers lose sight of their audience's concerns in favor of getting a laugh or two. Thus, even though her book was published in print format, Marshall models online tone and form. Simultaneously, she also takes her own writing advice; the book functions as a meta-perspective for how to write in online platforms and is full of practical knowledge about social media writing.

In *Writing for Social Media*, Marshall toggles between providing information about different social media platforms and encouraging readers to determine what they expect to achieve through developing a persona for social media sites. In the process, she outlines what rhetoricians know to be true about the critical acknowledgement of audience, writer, and purpose. From the beginning of the book, Marshall explains that writers should know why they are entering

online spaces before doing so. Furthermore, she recommends taking into account not only the demographics of and distinctions between users of various social media platforms, but also emphasizes remembering what kind of persona writers are attempting to cultivate through the content they produce. These suggestions that prompt a rhetorical awareness of the writing situation are critical to all writing contexts. In thinking about this volume as a teaching tool, it would most benefit a student in an introductory-level technical or professional writing course, but it could also be useful in a more general writing course, were a program interested in making connections between the rhetorical work performed in both academic and "real-life" settings.

The limitations of the book are inherent in its topical concern: a book on social media will, undoubtedly, become outdated rapidly as the landscape of the internet expands. Even though the book was recently published, it dates itself with the exclusion of new media platforms, such as Tik-Tok and Instagram's "Story" feature. Overall, Marshall's book is less helpful to instructors who are interested in helping students create multi-modal content for social media, as it offers no guidelines for producing compelling visual media, such as videos for a YouTube account or images for Instagram. Moreover, the book is lean on theoretical perspectives, and it generally neglects to comment on the larger implications of virtual social engagement and communication. Consequently, technical and professional communication directors and instructors should include additional texts to provide rhetorical or sociological perspectives of our cultural engagement with social media.

Regardless of its shortcomings, technical and professional writing program directors and instructors would benefit from the use of Marshall's book. Marshall legitimizes the kinds of writing performed in professional contexts by highlighting the complexity of the work, and she makes tangible the ways that skills learned in technical and professional writing programs can be practically applied. Marshall's book paints a picture of the ever-changing and multi-faceted arena of social media, while also making visible the way that each platform operates for different audiences. In highlighting these distinctions, Marshall delivers her best advice for how to achieve the production

of successful content that caters to individualized audiences. None of the information found in the book is particularly transformative to the way scholars think about writing for social media, yet Marshall does cull the relevant topics of discussion into one clear, accessible source that could be relevant to novices. As technical and professional writing programs prepare students to support businesses with interests in growing their social media platforms, Carrie Marshall's *Writing for Social Media* will function as a useful handbook to assist in teaching the skills necessary for online modes of communication.

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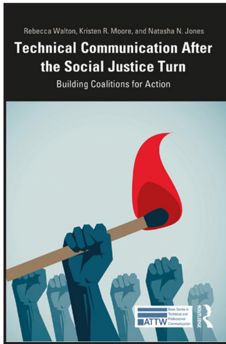

Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action

Rebecca Walton, Kristen R. Moore &
Natasha N. Jones, Authors
New York, NY
Routledge
2019. 182 pp.

Reviewed by Yanar Hashlamon
The Ohio State University

In technical and professional communication (TPC), one of the most frustrating and familiar responses to a publication or conference presentation on anything approaching social justice is, "but does social justice really work in technical communication?" In *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn*, Walton, Moore, and Jones unequivocally answer "yes" with a strength that is sorely needed in the field's scholarly and professional spaces. That strength can support TPC scholars who have been building coalitions and bringing their lived experiences and expertise into the field, and it can help those who are looking for resources to begin making programmatic or scholarly changes in their TPC work. Though some of the text's effectiveness may be limited by the varying audiences addressed, Walton, Moore, and Jones' work adds an important perspective that cuts across TPC scholarship and practice.

The book's three sections define terms, frame theory, and apply practice, respectively, across multiple contexts to provide a holistic

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approach for a variety of readers. Informing the text's wide scope is a tightly focused set of values held by the authors. Their attention to citational practice is especially appreciated as it broadens the field as much as it deepens scholarly commitment to disruption of oppressive structures. The authors "deliberately and reflexively work with theories from women of color that have yet to dominate the bookshelves of colleagues across the field of TPC" (p. 112). These colleagues are often signaled as the primary audience for this text, so for those of us whose perspectives and identities are historically marginalized from TPC, there is a lot of familiarity in the scholars whose work Walton, Moore, and Jones draw upon to answer the questions "Why is oppression a technical communication problem?" and "What does justice look like, and how is it enacted?" (p. 10). The authors cite the perspectives and politics of a variety of critically significant theorists, including Sara Ahmed's inquiries into university diversity initiatives and their tokenizing outcomes, Paulo Friere on critical pedagogy and bell hooks on engaged pedagogy, Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, Gloria Anzaldúa's liminal borderlands, Michelle Alexander's writing on mass incarceration, Audre Lorde's discussions of social marginalization and Angela Davis' reflections on activist organizing. The familiarity here isn't a bad thing – far from it. As Walton, Moore, and Jones show, familiarity isn't something marginalized scholars have felt too often in TPC, until recently.

The authors also appreciate that there is a sizable audience in TPC for whom a PDF of bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* is not a few clicks away whenever they are designing a new syllabus. Theoretical frameworks like the authors' 3Ps (positionality, privilege, and power) and heuristics for action like Chapter 4's the 4Rs (recognize, reveal, reject, and replace) help to organize theories and histories of political struggle and core ideas of social justice with clarity and effectiveness. Amidst this discussion, the authors make subtle but key gestures towards the aforementioned broader readership within TPC. They write on the limits of inclusion by pointing to persistent discrimination in workplaces, drawing on assumptions made about employees based on identity markers to explain positionality, and claiming "the easiest way to think about centering is to talk about users in UX design contexts" (p. 137). This attention to their varied audience is further

demonstrated in the authors' address of not only academic programs, but also community organizations and industry in the third section of this volume. Coalitional politics are not limited to only be scholarly or community-based or industry-based, and neither are they limited in Walton, Moore, and Jones' writing on the subject.

Where Section I of the text discusses oppression and justice in broad terms to establish the exigence within TPC, Section II addresses the authors' three Ps. Each is detailed in its own chapter as the authors discuss predominant theories and histories and exemplify all three Ps through examples of social injustices. Where the first section summarizes and applies work from theorists beyond TPC, the 3Ps are originally found in the authors' 2016 article, "Disrupting the Past to Disrupt the Future" and expanded in the book. Chapter 4 brings a powerful focus on marginalization within TPC based on privilege. The authors' discussion of how many TPC scholars view anything other than "'data-driven,' 'empirical,' or 'generalizable'" scholarship as illegitimate knowledge-making is an impactful, and once again familiar, example of injustice that privilege is deeply involved in making possible (p. 94). Chapter 5, on power, draws primarily on Patricia Hill Collins' definitional work from Black feminist theory and bridges structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power into TPC through a variety of anecdotal, hypothetical, and published examples. The authors go on to constellate the three Ps with these domains of power, framing takeaways as "a vision of the *field* that doesn't yet exist" (127), but are possible and must be examined and enacted across TPC.

The final section of the text is focused on coalitional action – the means with which to redress injustice in TPC based on the exigencies and frameworks established, evidenced, and applied over the first two sections of the book. The authors lay out the 4Rs, recognize, reveal, reject, and replace, as their practical heuristic for the field, describing each through examples from a hypothetical scenario involving a transportation planning project. This approach continues later in the chapter where the authors present two other hypothetical scenarios as case studies for critical context analysis and coalitional action. Though hypothetical scenarios do simplify application of the 4Rs, they also present limitations where lived experiences can show

the applicability of a heuristic in much greater complexity. Their writing on the Global South in one scenario abstracts neocolonialism in a way that ignores key differences between unique histories of settler and exploitation colonialism. The limitations of hypothetical scenarios are perhaps most pronounced when Walton, Moore, and Jones imagine and construct their audience.

The levels of precarity that readers of this text inhabit in the field must be addressed directly by any potential solution to confront injustice. The authors write that TPC scholars who claim to be "neutral" may be struggling to recognize injustice (p. 135). While that point may be true for some of the field, the authors do not account for those who have a vested interest in injustice and act intentionally to keep the field comfortable for themselves or to shore up their own material and cultural privilege. Chapter 7 attempts to anticipate such figures' critiques in a They Say/We Say response structure, positing that this chapter will "equip technical communicators to dismantle some barriers to coalition building" (p. 12). However, the responses position resistance to social justice as a matter of disagreement without substantial reference to the material contexts technical communicators, workers, teachers, and students find themselves in. The increasingly constricting labor laws that make unionization untenable or illegal, the precarity of many academic positions, and disparities in opportunities available to marginalized workers and scholars are just a few obstacles to coalition underlying the critiques anticipated by the authors.

As the authors write in their preface, this is the first monograph-length text in TPC attending directly to social justice. The authors have set a precedent to build coalitions based on disability justice, racial justice, decolonization, and more. Whether this potential comes to fruition is up to the field as a whole: that is, the scholars who have directly and indirectly played gatekeeper for what perspectives are accepted in the field, the scholars building coalitions to intervene in injustice, and everyone in between. It's my hope that *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn* be near at hand for TPC scholars as they write syllabi, assess and revise curricula, design research studies, edit their journals, mentor students, and organize community partnerships and service-learning initiatives. In particular, instruc-

tors might find that heuristics like the 3Ps and 4Rs lend themselves to both graduate and undergraduate level TPC courses. Program directors can use the text to help inform instructor training and support, foregrounding social justice in actionable terms with suggestions for further reading. Each of these contexts and more hold coalitional possibility. Each of them holds potential to enact real change with as much thoughtfulness as is present in this text.

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Yanar Hashlamon is a PhD student at the Ohio State University. His research interests lie in critical, anti-capitalist pedagogy and material rhetorics. He has conducted research on disability studies, programmatic assessment and curricula design in professional writing. He is currently a graduate co-editor of *The Peer Review* and has individually and co-authored work published in *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal and Computers and Composition*, respectively.

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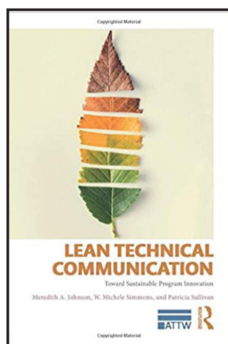

Lean Technical Communication: Toward Sustainable Program Innovation

Meredith Johnson, Patricia Sullivan, & W. Michele Simmons, Authors
New York, NY
Routledge
2017. 156 pp.

Reviewed by Meg Mikovits
Moravian College

Faculty across higher education in North America face increased teaching loads and course caps, pressures pertaining to student recruitment and retention, escalating demand for scholarly production, and fewer financial and material resources with which to carry out their work. These concerns are compounded by urgent questions about how our current systems perpetuate economic, environmental, and societal inequalities. Though its publication predates some of the most recent of these developments, *Lean Technical Communication* (2017) offers technical and professional communication (TPC) programs strategies that anticipate and respond to the most pressing challenges facing North American higher education and society at large. The book describes ethical and flexible strategies for navigating and reshaping bureaucratic structures that can deter innovation and cause programs to stagnate. Co-authors Meredith Johnson, Patricia Sullivan, and W. Michele Simmons build from their own TPC program administration experience and existing scholarship to present

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empirically grounded guidance for technical communication scholars who are developing new programs or modifying existing programs. Faculty new to TPC program administration and those with years of experience are equally likely to find inspiration in this book, which offers a socially and environmentally conscious framework for program development that considers and responds to unique local contexts and affordances rather than prescribing a specific approach.

Lean Technical Communication, divided into two main parts, first lays the theoretical groundwork for a model of lean program development and then provides three in-depth "on-the-ground cases" to illustrate the application of the theory in different institutional contexts. In Part One, Johnson, Sullivan, and Simmons frame the book by defining "lean technical communication" as "a set of techniques and technologies that comprise an efficient, flexible, and visual model of technical communication program administration rooted in social responsibility" (p. 4). They acknowledge that popular contemporary uses of the term *lean* carry connotations of frugality and glossy efficiency. In contrast, their book promotes a definition of *lean* that "prioritizes disruption, resilience, sustainability, and innovation" (p. 5), thus establishing the exigency for the book as a response to (and potential protection against) scarcity of economic, natural, and human resources. The authors introduce their vision for innovation within TPC programs by emphasizing the field's history of examining how writing practices and systems shape the way knowledge is produced, communicated, and valued across a variety of research sites. They argue that, by turning their attention to their own programs, TPC scholars can better identify and center social justice, economic stability, and environmental sustainability to create ethical and resilient programs.

The key terms of *Lean Technical Communication*—disruption, resilience, sustainability, and innovation—are reiterated throughout the book. These concepts form the basis of the "seven tenets of lean technical communication," which foreground value, disruption and innovation, social responsibility, economic cost, sustainability, efficiency, and visibility. Taken together, these tenets offer TPC program administrators a set of practical guiding principles for program development and stewardship that enact the core values of lean technical

communication. Additionally, the authors outline four continuums that capture competing demands inherent in academic program development. They assert that stewards of TPC programs must consider the range of decision points available within the continuums of standardization/flexibility, discipline/department, global/local, and dependency/autonomy—all of which, when analyzed in relation to the seven tenets and applied to local contexts, offer insight on productive directions for TPC programs. Finally, the authors articulate how to give "contemporaneous attention both to construction and to implementation" (p. 39) of programs through boundary work and stewardship.

To conclude Part One, Johnson, Sullivan, and Simmons present several theory-informed heuristics that helpfully guide program administrators through critical programmatic decision points using the lean framework—the seven tenets, four continuums, and boundary work/stewardship—promoted throughout the book. The application of these heuristics is illustrated through an example that helpfully walks readers through decisions that honor institutional values and disciplinary boundaries while simultaneously engaging in practices that serve to steward and promote the technical communication program.

In Part Two, the authors provide several in-depth case studies through the lens of the heuristic. These case studies illustrate how technical communication programs can strategically respond to structures at federal, state, and institutional levels; plan adaptable physical space and technological resources; and adopt pedagogical approaches that engage students and community members. The first case study involves a nuanced discussion and analysis of funding metrics used by one state university system and examines the ways those metrics interact with multiple "boundary objects" (Star & Griesemer, 1989) that program administrators can understand rhetorically. These boundary objects, which include the Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs, state funding protocols, institutional budget structures, course numbering systems, and more, are framed as opportunities for TPC program administrators. Through this case study, Johnson, Sullivan, and Simmons effectively demonstrate how budgetary and bureaucratic constraints might be

re-envisioned to reveal innovative ways to maneuver through external structures.

The second case study articulates the importance of accessibility and environmental sustainability with physical space and technology needs. Here, the authors discuss the importance of appropriate technology to TPC programs and describe how uncritical approaches to technology purchases and instructional space can subvert programmatic values: the standard computer classroom layout arranges student workspaces in fixed positions, bring-your-own-device policies exclude students with limited financial resources, and computer equipment purchases support the environmentally devastating cycle of manufacture and disposal. As an alternative, the authors provide strategies for program administrators to advocate for flexible classroom spaces and the acquisition of durable, energy-efficient hardware that can be redistributed to others on campus when it is no longer useful to the program.

Part Two concludes with a case study that demonstrates how lean technical communication practices support community-engaged pedagogy. Johnson, Sullivan, and Simmons encourage program administrators to plan community-based work "at the programmatic level, leading to coordinated efforts that can be less burdensome to faculty" (p. 95) and ultimately more productive and sustainable for all stakeholders. Through examples of a public writing project and a user experience project, the book illuminates how TPC programs can encourage pedagogy that highlights environmental justice and civic engagement by building meaningful campus and community relationships.

Ultimately, *Lean Technical Communication* offers a flexible theoretical framework that can scaffold the development of new programs or guide modifications to existing programs. The programmatic model exemplified in the book will offer new perspectives and insights to program administrators seeking to build socially responsible technical and professional communication programs. The book does not, however, delve into the nuts and bolts of program development (such as creating program- and course-level learning outcomes, implementing programmatic assessments, recruiting and training faculty, etc.), so readers with little prior program administration expe-

rience may find it helpful to consult additional resources on program administration to supplement the model presented in *Lean Technical Communication*. Additionally, the book does not engage with technical communication scholarship on race, ethnicity, or multilingualism, though clear opportunities exist to combine Johnson, Sullivan, and Simmons' model with scholarship that foregrounds justice and equity (e.g., Haas, 2012; Williams & Pimentel, 2014). Beyond program administrators, instructors of technical communication courses may also find the authors' heuristic method valuable for rethinking their own pedagogical practices in terms of programmatic values. Technical communication program administrators and stakeholders across a range of institutions and programs are likely to find *Lean Technical Communication* a worthwhile read for its practical, adaptable, and expansive approach to socially and environmentally conscious programmatic innovation.

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