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Staff Management in the Writing Center: Theoretical and Practical Preparation for Administrators

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STAFF MANAGEMENT IN THE WRITING CENTER:

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PREPARATION FOR ADMINISTRATORS

by

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Under the Direction of Michael Harker

ABSTRACT

Though every writing center administrator (WCA) manages a staff, staff management is not widely studied in writing center scholarship. This thesis reports the results of a nationwide survey of WCAs' preparation for and experiences with staff management in writing centers. The data suggests that many new WCAs feel unprepared for staff management at the beginning of their administrative jobs. The data about WCA staff management beliefs is categorized into four themes: collaboration, empowerment, nurture, and authority. A disparity also seems to exist between the frequency of these themes in the participants' description of their beliefs and the frequency of the themes in their descriptions of their daily practices. This thesis indicates questions for further research into these findings and discusses why staff management should be of larger interest to the field of Writing Center Studies.

INDEX WORDS: Writing center, Administration, Staff management, Survey

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the directors, assistant directors, and staff of the Georgia State University Writing Studio.

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1   INTRODUCTION

When I began my job as a graduate student assistant director of the writing center in a large research institution in the South, I was overwhelmed by the challenges of managing our staff, a feeling that I suspect is very common among new WCAs. My academic preparation was in critical reading, analysis, and writing, and I had taken a course in writing program administration, which prepared me for many aspects of administering a writing center. I knew something about budgets, about institutional relationships, about hiring and training, about carrying out research in the center, and about the pedagogy of the tutorial. I even had experience in event planning and promotions from my life outside of academia. However, once the semester started, once the budget had been addressed, the schedule had been made, the tutors hired and trained, and the students began to make visits, I found that a huge part of my job was managing a staff of about 40 tutors and front desk staff, all of whom had different backgrounds—English graduate students, graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), writing across the curriculum (WAC) tutors from disciplines outside English, MAs and PhDs and undergraduates—different numbers of hours in the center, different ages and family situations, and different ideas of what a writing center should be.

It seemed that everyone had immediate but different concerns. The teachers who worked in the center wanted to write comments on the papers, though the center's policy suggested conversation as the means for interacting with students and their work. The WAC tutors expressed intimidation about working on the English 1101 essays that made up a large percentage of the essays they read every day. The tutors who were assigned to us as a part of their funding package were sometimes less committed (perhaps understandably) than the tutors who applied, inter-

viewed, and were hired by us directly. The more experienced writers, teachers, and tutors wanted more autonomy; the less experienced and often younger members of the staff wanted more support and observation by an administrator. The new MA students did not always know what to say when a paper was poorly organized, and the PhD students (most of whom were teaching) sometimes said too much. All of these concerns happened at once, in the course of a week or two, and it was suddenly my job to reassure, provide ongoing training and resources, explain and remind about policies, encourage more assertiveness in some tutors, and suggest more reserve in others. Essentially, I had to help the staff be more productive, while making them all feel valued and appreciated. Balancing all their different needs and concerns with the needs of the students who came to us was very difficult, and I was not adequately prepared by the administrative wisdom I had read in the scholarship.

My scholarly training primarily prepared me to read, analyze, and create scholarly work. Even in my writing program administration (WPA) graduate course, the way I learned about the challenges of management was through reading articles about WPAs' struggles, but I never observed those struggles in my own department or had the opportunity to try out any of the strategies for myself. When I read Ed White's article, "Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA," I thought about his ideas concerning the exercise of power in administration. I read and wrote about them, but I did not try them or watch an experienced WPA put them into action. My WPA course helped me to think about different abstract problems in administration, but it didn't help me contextualize them in a real-life setting.

Even if the WPA course had been more focused on observation and apprenticeship, very little of it was (or could be) dedicated primarily to writing centers. The main focus of the WPA articles and books I read was on managing a large group of GTAs, which is a different context

than most writing centers. Because writing centers are often more eclectically staffed (hiring from multiple groups who have different aims, values, and training), managing a writing center staff involves a different set of challenges than management in other WPA contexts. My lack of practical experience was a hindrance to me, but I was able (though it was overwhelming and sometimes a little traumatic) to acquire that practical experience quickly on the job, especially by working with the director of the center who mentored me. The larger and more lasting problem was the lack of scholarly preparation for staff management challenges in the writing center. I had not systematically examined staff management, including abstract problems and theory, an exploration that I needed to form a system of principles that would guide my actions as an administrator, especially in the area of staff management.

In this project, I am defining staff management as the day-to day tasks and responsibilities of writing center administrators (WCAs) with and for the people who work in the center. Management includes providing opportunities for the members of the staff to develop personally and professionally, delegating the work of the center to employees who will be most effective and will benefit from the work, facilitating dialogue between employees who can share expertise, building a team that works together to provide the best help possible to the writers who come to the center, and communication with writing center employees—talking about problems that arise in tutorials and ways the staff member could improve, addressing complaints about the staff from inside or outside the center, answering questions from the staff, asking questions of the staff when more information is needed, providing encouragement, setting or clarifying values and goals, expressing praise and admiration.

The first chapter of this thesis will illustrate that, though writing center scholarship contains a wealth of administrative literature, there is very little work specifically addressing the

management of a writing center staff. The existing scholarship often lacks a theoretical explanation for why writing centers should favor a particular management model or imports management models from other contexts without the necessary exploration of their relevance or effectiveness in the writing center. I also demonstrate that there is a lack of empirical studies designed to interrogate the existing models of staff management in the writing center or to suggest new strategies and theories. Chapter 1 will explore the existing literature to establish the existence of and explore the nature, characteristics, origins, and implications of this gap, guided by the following questions: What models of staff management have been created for or in the writing center? What models have been imported from other, related fields? Are these models grounded in theory and connected to the values of Writing Center Studies? Are the imported models applicable to the writing center?

The second chapter of this thesis presents the methodology and the results of a nationwide survey of 63 new WCAs, designed to explore the administrators' attitudes toward their own preparation for staff management, as well as the beliefs and values they hold about managing a staff in their centers (See Appendix). The survey seeks to find answers to the broad question, "What are the implications of the lack of staff management resources in writing center scholarship for new WCAs?"

The final chapter will explore the implications of the survey for WCAs, for graduate programs preparing WCAs, and for the field of Writing Center Studies. The survey data suggests that a very large percentage of new WCAs report having been unprepared to manage their writing center staffs at the beginning of their administrative jobs, and the WCAs who have no previous experience in other staff management positions were the most likely to report feeling unprepared. The participants' descriptions of their beliefs about staff management were categorized

into four themes: collaboration, empowerment, nurture, and authority. Interestingly, the survey data suggests that WCAs' beliefs about staff management may not be acted out in their daily practices.

The following list of questions will guide this final part of the project: How well prepared are new WCAs for managing a staff? What beliefs do they hold about staff management, how effectively do they put their beliefs into practice in the writing center? What models of staff management from fields outside of writing programs (such as business or nursing administration) might be applicable to writing centers? What can the field learn about preparing WCAs for staff management from the results of this survey?

2   STAFF MANAGEMENT LITERATURE: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING

GAPS IN WRITING CENTER SCHOLARSHIP

"During any typical school day, dozens of problems and decisions will confront writing

center directors and instructors. It is impossible to have a policy that covers each one. The only

control mechanism, therefore, is an understanding, by the whole writing center staff, of the cen-

ter's goals and values. Decision can be made with those values and goals in mind."

---James Tackach "Theory Z Management and the College Writing Center"

In this chapter, I will argue that writing center administration has not traditionally been

conceptualized as management and offer some possible reasons. Next, I will establish that,

though there is an abundance of writing center scholarship on administration, there is not enough

literature specifically addressing the management of a writing center staff. I will make the case

that existing scholarship lacks well-theorized management models and that, even when those

theoretical models do exist, they are often imported from other contexts without the necessary

exploration of their relevance or effectiveness in the writing center. Finally, I will call for empir-

ical studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing models of staff management in the writ-

ing center and to suggest new strategies and theories.

When considering new administrators[1], looking to writing center scholarship for its work

on staff management is especially important. When a faculty member without specialized train-

ing in administration is hired to direct the writing center, that faculty member may consult writ-

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[1] In my study, I define "new administrators" as writing center administrators who have been

working in their administrative jobs for less than three years.

ing center scholarship for guidance. Graduate students preparing for WCA work through coursework or mentorship programs look to writing center scholarship for insight into the guiding principles and best practices of writing center administration. Many experienced writing program administrators who are new to writing center work seek out the administrative literature that exists in Writing Center Studies to prepare themselves for a new setting. In best case scenarios, future WCAs (WCAs) will depend on scholarly literature to form their beliefs about administration and to guide their administrative practices, so it is essential for current WCAs to investigate whether our body of writing center administrative scholarship adequately addresses staff management in the writing center.

My investigation of writing center administrative scholarship shows that WCAs have not always conceived of themselves as managers. In 1998, *The Writing Lab Newsletter* published "The Writing Center as Managerial Site" by Ronald Heckleman. The publication of an article arguing for the writing center as a managerial site in one of the most read writing center publications suggests that the community of WCAs as a whole did not think of themselves as managers. Heckleman speculates that WCAs "may not be accustomed, or even quite comfortable, thinking about the writing center as a . . . site of management," and his "aim is to demystify the concept of management as it applies to . . . writing centers" (1). Heckleman's view of management is not limited to staff management—though he does include working with employees as a part of his description of what a manager does—but his article has definite implications for staff management. If WCAs learn to think of themselves as managers and if managers have special knowledge and skills, then, argues Heckleman, "at least one course or practicum in theory and practice of management should form part of the required curriculum for those pursuing graduate degrees . . . in composition studies" (4).

Sally Crisp makes a similar argument in her article, "On Leading the Writing Center: A Sort of Credo and Some Advice for Beginners and Old Timers, Too," which also appeared in *The Writing Lab Newsletter* two years after Heckleman's article in 2000. Though Crisp seems to prefer the expression "leadership[2]," she does mention "people-management" several times in her article. Like Heckleman, Crisp argues that management or leadership requires special knowledge and skills above and beyond the knowledge and skills of composition specialists: "the ability to tutor—even tutor very well—is not equivalent to the ability to direct the program and staff of the writing center" (2). Crisp and Heckleman both conceive of WCAs as staff managers, and they both encourage WCAs to read about and practice leadership as a new set of skills. Unlike Heckleman, Crisp does not explicitly call for management skills to be a part of composition graduate programs. The existence of two articles in a widely-read writing center publication asking WCAs to reconceive of themselves as managers indicates that the literature and culture of Writing Center Studies, at least as recently as the late 1990s and early 2000s when the articles were published, had not adequately embraced the idea that staff management is an important component of WCA work. The fact that Heckleman and Crisp both had to argue that WCAs are managers and should think of themselves as managers is evidence that WCAs did not conceptualize their work as management work. Only when WCAs see themselves as managers will writing center research begin to treat the managerial aspects of WCA work as worthy of study and produce scholarship about management in the writing center. Speculating on why

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[2] The word "leadership" is used by Stephen Covey, a best-selling business author at the time of Crisp's article. I do not think that Crisp chooses "leadership" instead of "management" in order to distance herself from the business world, but because of her reliance on current business books. As noted below, Crisp uses Covey as a source in her article.

WCAs have not conceived of their jobs as managerial, Heckleman notes "an unfortunate bias in the humanities, where most composition programs are housed, against acknowledging the appropriateness of the managerial metaphor" (4). This bias may exist because of negative associations with business or with characterizations of "middle management" in pop culture (for example, the comic strip Dilbert or the movie Office Space). Whatever the cause, I suspect the bias contributes to the lack of staff management resources in writing center scholarship that I found in the existing Writing Center Studies administrative literature.

In my exploration of writing center staff management literature, I first sought out foundational edited collections by influential editors in the field of Writing Center Studies, such as Michael Pemberton, Joyce Kinkead, Linda Myers-Breslin, Christina Murphy, and Byron Stay. These resources are valuable because they can be used as a gauge of the availability of staff management literature in Writing Center Studies; since their function is to gather the most important and useful resources for more convenient access, their inclusion or exclusion of staff management is significant. Despite their attention to other administrative concerns, questions remain about staff management: What models of staff management are in use in writing centers now? What models of staff management should be used in the writing center? Is managing a staff in the writing center like managing a staff in other settings? What models from settings outside the writing center should be imported into the center? How does staff management fit in with other administrative tasks, like budget or institutional relationships?

For example, Pemberton and Kinkead's frequently cited book, *The Center Will Hold* (2003), includes articles about assessment, tutor training[3], research in the writing center, and

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[3] It might seem like an odd choice to exclude tutor training from my exploration of literature on staff management. There is an argument to be made that the training of writing center employ-

maintaining institutional relationships, but staff management is absent. In another foundational collection, *Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers: Scenarios in Effective Program Management* (1999)*,* edited by Linda Myers-Breslin, staff management in writing centers is not explicitly included, though tutor selection and training, the physical space of the center, technology implementation, and institutional relationships are all discussed. I also found entire books on specific administrative topics, such as *Before and After the Tutorial: Writing Centers and Institutional Relationships* by Mauriello, Macauley, and Koch and *Building Writing Center Assessments that Matter* by Schendel and Macauley, but there were no collections specifically addressing staff management.

Christina Murphy and Byron Stay's, *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book* (2006), which is often used as a handbook for new WCAs, includes two chapters explicitly addressing staff management. These two chapters are entitled "Managing the Center: The Director as Coach" by Michael Mattison and "Examining Writing Center Director-Assistant Director Relationships" by Kevin Dvorak and Ben Raforth. In their articles, these authors discuss a model of management imported from sports and the ideal collaborative relationship between directors and assistant directors, respectively. Besides this collection, I found very few articles or books con-

ees, even the training that happens before their jobs begin, is a part of how administrators manage their staff. For the purposes of this project, I will exclude tutor training, as it is often envisioned—educating future employees so they are filled up with the information that they need, information which is often encapsulated in a handbook of some kind. The staff management that will be explored in this project is focused on on-going interactions between administrators and members of the staff. Though this kind of interaction could be called training (in the sense that it teaches), it is not what is usually meant by tutor training in the field of writing center studies.

cerned with staff management in the writing center. The remainder of this chapter will show that those that do exist are incomplete in three ways: they do not explicitly connect the models to the values and goals of Writing Center Studies, they import models from other contexts without justifying their use in the writing center, and/or they are not supported by empirical research.

One group of articles explores staff management models, but those articles lacked a theoretical foundation that connects their respective findings to the goals and values promoted by Writing Center Studies. These authors describe staff management models and provide guidance on how to apply them, but neglect to explain the theoretical foundations of the models (or at least cite sources that do) and neglect to justify the choice of one model over another. Muriel Harris's article, "Solutions and Trade-offs in Writing Center Administration," while providing a useful analysis of the problem-solving process of an experienced WCA, possesses some of the shortcomings described above. Harris proposes using the tutorial model as an administrative model (some but not all of her examples were staff management examples). She describes common problems that occur in writing center administration and provides guidance, not by offering one solution, but by discussing the decision-making process that an administrator might take and a list of possible solutions. She explicitly wishes to avoid any particular model of leadership which might offer "simple answers to complicated questions" (64). Her goal is to encourage administrators to avoid rule-based administration, in which there are "well-articulated guidelines and formulas" which she describes as "inflexible" (64). Harris advocates relying on principles—"individualization and collaboration" are two she mentions—to guide administrators toward possible solutions that are in line with writing center pedagogy. Though her tutoring model is appealing to those who are already committed to writing center pedagogy and collaborative, individualized tutorials, Harris never explains why the principles that apply to tutor/student interac-

tions should necessarily apply to administration. It might be that administration is so similar to tutoring that the same principles or models will be productive for both, but staff management has not been explored as thoroughly in writing center literature as the pedagogy of the tutorial. More research into the challenges of staff management and the effects of different staff management models is needed to justify using the tutor model of collaboration and individualization as an administrative model.

"Examining Writing Center Director-Assistant Director Relationships" by Kevin Dvorak and Ben Raforth, one of the two chapters on staff management in *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*, describes a similar model of staff management, which also lacks a theoretical foundation that connects the values of Writing Center Studies with the chosen management model. The chapter is focused, not on staff management as a whole, but on the relationship between the writing center director and the assistant director. The authors discuss how good communication between director and assistant can help to solidify the writing center's agenda, formalize the assistant's job description, and help the assistant director to develop an identity as an administrator, whether the assistant is a graduate student or a professional assistant director. The article assumes a collaborative or mentoring model of staff management, embodied by joint problem-solving and joint identity-building between the director and assistant director, but, like Harris, the authors do not attempt to ground this model in theory. Are collaborative and mentoring relationships more productive and valuable than other possible models of the relationship between directors and assistants? What other models are available and how can writing center directors evaluate models of leadership? If there are, as Dvorak and Raforth say, "many experiences of consensus and dissensus regarding leadership and pedagogical philosophies," it seems hasty to assume the collaborative model as the standard in this article (n.p.).

A similar problem appears in an article by Kelli Prejean entitled "Reaching In, Reaching Out: A Tale of Administrative Experimentation and the Process of Administrative Inclusion." Prejean argues for another collaborative model, which she calls "inclusive" and "plural" (n.p.). She suggests that the director and tutors should share responsibility for administrative tasks as an alternative to the traditional director and assistant director model. Prejean's article provides an inspiring case study narrating her success in implementing a particular model of management in her writing center, but it does not interrogate the model itself to determine if it is theoretically sound. The author's only justifications for a collaborative relationship between the administrator and the tutors are that it provides "professional experience . . . applicable to positions [tutors] may hold in the future" and that "it does not rely as heavily on funding for a single administrative assistant" (n.p.). While budget and professionalization of tutors are certainly important considerations, they are not adequate justifications by themselves for choosing a staff management model.

Another group of authors seek to import models of management from contexts outside of writing centers and outside of the humanities—business and sports—for use in the writing center. Though these articles describe models that are different from the standard collaborative models described in the previously mentioned articles and might have new options and insights useful for WCAs, none of the authors adequately justified their use in the writing center. The articles by Crisp (2000) and Heckleman (1998), discussed above in the section about conceiving of WCA work as management, are examples of authors promoting unjustified, imported staff management models. Both models are imported from business, evidenced by each recommending advice from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey, a best-selling business leadership book at the time. Crisp also references *On People Management* by Mary Kay

Ash (the founder of the company Mary Kay) and *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies* by Peters and Waterman. Neither Crisp nor Heckleman gives a well-articulated description of the business models they advocate, leaving the reader to wonder if Steven Covey and Mary Kay Ash are advocating models supported by management theory or just the lists of practical advice found in the article. Though it might be beneficial to import all or part of the business model of staff management into the writing center, neither Crisp nor Heckleman discusses whether the model will work in the writing center or whether it aligns with the values and goals of WCAs.

Back (1999) also applies business management, specifically the Japanese system[4] of Continuous Quality Management, to the writing center, but her argument for this model fails to explain the theory that supports this model and to justify the model's use in the writing center. Back narrates the history of this management system and its adoption in American business and the American university, and she argues that in order to consistently improve writing center services, directors must improve communication with staff by implementing weekly staff meetings,

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[4] Though it is outside the scope of this project and my knowledge of business management, I think it is interesting to note the interest that writing center scholarship has taken in Japanese business management. The cursory reading I have done about Japanese business management models suggest that the Japanese, in contrast to the American and European business models I am familiar with, have an unusual focus on collaboration, power-sharing, and the value of each employee as a person. I would speculate that this focus is the reason that writing center researchers (who also share those values) have taken an interest in Japanese management styles. More research into Japanese business management and the theory and values it is based on might be fruitful for writing center administration.

ongoing training, and a newsletter (11-12). She centers managerial improvement on relationships with staff, which seems promising; however, suggesting staff meetings, newsletters, and ongoing training seems a tired answer that provides little real guidance. Without a theoretically situated model to guide management, writing center directors are left with the same kinds of questions: What should happen at these staff meetings? How should the relationship between staff and administration be structured? What do writing center staff members need from their administrators besides more information? What ideas underlie the Japanese business management model that she suggests, and are those theories applicable to the writing center? Are those theories in line with the values of WCAs? Not only does she neglect the needed exploration of the theory the model is based on, she also fails to explain why this particular model should be imported into the different context of the writing center.

James Tackach, in his 1984 article "Theory Z Management and the College Writing Center," also seeks to import business management techniques into the writing center. He writes that management "is one important role that writing center directors must play for which they have received little training," and he suggests adopting "Theory Z" management, a Japanese business management system with compelling characteristics: promoting stable and long-term hiring (3-4), decision-making based on principles instead of rules (4-5), generalist employees and managers in writing centers rather than specialists in certain disciplines, writing styles, or kinds of students(4), collective decision-making and sharing of responsibility (5-7), and an ethic of caring about staff as whole people (7-8). Much of Tackach's advice about putting these ideas into action focuses on large-scale structural changes in the permanency of staff positions and increases in salary and benefits. Although his argument for structural change is fascinating and relevant to management, Tackach fails to acknowledge that the structure of the center is often out of the

control of individual administrators, particularly the new administrators who most need staff management advice. It is not especially helpful to most WCAs, who have little real decision-making power about how staff are hired and paid or how the budget can be spent, to say that they should create permanent positions with benefits for their employees. Most WCAs would jump at the chance to better compensate the people who work for them. However, such things are rarely determined by WCAs, and the Japanese business model might be more useful to WCAs if Tackach addressed questions like the following: How could this ethic of caring be applied on a daily basis to interactions with staff members? How could collective decision-making and power-sharing be used in staff meetings? How should they be used to create policy changes? Tackach does not answer these more relevant questions.

To be fair, Tackach seems to aspire to justify the use of this model in the writing center, which sets his article apart from the other studies that rely on imported models. Tackach writes:

College and university operations are quite compatible with Theory Z management practices because of our educational institutions' emphasis on long-term goals instead of short-term financial profits. . . . College administrators, unlike the managers of companies obsessed with immediate profits, are generally willing to operate in the red for short periods to ensure that those goals are not compromised. Theory Z businesses operate similarly. (2)

Because Theory Z businesses and universities share a focus on long term goals and not just short term profits, Tackach believes that what has worked in those businesses will work for writing centers. He also concludes that the results for the writing center staff of implementing Theory Z management in his own center are the kinds of results that Theory Z businesses also report: more productivity because of more involvement, higher self-esteem, and evidence of a sense of pride in the accomplishments of the center. He argues that when employees are produc-

tive and proud of their work and their workplace, as they will be under Theory Z management, writing center directors, like Theory Z business managers, will feel less harried (7-8). These kinds of justifications for applying his business model to the writing center are an important first step, making Tackach's article much more useful than the others describing imported models, but questions remain.

Mattison's article, like those by Crisp, Heckleman, Back, and Tackach, advocates importing an outside management model for use in managing a writing center staff; however, instead of drawing his model from the business world, Mattison takes his from the world of sports. He argues that directors should use coaching tools to develop better human, a mission that he considers "at the core of" managing a writing center. These strong communication skills include encouragement for self-critical tutors, the use of a handbook to serve as director when the director is absent, getting to know the individual tutors in order to recognize their strengths and assign them tasks at which they are likely to succeed, and finding ways, such as mock tutorials, for tutors to practice their developing skills (n.p.). However, Mattison's discussion of the coaching model lacks a theoretical foundation linking it to the field of Writing Center Studies. He does not address *why* the coaching model is a useful one for the writing center. His gives an answer to the question of why this model should be applied to writing centers—because coaches and directors both deal with human activity and because they both deal with teams—but this answer needs more explanation (n.p.). Since humans use other kinds of models to interact with each other (parent/child, teacher/student, wife/husband), the argument that we are all human does not seem sufficient to justify importing the coaching model without more explanation. The argument that the coaching model should be imported into the writing center because coaches manage teams and so do writing center directors would be more convincing if Mattison answered these questions:

Should all teams doing all things be managed in the same way? Do the values of coaches and athletes align with the values of WCAs and their staff members? Why is the coaching model more appropriate for the writing center than other possible models?

Out of all of the literature on staff management models, whether imported or already in use in the writing center, I consider the chapter on writing center administration in Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet's (2007) book, *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*, to be the most valuable example of staff management scholarship in Writing Center Studies. The authors address the need for theoretical models of staff management directly, though they use different words to describe the models. They note the abundance of practical administrative advice on the wcenter listserv, but they believe, as I do, that administrators who receive many email answers to their questions about management difficulties "must . . . learn to shape a leadership identity, one that accomplishes the managerial as well as the visionary" (n.p.). They are correct to point out that this "leadership identity"[5] is needed in order to "creatively manifest principles" (n.p.); the practical, situational advice that appears on the listserv is not enough.

They go on to advocate a model of management that they call "functional" instead of "structural," meaning that instead of leading the center according to the hierarchical structures already in place at all levels of the university, the writing center administration should be "invit-

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[5] Geller et al. use both "leadership" and "management" when describing the work WCAs do with and for writing center staff members. "Leadership identity" seems to be the same as a theoretical model of staff management, as they are both theory constructed by a WCA to direct her actions as a manager. Geller et al. call their system "functional management." The terms "leadership" and "management" seem to be interchangeable.

ing the unknown into not only our tutors' and our colleagues' learning, teaching, writing lives, but into our own" (n.p.). When Geller et al. call upon models of management from outside sources, such as Buckingham and Coffman's business management book *First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, they situate these models within the pedagogy and values of the writing center. The purpose of their chapter, however, is not to explain and evaluate specific models; they do not describe Buckingham and Coffman at length, and their own "functional" model is not completely explained. Their intention is to spur WCAs to examine their own management practices reflectively and to encourage them to seek out "other kinds of successful leadership development models for guidance" (n.p.).

Their chapter thoroughly explores theoretical issues in staff management models and discusses the need to establish the relevance of outside models to the writing center, but one thing is lacking: empirical evidence. They are breaking ground in Writing Center Studies by theorizing about management models, a kind of research the field desperately needs more of, yet this theoretical understanding also needs to be challenged and supported by empirical research into how "functional" and "structural" management work in the writing center (n.p.). Since the staff management theory is almost exclusively explored in the seventh chapter of this book, it makes sense that Geller et al. would not have the space to provide empirical evidence in support of their theoretical model. A book-length study that theorizes about staff management in the writing center, explores different models, applies the models to practical situations, and presents empirical evidence is sorely needed in Writing Center Studies.

The Everyday Writing Center is not the only staff management literature in Writing Center Studies that is lacking in empirical evidence. In fact, no example in the existing literature discussed so far in this chapter provides empirical evidence to support its chosen model. Several of

the articles use anecdotal, personal experiences, which can be helpful to build ethos when sharing information with colleagues and which can be inspiring to read. Geller et al., Prejean, Tackach, and Mattison all emphasize that they use the models of management they advocate with positive results in their own writing centers. However, anecdotal evidence of this kind does not provide the necessary answers to some important questions about models of staff management. Assuming that the theory supporting a particular model has been explored and connected to the values, beliefs, and goals of Writing Center Studies, well-designed empirical studies are necessary to answer questions about the way it functions in a writing center: What are the effects of this model on the members of the staff? What are its effects on the students? What are its effects on the administrators using the model? Does it lead to increased success in achieving the goals of a particular writing center? Can it be used within the time, financial, and other constraints of particular writing centers? For an imported model, does it function in the writing center in the same way it functions in its original context? These and many other questions should be answered with empirical research about the use of staff management models in the writing center.

In this chapter, I have identified a gap in writing center scholarship concerning staff management. I argue that the field needs more theoretical research on the models currently in use and models that might be imported from other contexts. My study calls on the field of Writing Center Studies to recognize the need for empirical research on how these models work in the writing center and what the results of using them might be. It is important to note that my survey, which will be the focus of the rest of this thesis, is not designed to provide this empirical evidence about any particular model. Instead, I have designed it to explore the practical results of the scholarly gap established in this chapter. Exploratory surveys like this one are necessary to

direct the attention of the field to questions for further research that are of interest to current WCAs. By studying issues raised by data from WCAs themselves, Writing Center Studies can produce research that is immediately relevant to writing centers.

Through this exploratory survey, I seek to understand the experiences of new WCAs, who, because they have not had time to struggle into their own management models without the help of scholarship, suffer most from Writing Center Studies' lack of adequate staff management literature. My hope is that this review of the existing literature and the results of my survey will convince writing center researchers that the field must provide more scholarship about staff management for future WCAs.

3   SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, I will describe the design and methodology of a nationwide survey of WCAs and analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the survey.

I designed this survey to examine the preparation for and beliefs about staff management in the writing center. It is intended for new WCAs, defined as those administrators who have been in their WCA jobs for less than three years[6]. I chose to survey new administrators about their staff management preparation because more experienced administrators have had time to develop staff management beliefs and practices through their work, even if they were not well prepared prior to beginning WCA work. By targeting new WCAs, I hope to understand the experiences of WCAs who have not had time yet to develop their own staff management models. The new WCAs are the group who may suffer the most from the lack of available staff management literature in Writing Center Studies, and so I chose to gather data about them to find out how the group most likely to be affected by the gap in the scholarship handles staff management. The survey included 21 questions of various types, with only two questions that must be answered in order to continue the survey; one to confirm the participant's consent to participate in the survey and the other to collect information about how long the administrator has been in her job (See Appendix for survey questions). These questions ensured that all the participants gave informed

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[6] After three years a WCA has acquired skills and tools for staff management from on the job experience. I limited my survey to WCAs who have been in their jobs fewer than three years in order to better survey what tools are available from the field before a WCA has acquired her own from experience.

consent and that they all fell within the target demographic After receiving IRB approval from

Georgia State University, I sent the survey to a small group of WCAs to be pilot-tested.

I created and administered the survey online using Survey Monkey for data collection

and analysis, distributing it through the writing center and writing program administrator

listservs (wcenter and wpaL) in order to reach the largest number of WCAs. The instructions

asked only WCAs (including graduate students, faculty, and academic professionals) who have

been administrators less than 3 years to fill out the survey. I discarded the data from participants

who indicated that they have been WCAs for more than 3 years during the analysis of the data.

The survey remained open from March 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013.

3.1 Description of Survey

The survey, found in the appendix, begins with the consent page, describing the purpose

of the survey and asking administrators for their consent to begin. If the participant consented,

she continued to the next page of the survey. The second page features a series of questions de-

signed to gather data about the WCA and her writing center. These questions are multiple choice,

rating scale, or fill-in-the-blank and were designed to elicit demographic information useful in

analyzing other questions. For example, these questions allow me to search for potential patterns

in the preparation for managing a staff reported by administrators who categorized themselves as

graduate students, faculty members, or academic professionals. I chose multiple choice, rating,

and fill-in-the-blank questions in order to collect quantitative data about the participants, their

writing centers, and their levels of preparation for staff management.

The third page of the survey includes Likert scale and open-ended questions, intended to

collect data about the administrator's preparation (both scholarly and practical, both in and out of

the university) for managing a staff. I chose the Likert scale questions to allow participants to locate their answers on a continuum, and the open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate more on their quantitative answers. In hopes of eliciting longer and more thoughtful responses, the fourth page includes only open-ended questions. I designed these questions to reveal theoretical models of management held by survey participants and how those beliefs are enacted in their writing centers.

3.2 Analysis of Data

In this project, I used mixed methods, a combination of quantitative analysis and discourse analysis[7]. The multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, rating, and Likert scale questions were analyzed quantitatively, providing percentages and raw numbers as representations of the answers. To analyze the responses to open-ended questions, I grouped the data into categories of common ideas and wording (which are listed below in sections 3.9-3.11 of this chapter). I developed these categories from the data itself, instead of creating them ahead of time. Had I been investigating specific beliefs and practices as variables, the categories would have been set ahead of time by those variables. My survey, however, was more exploratory and was designed to find the categories in the open-ended questions, variables that can be used in future research, and then use those categories to analyze the data.

[7] Mary Sue MacNealy describes discourse analysis as a "well-designed, systematic method of investigation" using "empirical techniques such as carefully defined populations of interests . . . , carefully selected representative samples, and clearly defined procedures for collection and interpretation of data" in order to understand "chunks of related words, ranging from one-word commands . . . to much longer pieces of text" (124).

Though I filtered the data by many demographic characteristics, the most interesting and relevant correlations emerged when I filtered the data by three variables: previous experience in management outside the writing center, status as a graduate student, faculty member, or administrative professional, and number of years managing a writing center. My presentation of the survey data is, therefore, organized around these three variables and their correlations with the remaining data.

The following section describes the quantitative demographic data that was collected in the first three pages of the survey.

3.3 Survey Participants

During the month it was open, 63 people participated in the survey. Of those 63, 12 participants answered that they have been in their jobs more than 3 years, and their answers were removed from the data. The 51 participants left were made up of 51% faculty administrators, 33% administrative professional administrators, and 10% graduate student administrators. A small number of participants who checked "other" characterized their positions in other ways, such as "professional staff" or "college staff". 43% of the participants have been in their administrative position less than one year, 37% between one and two years, and 20% between two and three years.

The participants were drawn from writing centers with various numbers of staff and appointments per semester. 40% of centers had a staff smaller than 10, 32% between 11 and 20, 14% between 21 and 30, 8% between 31 and 40, and 6% between 41 and 50. The number of tutorials per semester ranged from fewer than 50 appointments to more than 4000, and the average number of appointments per semester was 1,163. The staffing of the writing centers variously

included directors, assistant directors, receptionists, technology or online tutoring coordinators, faculty tutors, graduate tutors, undergraduate tutors, professional tutors, or some combination, though there were multiple titles used for these positions. The budgets of the centers ranged from $4000 to $175,000, though many participants responded that they did not know the budget of their center. A few participants explained that because the budget comes from many different parts of the university, it was too complicated to report in one number[8]. In most of the writing centers represented, administrative responsibilities are primarily carried out by directors, assistant directors, and receptionists. In only 10% of the centers surveyed are graduate or undergraduate tutors involved in administrative work, and even fewer professional tutors (7%) and faculty tutors (2%) are assigned administrative tasks.

The following sections of this chapter will present the patterns found in the data when it was filtered by different demographic characteristics, such as status as faculty, graduate student, or academic professional, years in the current job, and previous experience.

3.4 Differences between Graduate Students, Faculty, and Academic Professionals

Question 2 asked administrators to classify themselves as graduate students, faculty, or academic professional administrators. I used this demographic information to examine the time each group spent on staff management out of their total time spent on writing center administration. An important distinction exists between the fraction of total administrative time that a WCA

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[8] The budgets of writing centers come from English departments, provosts, deans of colleges, writing across the curriculum programs, student success programs, and many other varied sources. Many writing centers have multiple sources of funding which change every year, making it hard to report one number as the budget of the writing center.

spends on staff management and the average number of hours a WCA spends on staff management. The former is measuring how a WCA chooses to allocate her time, regardless of how much time she actually has for administration all together. The latter is dependent on how much time the WCA spends all together on administration. The following chart shows the fraction of writing center administrative time that graduate students, faculty, and academic professionals use for staff management.
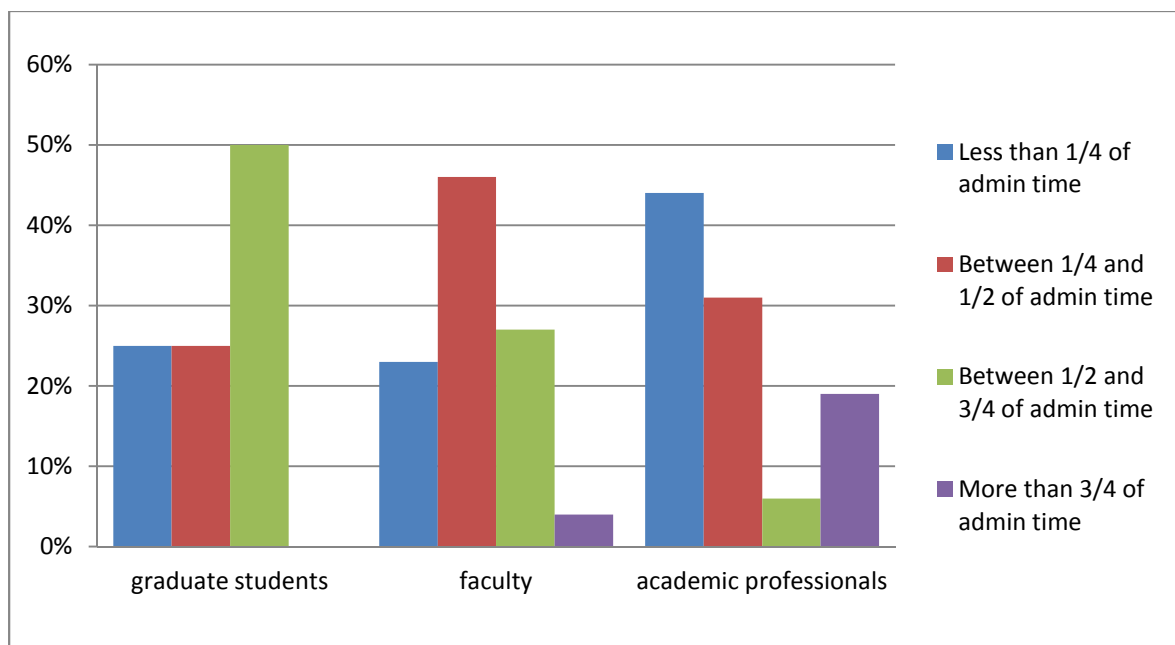
Figure 3.1: Staff Management Time as Fraction of Administrative Time

Half of graduate students (exactly 50%) reported spending more than half of their administrative time on staff management; less than half of faculty (31%) reported spending more than half of their time on staff management; and more than half of academic professionals (63%) fell into the extreme categories of spending time on staff management (less than 1/4 of their time or

more than 3/4). I will discuss the possible effects of differences in compensation and release time, which I did not ask about in the survey, in the implications section of my study.

When asked to respond to the statement, "I was well prepared to manage a staff when I started my writing center administrative job," 100% of graduate student administrators agreed or strongly agreed, 76% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed, and 67% of academic professionals agreed or strongly agreed.

3.5 Differences in Years on the Job

Question 3 asks, "How long have you been a writing center administrator?" Though the survey description asked for respondents who had been in a writing center administrative job less than 3 years, I had to discard 12 out of the original 63 responses because the administrator reported that she had been an administrator of a writing center more than 3 years. When I filtered the results by how many years the administrators had been in their writing center administrative jobs, some correlations emerged.

The average number of hours spent on staff management increased as years on the job increased, as shown in figure 3.2.
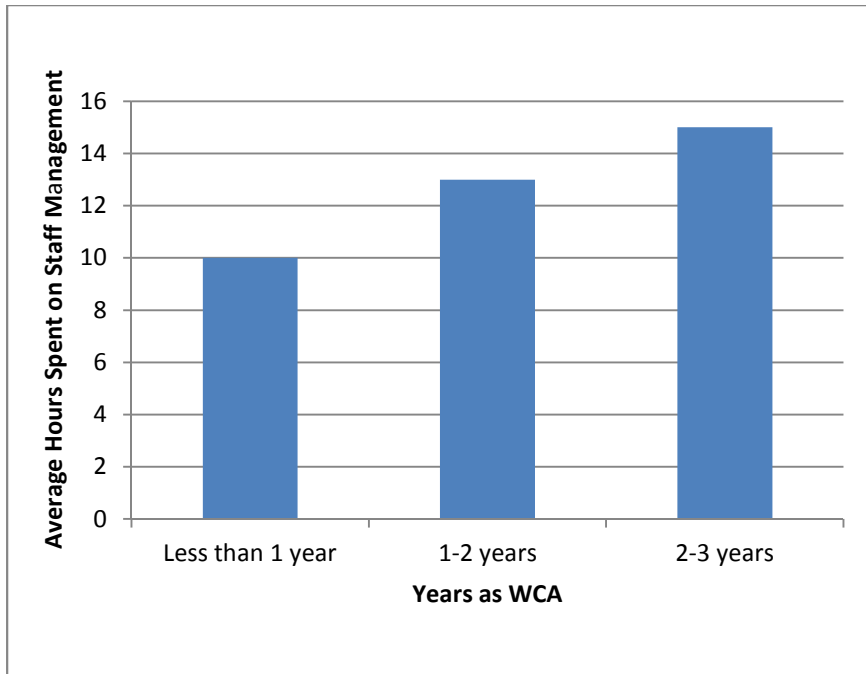
Figure 3.2: Number of Hours Spent on Staff Management by Years on the Job

Similarly, the fraction of time spent on staff management also seems to be dependent on the number of years the administrator has been in his writing center job. While only 15% of administrators who have been in their jobs less than 1 year spent more than half their time on staff management, that percentage rises to 37% for WCAs who have been in their jobs between 1 and 2 years and 40% for those who have been in their jobs between 2 and 3 years.
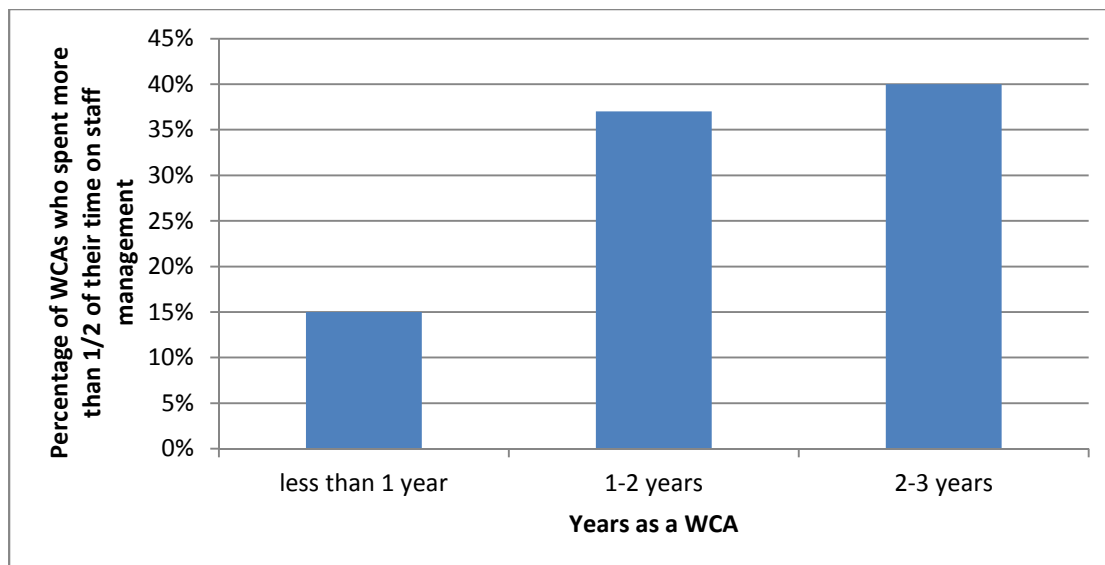
Figure 3.3: Staff Management Time as Fraction of Administrative Time by Number of Years

3.6 The Size of the Writing Center Staff

In order to investigate how the size of the writing center staff might influence time spent on staff management and how prepared a WCA felt to manage a staff when she began her administrative job, I filtered the data by the number of staff members in the center. As shown in figure 2.4 below, the percentage of all surveyed WCAs who spend more than half of their administrative time managing their staff rises as the size of the staff increases. However, the group of WCAs managing a staff of 41-50 report different results.
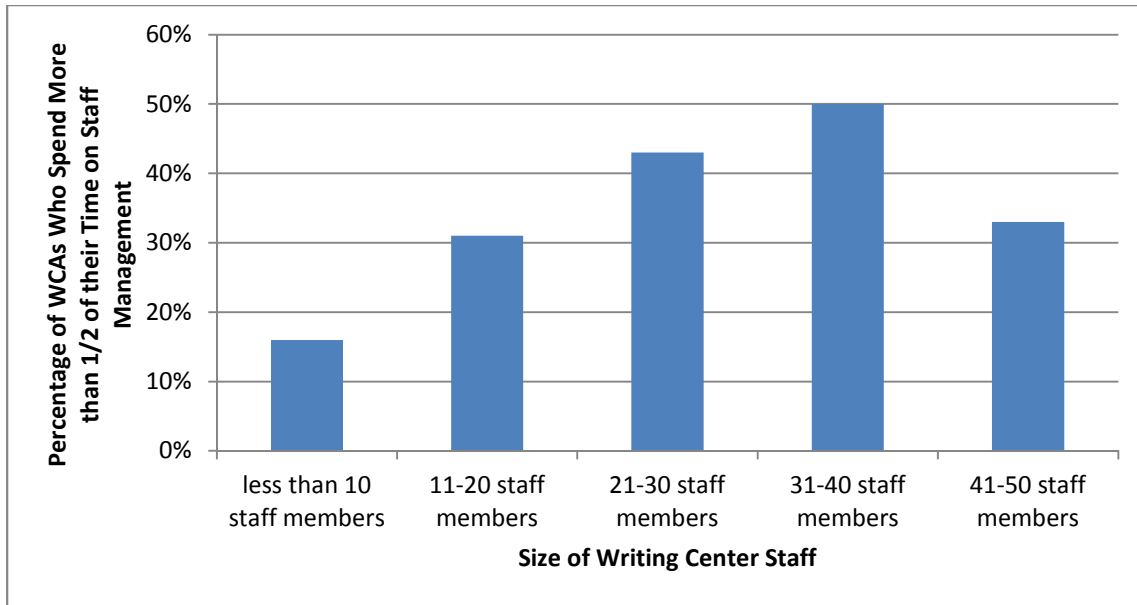
Figure 3.4: Fraction of Time Spent on Staff Management by Size of Writing Center Staff

Figure 3.5 below shows a similar increase in average hours spent on staff management as the writing center staff size increases. Figure 3.5 also shows that the increase continues in the largest staff group.
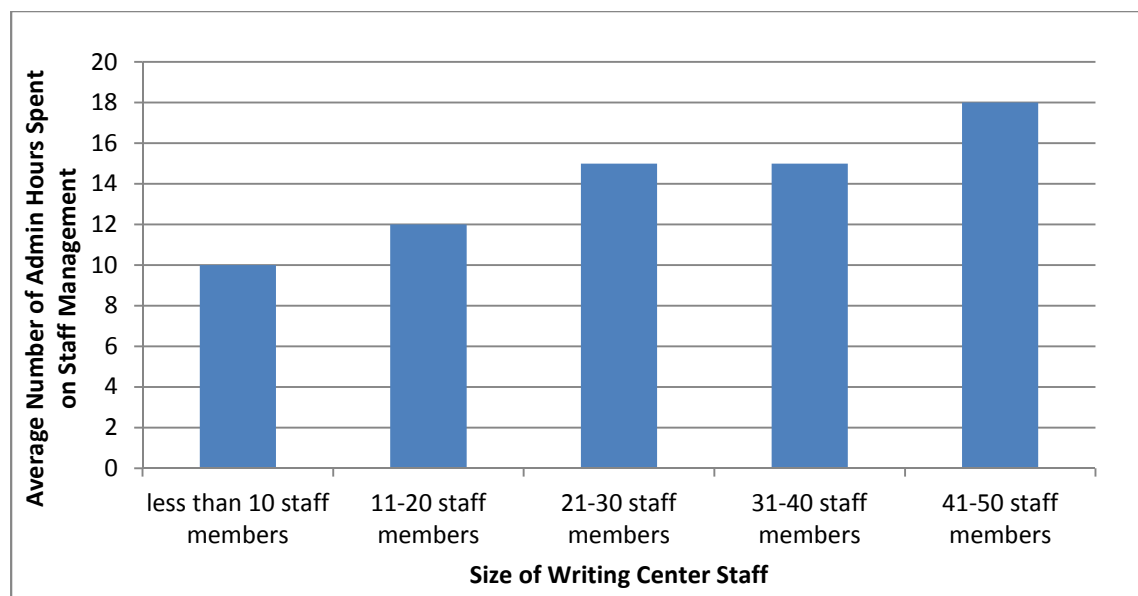
Figure 3.5: Average Number of Staff Management Hours by Size of Writing Center Staff

I also filtered the data by the size of the writing center staff each administrator manages in order to look at their assessments of their preparation for staff management, but I could detect no correlation between how well-prepared a WCA felt for staff management and the size of the staff in her writing center.

3.7 The Nature of the Relationship of the WCA and her Administrator

In order to investigate whether any correlation exists between the nature of the relationship a WCA has with the administrator to whom she reports and how well-prepared that WCA felt when she began her writing center job, I filtered the data using questions 12 and 13. These questions ask participants to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements characterizing the WCAs relationship with her administrator. Depending on the position of the WCA, this administrator could be the writing center director or an outside administrator.

When I examined only the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that their relationship with their administrator is supportive and collaborative, I found that 78% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they were well-prepared to manage a staff when they began their WCA jobs. When I looked at the participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their administrative relationship is supportive and collaborative[9], only 55% agreed or strongly agreed that they were well-prepared for staff management. 79% of the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that their communication with their administrators was frequent and close also agreed or strongly agreed that they were well-prepared for staff management. When participants reported that their communication with their administrators was not frequent and close, the percentage that felt well-prepared for staff management dropped to 58%.

When the relationship with administrators was characterized as collaborative and supportive and communication was also frequent and close, 82% of participants reported that they were well-prepared for staff management. Only 50% of participants who reported that they had frequent and close communication with their administrators but would not characterize the relationship as collaborative and supportive felt well-prepared for staff management. Participants whose administrative relationships were collaborative and supportive, but who did not have frequent and close communication with their administrators all reported feeling unprepared for staff management. I will discuss possible reasons for the correlation between a WCA's relationship with her administrator and how prepared she felt for managing a staff at the beginning of her WCA job in the final chapter of this study.

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[9] I discuss the possible design problem of pairing the words "supportive and collaborative" and "frequent and close" (which appear later in this paragraph) in the implications chapter, and I explain why I think there is still value to be gained from analysis of this part of the survey data.

3.8 Previous Experience Outside the Writing Center as Preparation for Staff Management

Question 16 of the survey asked administrators whether they had any experience manag-ing a staff in the private sector or in academic spaces other than the writing center. 58% of the respondents reported that they had outside experience, while 42% did not. The staff management experiences reported in the comment box included retail or office management experience, teaching, and other WPA work besides the writing center. When asked to respond to the state-ment, "I was well prepared to manage a staff when I started my writing center administrative job," 96% of administrators with prior staff management experience either agreed or strongly agreed. None of the administrators without prior experience managing a staff strongly agreed that they were well prepared. In fact, 53% of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were well prepared for staff management in the writing center.

When examining the data from the WCAs with and without prior experience outside the writing center, I found a correlation with the fraction of time out of all their administrative time that WCAs spend on staff management. The figures below illustrate the time administrators with and without prior staff management experience spent on staff management.
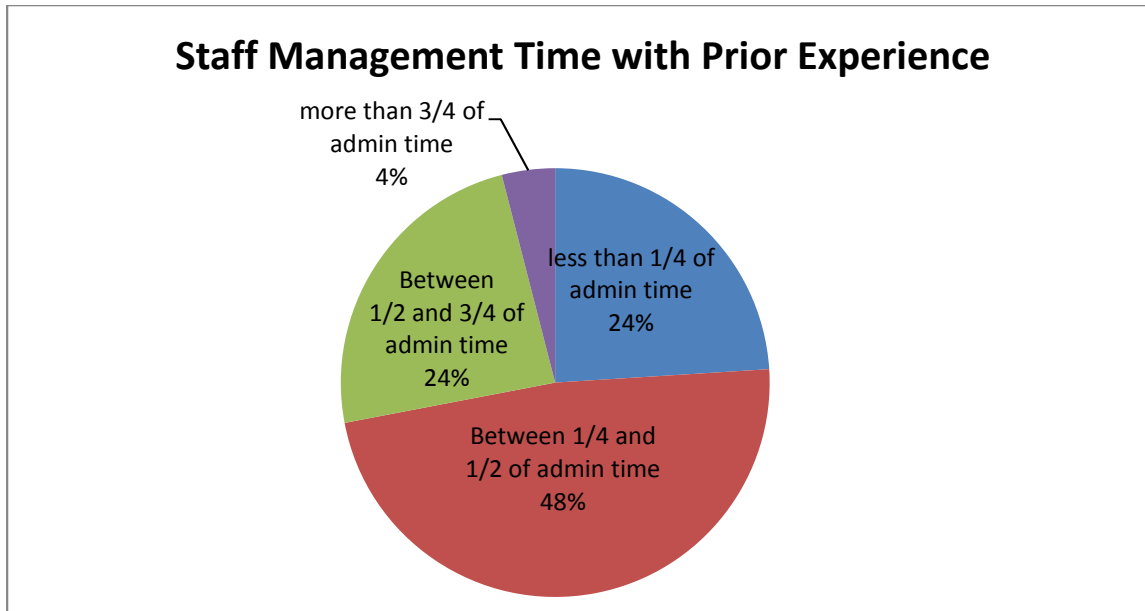
Figure 3.6: Staff Management Time with Prior Experience
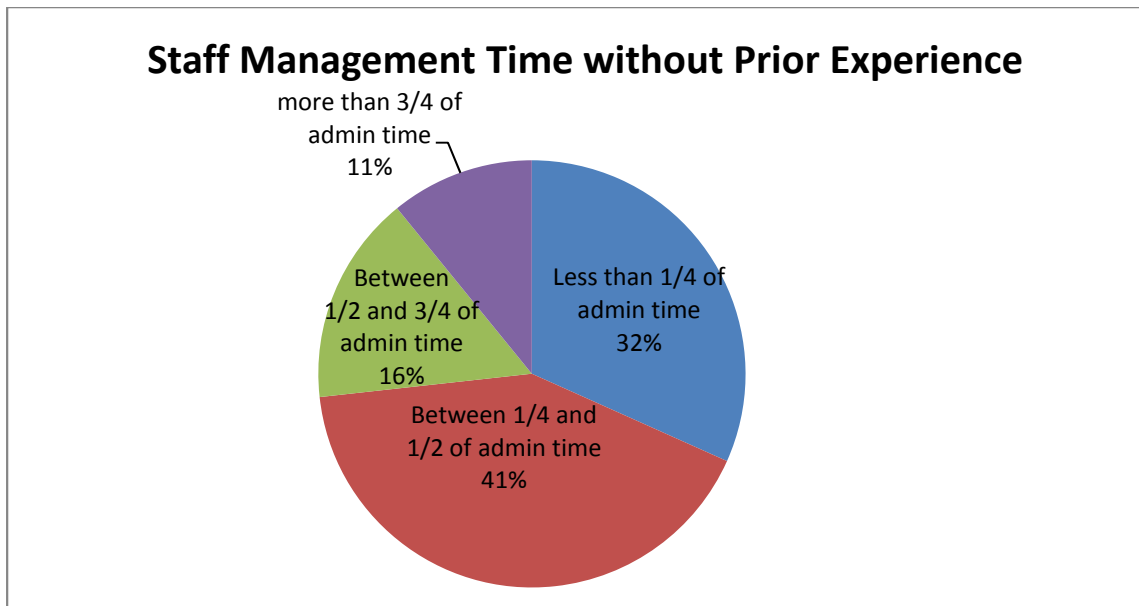
Figure 3.7: Staff Management Time without Prior Experience

As shown in figures 3.6 and 3.7, though the percentages of administrators with prior ex-

perience and without who spent more than half of their administrative time working on staff

management were essentially the same (28% and 27%, respectively), a higher percentage of the administrators without prior experience spent more than 3/4 of their time on staff management (11%, as opposed to 4% of those with prior experience). The percentage of administrators who spent less than 1/4 of their administrative time managing a staff was higher in the group without prior administrative experience (32%, as opposed to 24% of those who had prior experience). Nearly half (43%) of administrators without prior experience reported the fraction of time spent on staff management to be in one of the extreme categories (less than 1/4 or more than 3/4), whereas only 28% of administrators with prior experience reported themselves as falling into one of the extreme categories.

As shown in figure 3.8 below, participants with previous experience outside the writing center reported spending an average of 2.5 more hours a week on staff management than the participants without previous experience.
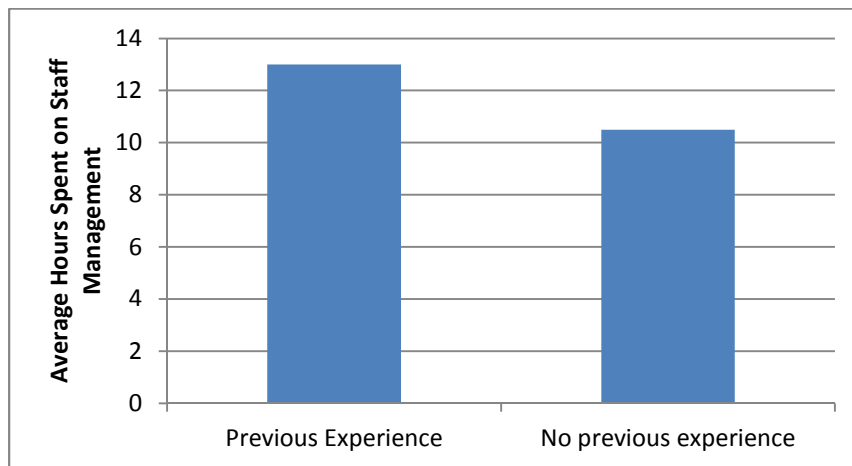
Figure 3.8: Staff Management Hours With and Without Outside Experience

3.9 Scholarly and Practical Training for Staff Management

For the question "What parts of your scholarly and practical training prepared you for managing a writing center staff?", I grouped the answers into the following categories: classroom teaching, working as a tutor in a writing center, leadership positions in graduate student organizations, internships (short-term administrative experience in the university), an apprenticeship with a writing program or writing center administrator after accepting the administrative position, a graduate course in WPA or WCA work, a training course outside the university, administrative positions as a graduate student or junior faculty member, reading scholarship on staff management, learning collaboration in creative writing classes by participating in a writing workshop, and no preparation for staff management. Each of these categories was mentioned at least once. The following table shows the number of times the answers that appeared more than once were counted in the open-ended responses.

Table 3.1: Scholarly and Practical Training Responses

Category of preparation	Number of responses
Administrative positions as a graduate student or junior faculty member	18
Working as a tutor in a writing center	11
Classroom teaching	6
Graduate course in WPA or WCA work	6
Internships (short-term administrative experience in the university)	3
No preparation for staff management	5

For the question "What gaps were there in your scholarly or practical training for managing a writing center staff?" I grouped the answers into the following categories: no general training in management of a staff, lack of knowledge of HR policies, no readings about staff management, no graduate course in administration, no structured mentoring program, no training in how to build community and investment among staff members, no training in managing non-student employees, and no gaps.

Table 3.2: Scholarly or Practical Training Gaps

Category of gap in training	Number of responses
No general training in management of a staff	5
Lack of knowledge of HR policies	3
No readings about staff management	2
No graduate course in administration	2
Un-named gaps	9
No gaps	5

For both questions, I discarded answers which showed a misunderstanding of the question and were not about staff management. For the question asking about preparation, I only discarded 1 answer out of 43. However, I had to discard 19 out of 39 answers to the question about gaps in training because they named gaps in training for other things besides staff management, such as budget, institutional relationships, and tutorial pedagogy. I see two possibilities that might explain the large number of answers that had to be discarded (which I will discuss in the implications section in chapter 3): either the question was poorly worded and confused the re-

spondents, or the poor preparation for staff management makes WCAs unable to identify the gaps in their own training.

3.10 Management Themes

Question 20 on the survey, "What are your beliefs about managing a writing center staff? What theories do you ascribe to about staff management in the writing center?" required a more complicated coding process than the other text questions, which only required categorizing and counting answers. Not surprisingly, the answers to this question were more complex, encompassing more ideas in one answer, and were generally written less as lists and more as paragraphs of interrelated text. In order to analyze the data, I first made a list of all the beliefs found in the answers, just as I did for the relevant training and gaps in the previous two questions. I grouped similar answers together in the same way; for instance, I grouped "the process should . . . allow for staff members to be heard" and "I always want to hear their ideas about what is and isn't working" into the same belief—"staff should have a voice in decision making." Once I had a list of beliefs, I counted the number of times that particular belief was mentioned in an answer. The answers, because of their nature as longer pieces of text, included many different beliefs within one answer, and I counted each belief separately.

I noticed that the beliefs fit into four major administrative themes—collaboration, empowerment, nurture, authority—broad descriptions of different staff management styles. The collaboration theme included beliefs about the benefits of WCAs and staff member working together to make administrative decisions. I grouped beliefs about the benefits of staff members taking on administrative tasks without the participation of the WCA into the empowerment theme. The nurture theme encompassed beliefs about the important role of WCAs in taking care of their staff

members and promoting the personal and professional development of the staff. I gathered be-

liefs about the role of the WCA in making decisions and policy for the writing center alone and

in providing the staff with guidelines and feedback into the authority theme.

3.10.1 Collaboration Theme

The collaboration theme included all the beliefs that seemed to be focused on making de-

cisions about the functioning of the writing center as a group (either a large group or in smaller

groups), with the goal of all members participating. This theme appeared a total of 25 times,

making up 30% of all beliefs about staff management. The table that follows outlines the beliefs

that I categorized as a part of the collaboration theme and the number of times that each belief

appeared in the survey results.

Table 3.3: Collaboration beliefs

Beliefs	Number of appearances
Used a form of the word "collaboration" to describe staff management.	7
Administrators should envision themselves as "co-learners," "peers," or "equals."	6
Staff should have a voice in decision making	5
Administrators and staff should share responsibility and leadership.	4
Centers should use "apprenticeship" or "mentoring."	2
Administrators should work beside staff to show "solidarity" or "equality."	1

3.10.2 Empowerment Theme

The empowerment theme included all beliefs that seemed to characterize the role of WCAs as sharing power with staff members. Though both the collaborative and the empowerment themes included beliefs about sharing power, I divided them based on the role of the administrator once power had been shared. In the collaborative theme, the beliefs were about using power together; in the empowerment theme, the beliefs were about giving power to staff to be used separate from the administrator, either alone or in groups of staff members. The empowerment theme was mentioned a total of 12 times, 14% of the total number of beliefs.

Table 3.4: Empowerment Beliefs

Beliefs	Number of appearances
Administrator's responsibility is to create an environment in which staff can take on responsibility for leadership.	5
Administrators should not "micro-manage" and should "get out of the way."	3
Administrators should get to know individual staff members and draw on their individual strengths.	2
Staff should evaluate the administration.	1
Staff should be in charge of the writing center.	1

3.10.3 Nurture Theme

I grouped all the beliefs which seemed to characterize the administrator's role as a care-taker of the intellectual, personal, social, and career development of the staff members into the nurture theme. The beliefs in this theme focused on the support of, growth of, and advocacy for the staff by the administrator. The nurture theme appeared 23 times in the survey results, which was 28% of the total number of beliefs.

Table 3.5: Nurture Beliefs

Beliefs	Number of appearances
Used variations on the word "supportive" to describe ideal staff management.	8
Administrator should encourage intellectual and professional development.	4
Administrators should focus on community building among all staff and building relationships between administrators and staff.	4
Administrators should be open to questions.	2
Used "Neo-human relations theory" to describe ideal staff management.[10]	1
Administrators should focus on staff members' strengths to build on instead of on weaknesses.	1

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[10] Neo-human relations theory, introduced by Maslow and Herzberg argues that employees have a hierarchy of psychological needs that must be met in order for them to be optimally productive and happy. Managers who ascribe to this theory generally use democratic workplace environment and opportunities for growth to empower employees personally and professionally (http://www.accel-team.com/human_relations/index.html).

Any negative feedback should be given along with a lot of positive feedback.	1
"Staff need the feeling of being useful and needed."	1
Physical proximity to staff is important.	1

3.10.4: Authority Theme

The final staff management theme I found in the survey results is authority, into which I grouped beliefs that focused on the administrator as the decision-maker, observer/assessor, and primary actor, who exercises administrative power alone. The authority theme appeared 14 times, 17% of the total number of beliefs.

Table 3.6: Authority Beliefs

Belief	Number of appearances
Administrators should communicate expectations and feedback to the staff clearly and honestly.	5
Administrators should work beside staff in order to know what is going on in the center.	5
Staff will respect administrators who know more than they know about writing and teaching writing.	2
Administrators should set policy for the center.	1
Administrators should be tolerant of mistakes, especially for the young staff members that often make up the bulk of writing center workers.	1

3.11: Daily Management Practices

The last question of the survey (question 21) asked respondents "How do you put these beliefs into daily practice in your center?" I grouped the answers to this question into the same themes that I identified in the answers to the previous question about beliefs and theories—collaboration, empowerment, nurture, and authority—in order to explore whether the daily practices of the WCAs aligned with the beliefs they expressed. There was also a large group of an-

swers (6 or 14% of daily practices) that were similar to "see above," indicating that the daily practices were included with or were the same as the beliefs.

There was some difficulty in placing some of the daily practices into the theme groups. For example, "constant reading about the center for the administrator" could be categorized in several ways. This response could be an example of collaboration because the administrator sees herself as a co-learner with the staff. It could be an example of authority, as well, if the administrator does this reading in order to gather knowledge for her unilateral decisions. When a daily practice could be interpreted in multiple ways, I placed it into a theme group based on the wording and the text around the answer. In the example used above, if the rest of the WCA's answer focused on learning together and on group decision-making, I would interpret the "constant reading about the center for the administrator" to be an example of co-learning and categorize the practice as collaboration. If the rest of the answer described observation of the staff and giving helpful feedback when they make mistakes, I would interpret the "constant reading" as an example of the WCA gaining more knowledge in order to effectively lead by herself and categorize the practice as authority. I will discuss how these ambiguous answers and my method of categorizing them might affect the reliability of my conclusions in the implications section.

3.11.1: Collaboration Daily Practices

The collaborative daily practices made up only 12% of the total number of daily practices, though collaborative beliefs made up 30% of beliefs. This disparity between beliefs and practices is significant to my discussion of the need for more staff management preparation for WCAs, and I will discuss it further in the implications chapter.

Table 3.7: Collaboration Daily Practices

Daily Practice	Number of appearances
Discussion-based staff meetings	3
Working together to make goals and changes	1
Constant reading about the center for manager	1

3.11.2: Empowerment Daily Practices

The empowerment daily practices made up 19% of the total number of daily practices, while empowerment beliefs made up 14%. These percentages are relatively close to each other and do not show the same level of disparity as the collaboration beliefs and practices.

Table 3.8: Empowerment Daily Practices

Daily Practice	Number of appearances
Staff working alone or in groups on administrative projects	3
Trust staff to do the right thing	2
Provide leadership opportunities for staff	2
Pair writers with tutors who have certain strengths	1

3.11.3: Nurture Daily Practices

The nurture daily practices made up 51% of the total number of daily practices, though nurturance beliefs made up only 28% of beliefs. Of the four themes, the greatest disparity be-

tween how often WCAs list the belief and the practices is in the nurture theme. I will discuss

possibilities to explain this disparity in the implications chapter.

Table 3.9: Nurture Daily Practices

Daily practices	Number of appearances
Offer readings for staff	5
Be friendly/informal	5
Offer an open door policy and be open to questions.	4
Provide professionalization opportunities for future careers	3
Taking time to communicate individually with each staff member	2
Take staff to conferences	2
Invite staff over to WCA's home	1

3.11.4 Authority Daily Practices

The authority daily practices made up only 5% of the total number of daily practices,

though authority beliefs made up 17% of beliefs. This theme group also shows a large disparity

between beliefs and daily practices and will be discussed in the implications chapter.

Table 3.10: Authority Daily Practices

Daily Practices	Number of appearances
Offer opinions.	1
Provide weekly emails to give feedback to the whole staff.	1

4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURVEY DATA FOR THE FIELD OF WRITING

CENTER STUDIES

"Writing center administration, a highly complex task as is, has an added complication in

that so many new directors plunge in with an almost total lack of preparation."

--Muriel Harris "Solutions and Trade-offs in Writing Center Administration

In this chapter, I will analyze the implications of the data presented in the previous chapter, make some tentative conclusions, and identify areas of further study. I have divided the implications chapter into several sections in order to discuss the wide range of data collected in this survey. After discussing the implications of different groups of data, I will conclude with suggestions for further research and a discussion of the importance of staff management research in Writing Center Studies. My ultimate purpose is to articulate and analyze the experiences of new WCAs—specifically, their beliefs and values about staff management—in order to move the field toward a clearer understanding of best practices for staff management and to better prepare future WCAs.

4.1 Self-Reported Preparation for Staff Management

One significant result of this survey is the large number of participants (26%) who report that they were unprepared for managing a staff when entering their writing center jobs. This percentage is significant because it includes those who had staff management experience in other contexts. Nearly half of the participants of this survey, however, did not have previous experience in other contexts. These less experienced WCAs are dependent on the training they receive

in their graduate programs and in the writing centers that hire them. Among those less experienced WCAs, the percentage who reported that they had been unprepared for staff management is even higher (53%). Based on the high percentage of new WCAs who reported feeling unprepared, it seems likely that Writing Center Studies as a field is failing to adequately address the staff management aspect of administration. Not only are theoretical explorations and practical advice about staff management largely absent from writing center literature, a significant percentage of the surveyed WCAs report that a gap also exists in their training and preparation. These findings suggest that the field of Writing Center Studies would benefit from considering how graduate programs, writing center training programs, mentoring programs, and other avenues of administrative preparation might better prepare new WCAs for staff management in the future.

4.2 Differences between Graduate Students, Faculty, and Academic Professionals

When comparing the time that graduate students and faculty spend on staff management, I found that graduate students report spending a larger fraction of their total time on staff management than faculty. One possible reason for this difference is that graduate students tend to hold assistant director positions, while faculty often hold positions as directors. When a director has an assistant director, perhaps the assistant takes on more staff management tasks, while the director takes on more tasks related to the budget and institutional relationships, which might require more status in the university. It would be beneficial in future research to find out which members of any writing center administrative teams take on staff management tasks. Are assistant directors more likely to assume that role? How prepared are they compared to directors? Do

co-directors tend to share staff management, or does one director assume the role of staff manager? How does preparation for staff management affect this decision?

Another interesting case for future study is the staff management decisions of faculty directors who have no assistant director or co-director. When all the administrative tasks are assumed by one person, does staff management receive less time than other administrative concerns? Of all the faculty administrators who responded to my survey, only 50% of them worked in a center with an assistant director. Research into how faculty spend their administrative time when they have assistants compared to when they do not would be a fruitful question for writing center researchers to consider.

Some administrative teams probably include tutors, receptionists, and other employees in staff management tasks. My data suggested that administrative responsibilities are primarily carried out by directors, assistant directors, and receptionists. In only 10% of the centers surveyed are graduate or undergraduate tutors involved in administrative work, and in even fewer writing centers are professional tutors (7%) and faculty tutors (2%) assigned administrative tasks. Though it is outside the scope of this project, an investigation into what kinds of tasks were labeled administrative by WCAs might prove fruitful. If they view administration very narrowly, that might explain why so few tutors are reported as involved, especially considering the large number of responses about beliefs and daily practices that mentioned tutors being involved in administration.

Interestingly, academic professionals reported a different use of administrative time than faculty or graduate students. Graduate students and faculty tended to spend between 1/4 and 3/4of their total administrative time on staff management, falling into the middle range, meaning that the amount of time they spent on staff management very rarely fell into the category of less

than 1/4 or more than 3/4 of their administrative time. 75% of graduate students and 73% of faculty reported that they fell into the middle categories of time on staff management. Curiously, administrative professionals showed a different pattern. 63% of the administrative professional WCAs who participated in my survey reported that they spend either the smallest fraction of their time (less than 1/4) or the largest fraction of their time (more than 3/4) on staff management. Why do academic professionals tend to spend either so much or so little time on staff management in comparison to faculty and graduate students, who tend to fall into the middle time categories? Is their training different? Do they conceive of their roles in the writing center differently? How much time do veteran WCAs spend on staff management? How does this amount of time compare with newer WCAs who are academic professionals, faculty, or graduate students? What staff management and time management advice can training programs and graduate programs for future WCAs give based on the best practices established by veteran WCAs and by empirical research? Focusing on the time spent on staff management by different groups of administrators might prove a very productive avenue for research.

Another area which merits further study is the different levels of preparation for staff management reported by the three different groups. 67% of academic professionals, 76% of faculty, and 100% of graduate students reported that they were well-prepared for staff management when they started their writing center administration job. The 100% of graduate students who felt prepared is intriguing, both because the graduate students were unanimous in feeling prepared and because the percentage of graduate students who felt prepared for staff management was so much higher than faculty or academic professionals. Perhaps the larger percentage of graduate students who report feeling prepared for staff management is because graduate students who are administrators in writing centers are often in the role of assistant director, ideally partic-

ipating in a helpful mentoring relationship with their director. That relationship may mean that they receive more staff management training and support on an ongoing basis than faculty and academic professionals who may not have access to these mentoring relationships. More research into the preparation of graduate student administrators for staff management, including surveys, interviews, and observations, could identify reasons for the higher number of graduate students who report feeling well-prepared compared to the faculty and administrative professionals. Knowing more about the fundamental nature of the preparation academic professionals and faculty receive might also explain the reasons they report feeling more unprepared for staff management than graduate students.

4.3 Differences in Years on the Job

The number of years a WCA has been working in her job seems to correlate with the number of hours she spends on staff management. The longer the WCA has been a WCA (up to three years for this study), the more hours she spends on staff management on average. Perhaps more experienced WCAs have more hours to spend on staff management because they have more available administrative time over all. However, the correlation between years on the job and time spent on staff management still holds when the fraction of time a WCA spends out of all her administrative time is examined instead of the average number of hours.   By this I mean, when I remove the variable of how much total administrative time is available to the WCA, more years on the job still correlates with more staff management time.

Several factors might explain this correlation. It is possible that other tasks, such as budgeting and building and maintaining institutional relationships might take priority over staff management in the earliest years of a WCA's job. Perhaps these concerns are more pressing and

must be handled immediately. They might also be more appealing than staff management, especially if the WCA is like those in the survey who report feeling unprepared for staff management. Those who are less prepared might prefer to prioritize tasks in which they are better trained when they begin. Further research is necessary to understand why newer WCAs spend less time on staff management, but my data suggests that, as time passes, managing the staff becomes a higher priority. Perhaps as WCAs gain experience, their evaluation of the importance of managing a staff increases, causing them to spend more time on staff management. Studies which survey and interview WCAs about their priorities and how they spend their time could ascertain which of these possibilities is correct or find that there is another reason for the correlation between more years in a WCA job and more hours devoted to staff management. The question is an important one for Writing Center Studies because the two possibilities imply two different perspectives on the importance of staff management. If WCAs are prioritizing staff management early in their time as WCAs because other tasks take precedence, then WCAs may value staff management less than other concerns. If WCAs spend more time managing their staff members after gaining experience and seeing the value of staff management time, then staff management may be valued very highly compared to other concerns. Answering this question would help the field of Writing Center Studies clarify its attitudes and values about staff management, which is essential for a field responsible for training administrators.

I was unable to discern any correlation between the number of years an administrator has been in her WCA job and her feeling of preparation for staff management. Based on that absence of correlation, it seems potentially useful to increase the sample size of future studies investigating preparation for staff management by including WCAs who have been in their jobs longer than three years. My data suggests that the variable of time a WCA has been in her job does not

correlate with any change in the variable of reported initial preparation for staff management. Thus, a survey investigating preparation for staff management need not restrict its participants to newer administrators. Collecting data about the number of years in a WCA job might still be useful in order to confirm that this variable does not affect reported preparation and to determine if the number of years a WCA has been in her administrative job correlates with other variables.

4.4 The Size of the Writing Center Staff

When I examined the data about writing center staff size and time spent on staff management, I found an unsurprising correlation between the two. As the size of the writing center staff increased, so did the fraction of administrative time spent on staff management. Centers with 41-50 staff members (the largest centers reported by the surveyed WCAs), however, reported different results. In these cases, the fraction of administrative time WCAs in the largest centers spent on staff management was less than many smaller centers. I see two possibilities to explain this anomaly. There were only three individual responses in that group (41-50 staff members), so perhaps these individuals had an atypical experience. A larger sample size might reveal different data. Perhaps WCAs with a large staff are also more likely to have an assistant administrator who shares or is responsible for staff management tasks. Future studies would also need to collect data about whether the surveyed WCA is a part of an administrative team, possibly causing the anomaly in the time spent on staff management in larger centers. Perhaps the people who replied to the survey happened to be WCAs who focused less on staff management than their co-directors or assistant directors, or perhaps the staff management time is divided between multiple WCAs. A survey question about how administrative teams divide up work would add a new dimension of data to this project, and I hope that future research will examine administra-

tion, not only from the perspective of individual administrators, but also from the perspective of administrative teams functioning as staff managers.

While filtering the data by the size of a writing center staff, I expected to find that WCAs who worked in larger writing centers would report feeling less prepared for staff management. I initially assumed that working with a larger staff would magnify challenges and make the WCAs who manage them feel even less prepared than WCAs with smaller staffs, but that assumption was not supported by the data. There was no discernible correlation between the size of the writing center staff and how well-prepared the WCA reported that she was when she began her administrative job. This is important because, when considered alongside the high percentage of WCAs who reported that they were unprepared (26%), it suggests that staff management training should be of more concern for all writing centers and their administrations, not just for writing centers with many staff members. Though it might be obvious that WCAs who will be managing a very large staff will need staff management training, the data shows that WCAs who manage the smallest centers with the fewest staff members also need staff management training.

4.5 The Nature of the Relationship of the WCA and the Administrator to Whom She Reports

Based on the data I gathered about the relationship of the WCA and the administrator to whom she reports, feeling well-prepared for staff management correlates with both a supportive, collaborative relationship and with frequent and close communication. The correlation with frequent and close communication was a little stronger, indicating that even when the relationship is less collaborative and supportive, frequent and close communication with the person to whom the WCA reports is correlated with feeling better prepared for staff management. I see several

possible reasons for this correlation, but perhaps more importantly, I discovered some problems with the way I designed the survey that may have confused the participants and made the data less useful.

Pairing "supportive and collaborative" into one question and "frequent and close" into another means that I cannot isolate those variables. The data cannot be used to answer the question, "Does frequent communication alone affect the self-reported level of preparation of the WCA?" because frequent communication cannot be separated from close communication for data analysis. I should also have defined these words more carefully in the survey so that I could understand exactly what about the relationship with the administrator to whom the WCA reports correlates with the level of preparation she reports. Perhaps frequent communication is the variable that actually correlates with a WCA feeling prepared for her staff management responsibilities. Because of the survey design, I cannot determine whether it is the frequency or the closeness of the communication between the WCA and her administrator that correlates with feeling prepared. Any future research that I do on the question of preparation for staff management and the relationships with the administrator to whom the WCA reports will be much more carefully worded, and I will isolate each variable into its own question.

With these limitations in mind, I would like to offer some possibilities for what the data suggests about WCAs' relationships with administrators and the effects of those relationships on WCAs' perceptions of their staff management preparation. It is significant that, even though the relationship of a WCA with her administrators does not directly affect the level of preparation for staff management that she brings to her job initially, the relationship is so powerful that it can affect the way the WCA perceives her preparation. There is a positive and a negative side to that power. A good relationship with one's administrator may be able to smooth the transition into a

staff management job, help a WCA feel confident and competent, and provide advice and feed-back that makes the learning curve shorter; these are all good things. However, it is possible that having a good relationship with one's administrator can also mask a real lack of preparation. Perceiving oneself as more prepared does not necessarily mean that one *is* better prepared. I would like to see more studies investigating the effects of WCAs' administrative relationships on their self-perception, and I would also like to see the field take responsibility for preparing WCAs *before* they enter their jobs, not throwing them in to learn as they go, even with a support-ive administrator to help them. A well-prepared WCA who has a productive relationship with her administrator could be even more successful and satisfied in her job than an underprepared WCA with that same productive administrative relationship.

4.6 Previous Experience outside the Center as Preparation for Staff Management

The survey data showed that there was a significant difference between the levels of preparation for staff management reported by WCAs who had previous staff management expe-riences outside of the writing center and those who did not. Though this is an expected result, the magnitude of the difference was a surprise to me. While 96% of WCAs who had staff manage-ment experience outside the writing center reported that they were well-prepared to manage a writing center staff, only 47% of those without staff management experience outside of the writ-ing center felt well-prepared. This seems to suggest that many WCAs bring their staff manage-ment training with them from other contexts and that many WCAs who have not had staff man-agement training in other contexts do not receive adequate training. As one survey participant put it, "I have had to learn as I go." This sentiment was expressed many times, and I have chosen

the quote to represent the views of the 53% of WCAs without prior experience who felt unprepared for staff management.

Perhaps some WCAs might argue that everyone has to learn staff management as they go, that the 58% of surveyed WPAs who had prior experience learned as they went along at some other job. To strengthen my argument that more preparation for staff management should be provided by the field of Writing Center Studies, more research is needed to investigate staff management preparation in other fields. Do management training programs improve the experiences of leaders, employees, and customers in the business world? In nursing? In other leadership settings? Do management training programs improve the functioning of writing centers? If so, which programs are the most effective? Which styles of management are the most appropriate for use in the writing center? 53% of the surveyed WCAs without any previous outside experience in staff management say that they were unprepared to manage their writing center staffs. One survey participant wrote, "I truly had no idea how to be someone's boss. My first semester was a disaster. Fortunately all my consultants quit or graduated, so I got to start over with a new batch who didn't know that I didn't know how to do it, and by that time I had learned a lot." The field of Writing Center Studies should investigate how to better prepare WCAs, not just to prevent this kind of struggle and shorten the learning curve for the WCA's sake, but to provide better support and guidance for the writing center's staff members and, ultimately, to provide a better experience for the students who come to the writing center for help.

When examining the data for correlations between whether a WCA had prior experience and the fraction of administrative time spent on staff management, an interesting connection with the job status of the WCA (graduate student, faculty, or academic professional) emerged. The fraction of administrative time a WCA spends on staff management correlates with whether she

has prior outside staff management experience; having no prior experience correlates with spending either the smallest amount of time (less than 1/4) or the largest amount of time (more than 3/4) on staff management. These less experienced WCAs spend either much less of their administrative time or much more of it on staff management.

Academic professionals also report spending a much larger or much smaller fraction of administrative time on staff management compared to faculty and graduate students. This similarity does not exist because the group of WCAs without prior experience is made up mostly of academic professionals. 33% of the total survey participants are academic professionals, and 37% of the WCAs without prior experience are academic professionals; academic professionals are only slightly overrepresented in the group of WCAs without prior experience. However, this 4% difference is not enough to explain the large difference in the fraction of administrative time spent by those without prior experience on staff management. This leads me to suspect that there is some similarity between academic professionals and WCAs without prior experience that leads them to spend their administrative time differently from the other groups in my survey.

More research is needed to answer the following questions: What causes academic professionals to spend either smaller fractions (less that 1/4) or larger fractions (more than 3/4) of their administrative time on staff management compared to faculty and graduate students? Why do WCAs without prior experience use their time in a similar way? Is there a common reason? Is a more moderate use of time a sign of more effective staff management (perhaps indicated by the fact that the experienced staff managers choose this moderate allocation of time)? What should we teach graduate students and future WCAs about how to use their administrative time? Curiously, the average number of hours spent on staff management was higher overall in the group with prior experience, even though they did not report their staff management time in the small-

est or largest categories of time like the WCAs without prior experience. A study investigating the way WCAs use their administrative time would possibly clear up some of the confusing and seemingly conflicting data.

4.7 Scholarly and Practical Training for Staff Management

The survey participants were also asked to describe the preparation for staff management they received, both scholarly and practical. Their comments might be helpful to graduate programs and writing centers seeking to improve the training of future WCAs. As the charts in section 3.9 show, the preparation that WCAs rely on most are experience in administrative positions during graduate school, tutoring experience, classroom teaching, and coursework in administration in graduate school. Since WCAs are reporting that these kinds of training helped to prepare them, it seems reasonable to begin with these options when trying to improve the staff management preparation in graduate programs and writing center training programs and when choosing preparation methods to study. There were a significant number of participants who reported absolutely no preparation in staff management, and those in charge of training future WCAs should be aware of this finding.

Unlike the data gathered about the kinds of preparation WCAs received for staff management, the data about the common gaps in staff management training was puzzling. Question 19 asked, "What gaps were there in your scholarly or practical training for managing a writing center staff?" I had to discard 19 out of 39 answers to this question because the participants named gaps in training that were not a part of staff management, such as how to deal with central university administration. Of the answers that were about staff management, many were not specific. The largest group of answers referred to a gap but did not name it, such as "pretty much

everything" or "every gap imaginable," and another large group wrote that they received no training at all. A few people did identify specific staff management gaps, like HR department regulations or dealing with non-student employees.

Two possibilities might explain the ambiguity in the discursive responses to question 19. The first possibility is that the wording of my question may have been unclear. I asked, "What gaps were there in your scholarly or practical training for managing a writing center staff?" Perhaps the use of the word "gaps" might have been confusing for an academic audience who uses that word in a different way. I could have phrased the question as "What do you wish you had been taught to prepare you for managing a staff?" or something similarly straight-forward. The second possibility is that when people are unfamiliar with a subject, they are unable to identify what they are not aware of. If this second possibility is what led to incomplete responses or responses that did not answer the question asked, it strengthens my argument that the absence of staff management literature and the unpreparedness of new WCAs is a problem to be addressed by the field. If the WCAs cannot identify gaps in their staff management training, that fact may indicate that the experience of figuring out staff management on the job rather than being adequately trained initially has not made them aware of staff management principles and nomenclature. The latter seems the more plausible to me of the two possibilities because of the number of non-specific answers to the question. Those who gave non-specific answers seemed to understand what the question was asking but were unable to identify particular gaps. It is imperative that researchers find out if the large percentage of surveyed WCAs who report themselves as unprepared to manage a staff at the beginning of their WCA job eventually learn enough about staff management to identify gaps in the training they received. If not, the field may be relying too

heavily on gaining expertise through on the job experience and not heavily enough on training and preparation.

The field of Writing Center Studies would certainly benefit from investigating the experiences of the WCAs who report that they were unprepared for staff management, but even more knowledge might be gained from the WCAs who reported that they were prepared for staff management. Many of those WCAs report that they learned their management skills in other contexts, so it could be a productive avenue for future research to investigate the kinds of outside experiences these WCAs had. How did these WCAs acquire the staff management skills they brought with them from other contexts? Did they have formal training? What kinds of formal training were the most useful to them? Answers to these kinds of questions could help graduate programs and writing centers shape their administrative training in order to provide similar experiences to future WCAs and to current WCAs who may not be as well prepared as the field might hope.

4.8 Relationship between Beliefs about Staff Management and Daily Practices

One of the most promising areas for future study that emerged from my survey is the division of the beliefs about staff management into four broad styles of management: namely, collaboration, empowerment, nurture, and authority. A large-scale, rigorous study of staff management beliefs and their categorization would be a revealing direction for future research. My initial exploration has yielded some interesting questions that might be examined in such a study. How could each of these groups be defined? What makes a belief fit into one of them rather than another? How do the groups interact with each other? Do WCAs choose a primary style, or do most WCAs use a combination of beliefs? Is it possible or useful to plot these groups on axes to

define individual leadership styles that incorporate different combinations of the groups? What other styles exist for staff management in writing center administration? What groups of beliefs exist in other staff management contexts? How can those apply in the writing center? What is the relationship of these groups to theoretical models of staff management? Seeking answers for these kinds of research questions is an example of the scholarship that could support individual WCAs in the reflective practice of "learn[ing] to shape a leadership identity, one that accomplishes the managerial as well as the visionary" that is so central to conception of good administration in *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice* (n.p.).

I found the discrepancies between the prevalence of certain groups of beliefs and the corresponding daily practices very interesting. Though 30% of the beliefs expressed about staff management are classified as collaboration, only 12% of the daily practices listed by participants are classified as collaboration. While only 28% of the beliefs are classified as examples of nurture, 51% of the daily practices are classified as nurturing. Finally, although 17% of the beliefs are classified as authority, only 5% of daily practices are classified as authority. There was less disparity in the empowerment group; 14% of beliefs and 19% of daily practices are classified as empowerment. The disparity between what WCAs said that they believed and what they said that they did was very interesting; however, the difficulty of classifying the daily practices into categories makes the data on these disparities less clear.

Categorizing the beliefs was much more clear-cut than categorizing the daily practices. The belief "[I]t is my responsibility to care for my staff, first and foremost" is clearly an example of the nurture group, as I define nurturing in this study. However, when a participant lists "I give tutors leadership opportunities, bring them to conferences, provide training that will apply to various future career paths, etc." as daily practices, the categorization is less clear. There is some

ambiguity about whether these daily practices are examples of empowerment or nurturing. "Leadership opportunities" seems to fit into the empowerment category because it is an example of giving power to employees to exercise independent of the administrator. However, "bring them to conferences" and "provide training that will apply to various future career paths" are less easy to classify. These could be examples of empowerment if the WCA envisions these actions as ways to put the tutor in charge of the center, perhaps by bringing knowledge back from the conference to educate the rest of the staff. I classified them both as examples of nurture, though, because they seem to be focused primarily on promoting the career development of the staff. Because so many of the daily practices could be classified differently based on the intentions of the WCA, follow up interviews in which the WCAs talk in more depth about their daily practices would make the data more complete and the categorization more clear. If given the chance to explain why they choose to "bring [tutors] to conferences," the WCAs would probably provide the researcher with the necessary context to categorize the daily practice more accurately.

However, even with these ambiguities, it is worthwhile to discuss some tentative implications of the disparity between the beliefs and the daily practices of WCAs, particularly to suggest areas for future research. As a group[11], it seems that WCAs hold a combination of the four

[11] It is important to remember that individual WCAs have different combinations of these themes. Just because 28% of the beliefs reported by the survey participants fall into the nurture theme does not indicate that 28% of the beliefs of any individual WCA would fall into the nurture theme. I am examining the participants of my survey as a whole group in order to discuss the staff management beliefs common in the field of Writing Center Studies. Studying the beliefs of individual WCAs about staff management in a series of case studies would be a productive and interesting project. It might uncover relationships between the themes. For instance, do cer-

themes, though not an evenly-distributed combination. Collaboration and nurture are most (and nearly evenly) valued, while authority and empowerment are less prominent (but still significant). However, on a daily basis, WCAs report primarily enacting the nurture theme, with a small amount of empowerment and collaboration and a *very* small amount of authority. More research is needed to understand why this disparity exists. Observational studies of writing center staff management practices, including surveys and interviews about the WCAs' beliefs about staff management would likely produce a large amount of new and important knowledge about how staff management beliefs and practices intersect (or not) for the field of Writing Center Studies.

4.9 Conclusion

I would like to make some suggestions about how this thesis could be used in the field of Writing Center Studies. My goal was to investigate the literature on staff management in writing center scholarship and examine the experiences of new WCAs in light of that investigation. My review of scholarship in the field convinced me that there is a gap in writing center scholarship in the area of staff management. Likewise, my examination of the survey data that I collected convinced me that the gap in the literature is accompanied by a gap in the preparation of WCAs in the area of staff management. My aim is that this thesis will raise questions that motivate future research that provides sorely needed guidance about how to better prepare WCAs for staff management.

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tain combinations of the themes appear more frequently in the same WCA (authority and empowerment, for example)?

Because of the exploratory nature of my survey, I ended up with many more questions than solid conclusions. That said, I hope that writing center researchers will find my survey results useful in shaping future research projects. Most of the questions raised by this survey are related to investigating current staff management in writing centers, discovering staff management models outside of the writing center, and studying the appropriateness of those models for use in the writing center. Since the field of Writing Center Studies has done so little work on staff management, I think the place to begin is with what currently exists in and out of the writing center. Once researchers have carried out definitional studies to clarify the staff management beliefs and daily practices of WCAs and the beliefs and daily practices of managers in other fields, the field of Writing Center Studies can begin to think about how Writing Center Studies *should* conceive of staff management and carry it out on a daily basis.

Scholars in Writing Center Studies would do well to pursue research along these lines because such studies may yield a set of best practices for writing center staff management. WCAs could look to these best practices to inform the day-to-day work in the profession, not simply for the sake of doing so, but because the work that WCAs do is—in the end— aimed toward impacting the students. Best practices, however, can only come through the kind of research I have suggested in this thesis, including both theoretical explorations of staff management and empirical research on current staff management practices.

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APPENDIX

1. Do you consent to participate in this survey?

☐ yes

☐ no

<div align="center">✱</div>

2. Are you a ...?

☐ graduate student

☐ faculty member

☐ academic professional

☐ other

Other (please specify)

3. How long have you been a writing center administrator?

☐ Less than one year

☐ One to two years

☐ Two to Three Years

☐ More than Three Years

4. What kind of staff positions currently exist in your writing center? Check all that apply.

☐ Director

☐ Assistant Director

☐ Receptionist

☐ Graduate Tutors

☐ Undergraduate Tutors

☐ Professional Tutors

☐ Faculty Tutors

☐ Technology Coordinator

☐ Other

Other (please specify)

5. Of the positions that exist in your center, which involve administrative work? (Some possible examples are training, maintaining institutional relationships, handling complaints, budget, etc.)

- ☐ Director
- ☐ Assistant Director
- ☐ Receptionist
- ☐ Graduate Tutors
- ☐ Undergraduate Tutors
- ☐ Professional Tutors
- ☐ Faculty Tutors
- ☐ Technology Coordinator
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify) [   ]

6. How large is your writing center staff (include all positions in the center)?

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ More than 50

7. What is the annual budget of your writing center? If you don't have this information, please write "I don't know."

[   ]

8. How many tutorials occur in your center per semester (in person and/or online)? If you do not have this information, please write "I don't know."

9. What percentage of the time you spend on writing studio administration would you estimate is spent on managing your staff (training staff, giving feedback, observing, professionalization opportunities for staff, etc)?

- less than 25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- more than 75%

10. How many hours per week would you estimate that you spend managing your staff (training staff, giving feedback, observing, professionalization opportunities for staff, etc)?

11. Rank these staff management challenges according to how frequently you face them? (1 is the most frequent, 5 the least frequent)

N/A ☐ [▼] Staff who are late or don't show up

N/A ☐ [▼] Addressing issues of staff interactions with students

N/A ☐ [▼] Providing on-going training for staff

N/A ☐ [▼] Addressing issues of staff interactions with other staff

N/A ☐ [▼] Addressing pedagogical issues in tutorials

12. My relationship with the administrators to whom I report is support-ive and collaborative.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

13. I am in frequent and close communication with the administrators to whom I report.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

14. Describe the structure of your relationship with the administrator to whom you report.

15. Describe the structure of your relationship with the staff members who report to you.

16. Do you have staff management experience outside of the writing center in academia or in the private sector?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please list your management experiences.

17. I was well prepared to manage a staff when I started my writing center administrative job.

     ⬜ Strongly agree

     ⬜ Agree

     ⬜ Disagree

     ⬜ Strongly disagree

18. What parts of your scholarly and practical training prepared you for managing a writing center staff?

19. What gaps were there in your scholarly or practical training for managing a writing center staff?

20. What are your beliefs about managing a writing center staff? What theories do you ascribe to about staff management in the writing center?

21. How do you put these beliefs into daily practice in your center?