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# Rhetoric & Writing at BGSU

## Rhetoric & Writing Notes - Fall 2002

### Issue Six Fall 2002

#### An Alumni Update from Steve Krause

Like the other graduates who have sent Alumni Update pieces, I think faculty associated with the Ph.D. program were a great influence on me—Bruce Edwards, Rick Gebhardt, Sue Carter, Donna Nelson-Beene, and of course my favorite teacher and dissertation director, Alice Calderonello. But really, I think the biggest influences on my work then and since were fellow graduate students, both people in the Rhetoric & Writing Program and those in other programs at BGSU. So a big howdy to all of you who might be reading this!

I finished my PhD in rhetoric and writing at BGSU in 1996, writing a dissertation that was kind of about postmodernism, rhetorical situation, and computers. Check out my homepage <http://krause.emich.edu> and follow the link to an online version of my dissertation, if you're curious. My first faculty position was at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon, a beautiful place that was certainly a contrast to the flatlands of northwest Ohio. Among other great Oregon experiences, my wife, Annette Wannamaker (a 1997 BGSU Literature PhD), and I had a son; Will was born in Ashland in 1997.

I came to my second and current position at Eastern Michigan University in 1998. EMU is a Mid-American Conference school located less than 10 miles from the University of Michigan's main campus. I teach a variety of writing classes here, everything from first-year writing to graduate courses in our MA program in the Teaching of Writing. EMU is a great place to work, the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area is a great place to live, and I'm happy to report that I was granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor this past year.

Over the last six years, I've given many presentations at various national and regional conferences (and I always enjoy running into BGSU pals). I've also published a few articles and book chapters, most recently, a piece in *College Composition and Communication Online*. My other ongoing writing project is a textbook designed to teach research writing to first-year students (the sort of thing we all experienced in GSW!). It's under contract with McGraw-Hill and should come out within the next two years.

Steve Krause is associate professor of English at Eastern Michigan University.

The article Steve mentions is "Where Do I List This on My CV? Considering the Values of Self-Published Web Sites" *CCC Online* (Sept. 2002) [http://www.ncte.org/ccs/2/54.1/krause\\_copy.html](http://www.ncte.org/ccs/2/54.1/krause_copy.html). This interesting article reviews several self-published web sites as context for discussing increasingly timely issues for faculty. Steve and the CCC Online Editor plan future updates, and Steve invites readers to check his website (the URL is in his article) for new links in a year or so.

#### Good Spring News for Donna Nelson-Beene

The end of the 2001-02 brought two significant professional accomplishments for Donna Nelson-Beene, a R&W faculty member and Director of the General Studies Writing Program <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/gsw/home.html>.

Following BGSU's normal faculty review procedures, Donna was granted tenure and promoted to associate professor of English in May.

A few weeks later, she was reappointed to a four-year term as Director of the General Studies Writing Program. Commenting on the appointment, Arts and Sciences Dean Donald Nieman said that "Dr. Nelson-Beene has provided the program with exemplary leadership" and that, under her leadership, "the program will be elevated to new heights over the next few years."

R&W graduates who would like to send congratulations can reach Donna at [dnelson@bgnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:dnelson@bgnet.bgsu.edu).

#### C&C Online Moves to BGSU

Kristine Blair, associate professor and director of English Department efforts in digital literacy and teaching, is the new Editor of *Computers and Composition Online*, the virtual component of the refereed journal *Computers and Composition* <http://corax.cwrl.utexas.edu/cac/>.

appointment as Editor of Computers and Composition Online acknowledges Kris's background and her leadership in this burgeoning area of composition studies. And it means that the editorial home of C&C Online moves from University of Texas, Austin to BGSU.

### **Some Recent Faculty Accomplishments**

Alice Calderonello and Kristine Blair have had their book Grammar for Language Arts Teachers accepted for 2003 publication by Longman. The book is a direct outgrowth of Alice's and Kris's involvement in the "Grammar and Writing" course required of BGSU undergraduates preparing to be high school teachers.

Kristine Blair was elected recently to a four-year term on the Steering Committee of the NCTE College Section. She was a visiting researcher in rhetoric and technical communication at Michigan Technological University this June. Kris observed practices in technology and teacher training, consulted on course management tools, and presented "Electronic Portfolios and Teacher Professional Development" during MTU's summer institute on Computers in Writing Intensive Classrooms.

Bruce Edwards, Associate Dean of Continuing Education and a senior professor in the Rhetoric & Writing Program, recently extended his record of scholarship on two individuals of longstanding professional interest. He and his wife Joan spent two weeks at Oxford, England this summer, where Bruce gave a seminar for the Triennial C.S. Lewis Symposium. (For some of Bruce's other work on Lewis, see C.S. Lewis and the Inklings <http://personal.bgsu.edu/~edwards/lewis.html>, Google's first site under "Inklings" and seventh under "C.S. Lewis.") Bruce's essay "Kenneth L. Pike's Tagmemics and Its Impact on Rhetoric and Composition Studies" will appear this fall in an edited collection, Language and Life: Essays in Memory of Kenneth L. Pike published by the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas.

Richard Gebhardt has had recent publications reflecting several of his scholarly and professional interests. "Argument as Common Ground for Literature and Composition," an essay with roots in a recent FIL (AKA sabbatical) project, was published this spring in the College English Association's journal CEA Forum <http://www.as.yosu.edu/~english/cea/gebhardt.html>. Rick's invited article "Reviewing and Refocusing Doctoral Education in Composition Studies" came out this spring in JAC (Winter 2002). An essay originally titled "Toward Understanding and Cooperation Among Teachers of Writing Teachers" is the Foreword of the edited collection Teaching Writing Teachers of High School English & First-Year Composition (Heinemann, 2002). And one of Rick's earlier articles, "Administration as Focus for Understanding the Teaching of Writing," was reprinted in the Allyn & Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators (Longman, 2002).

### **Recent News from R&W Program Alumni**

Brad Barry [barry@dixie.edu](mailto:barry@dixie.edu) has been granted tenure and promoted to associate professor of English at Dixie State College of Utah.

Roxanne Cullen, Head of Languages and Literature at Ferris State University in Michigan, is serving this year as the Interim Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences. Roxanne ([Roxanne\\_Cullen@ferris.edu](mailto:Roxanne_Cullen@ferris.edu)) is coauthor of "Beyond Postmodernism: Leadership Theories and Writing Program Administration" in The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist (Boyton/Cook, 2002).

Mark DelMaramo [mdelmara@thiel.edu](mailto:mdelmara@thiel.edu), a faculty member at Thiel College in Pennsylvania since 1989, has been promoted to professor. He writes that his "wife Brenda (nee Green, BGSU BA and MA alumnus) is an adjunct at Thiel. We have adopted a little girl from China (August 2000), and I have become Summer Director of Camp Notre Dame, in Fairview, PA."

Randall McClure reports that he has moved from California to a position at Minnesota State University. Randall [randallmcclure@hotmail.com](mailto:randallmcclure@hotmail.com) teaches a variety of undergraduate composition classes and graduate courses in computer-assisted writing and composition theory, and next year he will be the department's teaching assistant director. His wife Christine is teaching part-time in the department and his son, Connor, is now 8 months old.

Dennis Quinn directs the English placement program in the School of Adult and Continuing Education at Barry University in Florida. He writes that "looming is the creation a developmental writing course for adult learners, most of whom have ESL interference" and that he'd love to get email [dquinn@mail.barry.edu](mailto:dquinn@mail.barry.edu) with references, URLs, or suggestions to help him with the project.

Alan Rea [allanrea@wmich.edu](mailto:allanrea@wmich.edu) has been promoted to Associate Professor at Western Michigan University, where he teaches web development and programming in the Computer Information Systems Program in the Business Information Systems Department of Haworth College of Business. Alan recently coauthored a textbook, Computing Concepts, for Irwin/McGraw-Hill, and he is working

long-standing interest in psychological backgrounds of teaching writing in a graduate clinical psychology program at Eastern Michigan University.

Sharon Strand learned last spring that she was tenured and promoted to associate professor at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. Sharon SharonStrand@bhsu.edu writes that most of the time she enjoys her job teaching composition, directing the writing program and the writing center, and developing a program for first-year students. She adds: "I am enjoying working here at BHSU with Christine Shearer-Cremean [1997 R&W graduate] and David Cremean [a BGSU Literature PhD]. Recently, Christine and I collaborated on an article and an online project. And I am enjoying getting to know the Christine's and David's children, Cormac and Sammie."

Joseph Wilferth has moved to the English Department of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga <http://www.utc.edu/~engldept> where he teaches courses ranging from first-year composition to upper-level and Graduate courses in rhetoric, composition, and professional/technical writing. Joe's recent publications include "The Changing (Inter)Face of Argumentation and Research Writing" in *Text Technology* (April 2002), and "Private Literacies, Popular Culture, and Going Public: Teachers and Students as Authors of Electronic Portfolios" in *Kairos* (Summer 2002) <http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/7.2/index.html>.

### **Administrative Positions—Some Things to Consider: Richard Gebhardt and a Recent R&W Program Graduate**

One of the trickier decisions young composition faculty face is how to respond to invitations or pressures to take on administrative positions. Last year a R&W Program graduate faced that decision in a noteworthy way--skeptically and analytically, with an awareness of personal interests in department leadership and of institutional problems that would make leadership difficult. The two of us thought our email exchanges about the matter might be of interest to others.

#### **A Grad's Letter**

I write because I'm in need of a bit of advice. Recently, department colleagues have been asking me to consider a chair position that would begin next academic year. In light of the work-compensation ratio, I'm very hesitant. At the same time, I don't want to come off as being unwilling to "pay my dues," so to speak. Also, I think I might make a pretty decent chair and would (almost) like to give it a try. Nonetheless, I am surprised at how much responsibility, work and stress there is in light of the compensation. Here are some details:

Per semester, they are offering a single course-load reduction (from four writing courses to three), and about an extra \$625.

The term is two years (or four semesters). They will also ask me to work a bit throughout each summer as well (committee work, hiring adjuncts, scheduling, etc).

I would be leading 11 full time faculty and about 13 adjunct faculty. Part of this implies chairing the hiring committees for composition instructors, negotiating and organizing teachers' schedules and mediating student/teacher problems. Apparently many administrative council meetings are part of the package too, but I don't know how many.

We have about 5,500 full-time students at our state-funded college.

How does this compare to chair compensation at your institution? To me, it seems like such an important mid-level management promotion, with many crucial responsibilities--but more hours invested per week and only an extra \$1250 per year. While I probably should not compare this to corporate America, I have a feeling that many businesses do a better job of compensating mid-level managers. Am I looking at this correctly?

#### **My Reply**

It's good to hear from you, and to learn that your department has so quickly taken notice of your leadership abilities. I'm glad, too, that you are taking such a professional approach to the offer to be department chair. Lots of people say "yes" too quickly and then stumble, later, into issues of time and compensation which you astutely sense from the start.

I see two very broad kinds of issues at work in the decision you face. One of them is the fact that academic leadership is vitally important--too important to be done by people motivated by ego (especially since there's so little glory in the work) or by people "taking their turn" at what they consider onerous administrivia. My sense of you is that you have good leadership skills and that you would take a professional and ethical approach to department leadership.

The other kind of issues involve workload (whether the job will grind you down to an ineffective nub of yourself); appropriate

It's hard to address the pragmatics of compensation, since so much of this is grounded in the local practice of individual schools. But here are some thoughts.

One course off per semester (a 25% release on the year) seems light to me if there are lots of substantial duties, and particularly if there isn't much staff support. But if there is good staff support or if other faculty get releases for doing things that help the chair, maybe one course would be enough in a school of your size.

I think I'd look at the demands of the job in light of the "two-hours-out-of-class-per-contact-hour" formula sometimes used to describe course demands. With one course release per semester, that would be about 300 hours a year, or about 9 hours a week from September through May. (If there are summer duties, then the 300 hours would need to stretch further—maybe 6 hours a week over eleven months.) How does the job fit that time frame? This is something you could discuss with former chairs and with the dean.

If the course release is set in stone, you may be able to negotiate a job description that better fits it and/or additional support (more secretarial assistance, for example, or an assistant chair getting one course per year to help on some specific things).

\$625 per semester seems low. But the specific culture of an institution plays a big role in determining such things. Here, a chair's salary is 11/9ths of what her faculty pay would be for the academic year; that is, you divide the regular salary by nine and then multiply it by the 11 months the chair works. And the annual chair stipend for a big department like English is \$4,000 on top of the eleven-month salary.

## Epilogue

After seeking advice from several graduate school mentors and considering lots of factors, my anonymous coauthor decided to decline the department offer of a recommendation to be the chair. One of these factors, the climate of the institution, influenced the decision not to try--this time, anyway--to negotiate better compensation. Here's how a recent email puts it:

Because of my college's cultural climate, I chose not to negotiate a better package. We have experienced tremendous budget cuts during the last year, and many people on campus have lost their jobs. Also, there is a long history of volunteerism on this campus. Some of the veterans don't understand why younger faculty, and faculty from out of state, won't exhibit the same spirit of volunteerism. I did not want to appear disrespectful to these veteran volunteers by asking for more compensation than they've ever received. I want to see the compensation model improved for every chair on campus; not just me.

This graduate of the Rhetoric & Writing Program, I feel confident, will consider department administration again in the future since, like many people in composition studies, this person has a good background for academic leadership and interest in doing this valuable work. You, too, may have abilities and inclinations that lead you toward writing program or department administration. If so, you may want to take a look at this little list of resources (or make a note of them for future use):

David Schwalm's "The Writing Program (Administrator) in Context" in *The Allyn & Bacon Sourcebook*

for *Writing Program Administrators* (Allyn & Bacon, 2002).

Duane Roen's "Writing Administration as Scholarship and Teaching" in *Academic Advancement in*

*Composition Studies: Scholarship, Publication, Promotion, Tenure* (Erlbaum, 1997).

The website of the Council of Writing Program Administrators <http://www.wpacouncil.org>. Among other

things there, you'll find "The Portland Resolution: Guidelines for Writing Program Administrator Positions" and information about the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Summer Conference and its Summer Workshop for new WPAs.

The website of the Association of Department of English <http://www.ade.org/>. There you will find such

resources as reports, recommendations, information about ADE Summer Institutes for Chairs, and (for those in ADE member departments) archives of the organization's journal *ADE Bulletin*.

R&W Notes would like to hear from other program graduates about experiences with administration—success stories, horror stories, lessons learned, advice to new grads. If you think you have an item you might share sometime, would you please try to do it before Thanksgiving? The thirteen students now taking ENG 780 "Writing Administration" would like to read your ideas yet this Fall semester.