

Review of the Department of Writing Arts at Rowan University

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Representing the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Consultant/Evaluator Service, we visited Rowan University's Glassboro and Camden campuses on October 20-22, 2013. Although a CWPA team evaluated Rowan's Department of Composition and Rhetoric in 2004, this review is the first since the department became Writing Arts.

Prior to our visit, the department used four questions to organize a substantial self-study which was helpful before and during the visit. The questions are:

- Given new university priorities, which core structures and programs provide optimal curricular and resource effectiveness?
- How does the department maintain and optimize related Writing Program entities?
- How can the department raise its profile on and off campus?
- How does the department harmoniously optimize and maximize individual and programmatic resource allocation?

During our visit we regularly conferred with the department's chair, Sanford Tweedie, who provided kind and extensive attention. We also met with tenure-track, three-quarter-time, and adjunct faculty in the department and with a number of undergraduate majors. We conversed as well with James Newell, Provost; Lorin Arnold, Dean of the College of Communication and Creative Arts; and administrators and faculty members from the Colleges of Engineering and Education.

Our visit confirmed what evidence in the self-study indicated: the Department of Writing Arts has many strengths. In a rare and commendable feat, it brings together specialists in academic, professional, and creative writing. Moreover, these diverse faculty members clearly get along; we admire the sheer collegiality they project. Equally impressive is their service ethic: they engage heavily in committee work even as they dedicate themselves to teaching. The adjunct and three-quarter-time faculty we met seem just as devoted as their tenure-stream colleagues to maintaining the department's health.

In the curricular realm, the first-year writing sequence is well-conceived, well-managed, and taught by a well-trained staff. This program has rightly been honored at the national level with a Certificate of Excellence from the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and it continues to merit its foundational place in general education at Rowan.

The department's other undergraduate courses are also laudable. They are intellectually sound, technologically up-to-date, and relevant to Rowan's student body, as evidenced by the ample number of Writing Arts majors and by solid course enrollments. We were not surprised to hear the department's undergraduate programs praised by higher-tier administrators. Similar compliments were expressed by faculty from other units. The School of Engineering values the long collaboration of Writing Arts in the School's nationally praised Sophomore Clinic; the School of Education enthuses over how the department has partnered with it in the training of teachers and administrators.

Other departmental attributes are manifold. At the graduate level, the department's Masters program is a resource for people who wish to launch or enhance careers related to writing. By featuring instruction in multiple genres, from informational prose to creative writing, the program offers current and potential students an attractive range of options. The Glassboro campus's Writing Center, which the department staffs and supervises, has an ample patronage that seems grateful for its help. *Glassworks*, the literary journal that Writing Arts publishes, enlarges the department's public profile while giving students experience with professional editing.

Obviously the department wants to preserve these existing strengths. But developments on the University's various campuses present Writing Arts with new opportunities to broaden its role at Rowan. The department can now admit first-year students into a 4 + 1 program culminating in the M. A. Beginning this spring, four of the department's courses will be significant components of the new major in Liberal Studies: Literacy Studies. With the University's incorporation of a medical school, the department could devise writing courses pertinent to future doctors, nurses, and other health care providers. In our meeting with representatives from the School of Education, we heard interest in increasing the department's undergraduate and graduate courses for teachers. Meanwhile, the boom in Rowan's international students means greater demand for classes in multilingual (ESL) writing. More generally, Rowan's surging enrollment will swell the clientele for first-year composition.

Admittedly, such opportunities can vex a department already saddled with numerous challenges. For example, Writing Arts must determine how it will respond to three changes in the University whose effects and implications are not yet clear. These developments are (1) the state's designation of Rowan as a research institution; (2) new tenure and promotion criteria that push faculty to secure external funding; and (3) increased attention to STEM fields. In the context of these changes, the department has other concerns. Because not many students who come to Rowan begin as Writing Arts majors, the department is trying to boost the numbers who do. This effort entails raising the department's profile in area high schools—a task harder now that the department no longer participates in the National Writing Project, which brought Writing Arts faculty in contact with K-12 teachers. The M. A. in Writing program, too, faces pressure to increase recruitment, given that a recent University study found it under-enrolled. But an overriding problem is the faculty's size. Though talented and hard-working, present Writing Arts staff can only do so much. They are stretched to capacity. Their current

number leaves them unable to build all the courses, campus outreach, and public presence they might.

Hence, we call in this report for a growth in personnel. At the same time, we realize that the University's funds are finite, so that any given year will see limited addition of faculty lines. Departments seeking to expand must decide their priorities, clearly itemize them, and persuasively argue for them. To a great extent, the Department of Writing Arts recognizes this imperative. Once again seeking advice from the CWPA Consultant/Evaluator Service, it has conducted an intensive self-study focused on crucial issues. As a new chair, Professor Tweedie is notably eager for the department to undertake fresh initiatives while it pursues current ones. Nevertheless, circumstances can deter Writing Arts faculty from setting and sticking to *any* communal agenda—let alone one that is pointed and cogent. Loss of departmental focus is especially possible at an institution that is going through big changes at a dizzying pace, as is the case with Rowan.

So, here at the outset of our report, we want to underscore the importance of timely, action-oriented *planning*. In our view, the Department of Writing Arts should spend the remainder of this academic year formulating tactical priorities. Whatever merits the department finds in our various suggestions, it needs to draw up a ranked list of specific goals and hopes, accompanied by detailed rationales for each. The list should constitute a three-to-four year agenda for hiring, with clear indication of the particular specialties desired. By summer 2014—preferably earlier—the department should submit this plan to the Provost and to the Dean, ready to argue for the resources that would support it.

The procedure we envision will, we realize, ask much from an already-taxed faculty. But expeditious, methodical, and exact planning seems vital to the department's future. Otherwise, it risks becoming merely reactive and scattershot—responding in random, piecemeal ways to whatever new demands the University makes. Far better for the department to nurture a sense of its own agency—to take significant charge of its destiny, so to speak. Specifically, the planning we advocate would reflect four goals:

- Vision—A clear, coherent, and detailed picture of the kind of department that Writing Arts wants to become;
- Drive—Energetic commitment to drafting and implementing this picture;
- Coordination—Careful organization and scheduling of the planning process, with precise timetables, appropriate division of labor, and regular opportunities for input from the entire staff; and
- Identity—Awareness of the need to create a distinct, definite, and easily explainable profile for the department's undergraduate and graduate programs, even as these programs include various kinds of courses.

In the following sections, we make a series of more concrete recommendations based on the department's self-study and our on-site visit. Specifically, these recommendations focus on (1) building community within the department; (2) building curriculum within the department at the undergraduate and graduate levels; and (3) building community and curriculum with others.

1: BUILDING COMMUNITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

Recommendation #1: To plan and pursue initiatives as a department, Writing Arts must become even more of a community than it already is.

The faculty of Writing Arts display dedication to teamwork. They seem genuinely devoted to collaborating on governance, whether by serving on committees or by participating in the department's monthly meeting. We sensed they respect one another, determined to confront challenges constructively as a group rather than indulge in private, self-absorbed grumbling. Current tools for building solidarity include regular meetings of the course coordinators. Also, both the First-Year Writing Program and the curriculum for majors are geared toward well-defined outcomes that promote consistency across class sections. The First-Year Coordinator works closely with a Steering Committee and holds regular meetings with her staff, thereby maintaining course quality and contributing to instructors' professional growth. A promising measure is the newsletter begun by the new chair, which will report the department's achievements, goals, and concerns. Several faculty members underscored to us the value they found even in simple, informal hallway conversations with colleagues.

Yet if it is to assert collective agency through the tactical planning we advocate, the department must develop additional ways of coalescing as a group. Further means do exist through which faculty can pool information, exchange ideas, learn of one another's projects, and foster shared sense of purpose. One possible step is regular use of a department listserv for various functions: e.g., to announce faculty and student accomplishments, to enable discussions of professional or campus issues, and to point out new publications or technologies relevant to writing studies as a field. Other possibilities include blogs (perhaps with rotating moderators) that report local innovations in teaching and curriculum; presentations on department members' latest research or creative efforts; and periodic showcasing of work produced by Writing Arts majors. One or more faculty might also assume responsibility for keeping all departmental colleagues up-to-date about the role of writing in particular areas of the University: say, the School of Engineering, the School of Education, the Department of English, or departments of emerging health-oriented fields. One faculty member can become the connection to the Development Office, keeping up on campus initiatives and grant possibilities.

In our conversation with First-Year Writing staff, we heard a reasonable request for greater interaction between their program and the courses meant for Writing Arts majors. In particular, more initiatives could connect the two tracks' core values. Worth encouraging as well is an increase in the general distribution of data about students. During our visit, many faculty members seemed surprised to hear from the chair that although "pure" Writing Arts majors perform better in introductory courses than the department's education students do, the reverse occurs as the two groups move on. Revelations like this can lead to better program design.

Ways of building community among *students* deserve, too, to be explored. When we met with select Writing Arts majors, we were heartened to hear them unanimously praise the department. They appreciate the range of its courses, the training it offers, the excellence of its teachers, and the opportunities it has given them to compose various kinds of texts, not just standard academic discourse. Their level of satisfaction with the faculty and curriculum is high. But we were dismayed to learn that outside of their formal classes, their interaction with one another is quite limited. They tend to see themselves as merely travelling individual paths through the same required courses, rather than as belonging to a collective enterprise. We think the department should do more to help its majors trade ideas, collaborate on projects, and generally develop a sense of unity. Such deeper bonding is apt to enrich the intellectual experiences of these students. It may also make them more emotionally engaged with the department as a home. In addition, a genuine student community may prove attractive to *prospective* majors, for they will see Writing Arts not only as a curriculum but also as a congenial network of peers.

To foster student community, the department can strongly encourage its majors to attend and even conduct presentations of the sort we suggest above. At one or more points during the semester, different sections of the same course might share their evolving concepts and questions about writing. Sustaining a continuously active “majors’ club” is clearly beneficial. A more ambitious move would be to establish a Writing Arts living/learning community in an existing dorm or in one of the future residences planned for Rowan. Ideally, the facility would be reasonably close to the department, include classroom space, and provide access to digital production technology. Living/learning centers like this already exist on many campuses, for they do much to nurture feelings of kinship among students with similar interests.

Recommendation #2: Writing Arts should continue its effort to obtain for its faculty a common physical space with good working conditions.

Writing Arts has long sought to house the vast majority of its offices and classrooms in one building. This aim is understandable. Sharing space would cultivate the feeling of engagement in a joint enterprise. Also, their being in close proximity would enable them to project more of a communal identity—indeed, more of a *disciplinary* identity—to students and to other faculty at Rowan. Unfortunately, various circumstances still prevent the department from locating itself in one main place. But, given the importance of this goal, we hope campus administration will help Writing Arts attain it. Meanwhile, the department should continue to remind higher-tier administrators that faculty members tend to be more cohesive when they can occupy literal common ground.

To be sure, a facility must be comfortable enough to make faculty *want* to work in it. During our visit, adjunct and three-quarter-time instructors told us that the physical set-up of their basement office space discourages them from conducting conferences there. Even after recent renovation of the room, these teachers find it cramped, dark, moldy, and strewn with broken chairs. Part of the problem is that they must share the space with other departments’ staffs. In general, the conditions remain so bad that many Writing Arts instructors are simply resigned to meeting their students elsewhere. One prefers to hold

appointments at Barnes & Noble; we heard that colleagues of theirs use other off-campus sites. Dispersal like this hardly promotes community among instructors. Nor is it good for their morale. At risk, too, is the quality of their teaching. So, the department should keep pressing for improvement of the basement area. Campus administration needs to revisit the matter and more extensively address it.

2: BUILDING CURRICULUM WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE LEVELS

Recommendation #3: The department needs to define more sharply the major it offers, giving the undergraduate Writing Arts specialization an identity easily understood by students, their parents, and other groups at Rowan.

In many respects, the Writing Arts major is a thoughtful and smoothly-coordinated set of core courses, tracks, and electives that already attracts a significant number of students. Given this state of affairs, the department might have been complacent. The faculty deserves credit, then, for their willingness to keep reflecting on the curriculum, to adjust it when necessary, and to try recruiting more students who have just arrived at Rowan. But the department needs to extend this admirably constructive attitude by making clearer to various constituencies what a Writing Arts major is centrally about.

In part, we call for a sharper profile because many people outside the department are likely to associate it only with first-year composition. This limited view often afflicts stand-alone writing departments. But we also have in mind our conversation with Writing Arts students. When we asked them how they would describe (or “pitch”) the department’s major to high school students, they tended to emphasize three things: that it shows how to put words together; that it offers regular feedback on one’s creative efforts; and that it offers a variety of subjects, most of which require a variety of writing genres and not as many conventional academic papers as an outsider might suspect. Although we agree that these features can be appealing, they do not amount, we think, to a departmental image that is sufficiently distinct and compelling.

What *other* attractive elements might be said to distinguish courses in the major? Surely there are several candidates, and we encourage the department to make its own choices. To us, one virtue of the major is that it grooms students for today’s jobs, which often require advanced writing skills honed through extensive practice in textual production. Even creative writing courses serve this vocational purpose, for many jobs depend upon the powers of imagination and eloquence that fiction and poetry workshops nurture. As Dean Arnold pointed out to us, parents of Rowan students want their offspring to take courses that provide career preparation. This is a benefit, then, that the department should rightly claim to deliver. But the Writing Arts curriculum could stand out, too, as an exciting new version of the liberal arts. Specifically, the department could publicize its major as a systematic study of the ways in which writing is not what it used to be. After all, digital technology is changing traditional conceptions of composing, textuality, style, editing, authorship, audience, and circulation. Moreover, Writing Arts faculty members are

already conscious of these transformations and able to explore them with students. If all courses in the major—not just one or two—conspicuously pondered these developments, undergraduates might see Writing Arts as an intellectually vibrant discipline that also boosts their chances of employment.

Although considerable thought has gone into the present design of core courses, we suggest that the department review their content. We wonder whether the main concern of each course is sufficiently clear. For example, when we asked undergraduate majors what they learned in *The Writer's Mind*, their answers indicated that different sections of the course taught quite different things. They felt that the focus of their class depended upon the particular teacher they had. We ourselves are confused by the title of another core course, *Evaluating Writing*. To us, the title implies a course on theories of assessment, a big concern of composition studies as a field. But the majors we interviewed recalled chiefly studying various schools of literary interpretation. This is an intellectually credible topic, but not one evoked by the course's name, and we are curious how the course's approach to literature differs from an English department's approach to it. Overall, the respective purposes of the core courses ought to be more intelligible than they presently are. There could also be greater consistency across the sections of each course, even as instructors retain the right to make some key decisions about their class.

To tell a clearer "story" about its undergraduate major, the department might make more use of student portfolios. In our meeting with faculty who teach courses in the major, we learned that the typical portfolio generated by their students emphasizes products. Basically it compiles certain texts that the student has composed. But a portfolio can and should also include a detailed account of the student's *development*—the learning process through which he or she gradually improved as a writer. Models across the country could inform deepening of the value of eportfolios. Information gleaned from eportfolios that feature examples and reflection over time would help the department better explain its educational role.

Recommendation #4: The department needs to define more sharply its Masters program, to attract a greater number of graduate students.

As we noted earlier, a recent report by the University concluded that enrollment in the department's M. A. program is inadequate. Therefore, the program's survival is at risk. At our meeting with graduate Writing Arts staff, this dark prospect was much discussed. For several of the faculty, the report's matrices are murky; they would like to know more about the logic and evidence that led to its finding. This wish for clarification seems reasonable, and we hope that the institutional researchers involved will respond. In the meantime, the department has admirably drawn up a list of strategies for raising the number of M. A. students. These measures include increasing undergraduate students' awareness of the new 4 + 1 program; offering more summer courses; and engaging in stronger marketing to the public, with particular attention to K-12 teachers.

We believe, however, that in order for these steps to succeed, the basic nature of the M. A. program has to be clearer in the first place. The department's current overview of the program begins as follows:

The Masters of Arts in Writing program offers students from South Jersey and beyond the opportunity to broaden their writing skills and see themselves as writers. Our program's blend of creative writing, new media composing, and composition studies offers students writing experiences they wouldn't be able to find elsewhere.

As we bluntly said at our meeting with program faculty, we find this language too vague. For us, it does not sketch a precise enough picture of the program's benefits. Above all, this wording fails to depict the program as offering *advanced professional training*. Some reference of this kind seems necessary if the program is to tap significant potential constituencies: people who presently teach writing, regularly write at work, or aspire to writing-related careers. With the first group in mind, the department might increase its number of primarily practical courses for K-12 instructors, whether the subject be composition pedagogy or the art of administering school writing programs. The other two groups might welcome courses in technical writing, an element of the curriculum that seems well worth beefing up. However the department chooses to phrase its M. A. program's mission statement, *professional* seems a crucial word to add.

(3) Building Community and Curriculum with Others

Recommendation #5: Rowan should create and fill the position of Director of Writing across the Curriculum.

According to Provost Newell, upcoming General Education reforms offer new requirements for departments across the campus to help students develop written and oral competencies. Because departments will be asked, "How do you know your students can write?," they will need to identify writing and speaking pedagogies and assessments that work. As curricula are retooled to highlight writing, writing intensive courses and writing practices in other courses will become more and more important.

To frame these redefined competencies in a coherent and cohesive way, Rowan might use the Framework for Postsecondary Writing developed by three of the foremost professional literacy organizations in the United States: the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Writing Project, and the National Council of Teachers of English. The habits of mind detailed in the Framework are undergirded by applicable learning theory, extensive research about composing, and effective pedagogical practices. Through organized faculty development, faculty members across campus could consider together writing pedagogies and assessments that provide a developmental approach to writing that aids students in graduating with the habits of mind and skills necessary for their civic, personal, and professional lives.

Writing intensive courses, where writing is especially emphasized in the majors, go through initial scrutiny; but, according to some faculty and administrators with whom we spoke, many courses are weak in pedagogy and in assessment of student learning outcomes. To strengthen writing in both general education and the majors, we strongly recommend that the campus create the position of Director of Writing across the Curriculum. This WAC position would demonstrate Rowan's commitment to writing and recognition that faculty and students need a WAC expert to coordinate the campus effort. Central administration should assume responsibility for creating the line, situating the director in a department but not counting the appointment in that department's ration of faculty lines: the position is necessary to all departments and colleges in the University. Rowan will be able to find extensive resources within the field of Writing Across the Curriculum to help in the conceptualization and implementation of such a position and can anticipate strong applicants.

Recommendation #6: The Writing Center, already expanding its service to the university, needs more space, full-time leadership, and more tutors.

The Writing Center documents well its procedures and its impact on student achievement. Using what technology it has in an effective way, it traces usage by department, time, and topics discussed. Although the Center suffers from a lack of reliable technology for use with students and a sparse staff, it counsels well students from many colleges across the campus. As the Glassboro student body grows dramatically in the immediate future, as writing becomes even more a focus throughout the University, and as international students increase, however, the Center must be better resourced in order to continue to contribute to the quality of an education at Rowan. Space shared at times with tax preparers, one 3/4 faculty member director who has a substantial teaching responsibility, and too few tutors detract from the ability of the Center to serve students and faculty as fully as it could. Sufficient designated space, a full-time director, and more tutors would increase the Writing Center's efficacy. A required peer tutoring course before tutors can be employed would also increase the quality of the Center's service.

Like the Director of Writing across the Curriculum, the Writing Center is a campus responsibility. Although Writing Arts does and should play a crucial role in providing expertise for the Center, resources must be considered a campus-wide investment as the Center lives up to its role as the focal point of writing support for all university students and faculty members.

Recommendation #7: Rowan will benefit from increased communication and collaborative curriculum development across departments and colleges.

Rowan already has strong examples of cooperation across colleges. For example, Writing Arts and the College of Engineering and the College of Education collaborate on courses that strengthen the curricular offerings of Engineering and of Education. These collaborations include offerings in undergraduate and graduate education and have been recognized beyond the university as positive practices.

College of Engineering

Examples of course collaborations between Writing Arts and the College of Engineering, like all collaborations, however, deserve constant modification to keep them viable. For example, the Sophomore Clinic, which Associate Dean Steven Chin calls one of the "hallmarks of the engineering program," has growing pains as numbers of students increase significantly and as the instructors, mostly $\frac{3}{4}$ faculty, change regularly. The College of Engineering plans establishment during the 2014-15 academic year of a group to revitalize the Sophomore Clinic and to manage growth. The Dean agreed that having Writing Arts faculty in that group is important to assure that plans for the future include joint decision making among faculty from both the College of Engineering and Writing Arts about such matters as time slots for the Clinic offerings and assignments, pedagogies, and assessments.

During our meeting with Sophomore Clinic faculty from both Writing Arts and the College of Engineering, generative suggestions for improvement were offered. For example, current faculty members have laid out a continuum of structural options ranging from a separate lab and writing components to a highly integrated approach. Using audience as an important consideration in writing, a consideration applicable and already applied in later writing courses, was suggested. Sequencing writing tasks, a practice in a course in the engineering major, was greeted with enthusiasm. Another possibility is having a Sophomore Clinic Coordinator with the charge of maintaining cohesive content in the course.

All faculty members present agreed that ongoing professional development is essential for developing and maintaining high quality of teaching and learning in the Sophomore Clinic. Specifically, faculty members crave help in using appropriate approaches and language in assessing student writing. Individual instructors have developed very different pedagogical strategies that could effectively be shared as progress is made toward the goal of cohesiveness in the course. For example, participants in the meeting affirmed the possibility of convergent and divergent thinking as an explicit core element in the course.

As the College of Engineering adds to its curricular offerings, writing has the prospect of being included as a central element necessary in preparing for all professions. The new biomedical engineering curriculum, for example, might include a course about writing in biomedical engineering or might have writing assignments embedded in every course. Writing Arts could collaborate in either alternative.

College of Education

Hard at work at securing courses in Writing Arts as acceptable for middle school teacher certification in English, the College of Education is open to other collaborations in undergraduate and graduate education that enhance or expand current connections. The Literacy Studies dual program offers students a focus on writing not possible in the past. An additional possibility, however, would be a Writing for Teachers course for the over 100 dual majors, one that could be piloted as an honors course. On the undergraduate side,

Writing Arts might also consider doing brown bags on the writing part of the Praxis, augmenting help being provided by the Writing Center. Cydney Alexis on the College of Education faculty has experience and data about the importance of having a Writing Center Director who could coordinate work on the Praxis, essential as the College of Education expands with new arrangements with other local institutions.

Discussants during our visit generated two exciting potential ideas regarding graduate education. The graduate degree in Teacher Leadership currently has courses in technology, special education, and reading but not writing. Courses in the current MA in Writing might be possible to include. Secondly, the Ed Min graduate degree is being restructured. Perhaps a 12-15 credit component in Educational Writing could be included. As Writing Arts addresses issues with its MA program, it might want to initiate immediately discussion of these possibilities.

Joint positions

As collaborations with Engineering and Education and with Medicine grow in quantity and quality, Rowan would do well to consider joint appointments that portend well for integrated courses. For example, a joint line in Engineering and Writing Arts would enable professional leadership of the Sophomore Clinic and other initiatives between the schools. Provost Newell explained that joint lines are either 75%-25% or 50%-50% between the colleges involved. In the first instance, promotion and tenure passes through the college with the 75% appointment; in the second instance, a special promotion and/or tenure committee is appointed. Currently he estimated that Rowan has 30-49 positions of the first type and 2 of the second. The support of both Deans of schools involved for either kind of position would elevate the chance of a new joint appointment during the annual negotiation about new lines.

A second logical place for a joint position is in medicine and Writing Arts. Writing Arts' latest hire has credentials for writing in medicine but is entirely situated in Writing Arts where she has multiple responsibilities in technical writing. As medicine assumes a greater role in Rowan's identity, as Camden moves beyond its current focus on emergency preparedness related to medicine, and as more research emerges about writing in medicine, Rowan can elevate its identity as an integrator of medicine and writing through a joint faculty appointment.

A famous rhetorician once said that "Reading and writing float on the sea of talk." Public speaking as a cornerstone course in Communications could be integrated with writing to emphasize the connection that is being made in the Common Core State Standards at the K-12 level. If New Jersey continues in the assessment consortium PARCC, students from the state will come to Rowan with experience in composing for talk and print. Rowan could anticipate such experience and draw students with an integrated approach to public speaking and writing. A joint appointment would enable development of courses and building of connections between current courses.

Although all joint appointments cannot be made at once, Writing Arts could in its vision statement and short term tactical plans prioritize joint appointments that could

serve students in the important goal of integration of learning. In the new research expectation of faculty members, Provost Newell emphasized that the requirement can be met by securing money but also by coordination of programs. Joint appointments in areas that require coordination across colleges could fit in this category.

Recommendation #8: Writing Arts needs to expand and deepen external communication.

As we indicated earlier, we surmise that the purpose of the Writing Arts Department and the scope of intellectual activity among its faculty members are not as well understood across campus as they might be. Although Writing Arts has a strong First-year Writing Program, it is not the department's sole focus and accomplishment, and Writing Arts faculty need to take charge of creating a broader perception. For instance, a collectively produced presentation/PowerPoint/video about Writing Arts could be delivered by different Writing Arts faculty members at campus-wide or college-specific events.

Furthermore, Writing Arts should grab the reins of representing itself beyond campus. An External Advisory Board, consisting of local executives and other professionals, could serve this goal. By interacting with department faculty, members of the Board would learn more about Writing Arts and become better able to speak about it in public. At the same time, students could do more class-based research projects in local businesses and organizations. As they learn about the writing done at these locales, they might receive valuable feedback on their own evolving portfolios. At the same time, the benefits would be reciprocal: these workplaces would become more aware of what Writing Arts majors study and accomplish at Rowan. As more people in the community learn about Writing Arts, there is a greater probability of attracting more people to the undergraduate program and to the Masters program, whether to take all the available courses or specific ones. In preparing to represent itself to the public, Writing Arts will become clearer about the hallmarks of its curriculum, more able to articulate and integrate its various components.

Conclusion

We appreciate that Provost Newell, Dean Arnold, the Writing Arts faculty, and other campus constituents will consider for implementation each of our recommendations. For Writing Arts specifically, however, the first step toward implementation is clear: this academic year, the Department of Writing Arts needs to engage in careful and timely planning that reflects clearly specified priorities. Although this effort demands vision, drive, coordination, and a precise sense of the department's identity, we believe that the department possesses material and human resources necessary to the task. We believe also that Rowan University has a ripe opportunity to enrich its students' education and its reputation as an institution through concrete steps suggested in this report. We wish Writing Arts and Rowan faculty and administrators well in this commitment to excellence.