

“For this additional burden we had no additional help”: First-year composition and writing program administration at Iowa State from 1869 to 1939

by

Colin Payton

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Rhetoric and Professional Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Jo Mackiewicz, Major Professor
Abram Anders
Jeanine Aune
Sarah Huffman
Craig Rood

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this dissertation. The Graduate College will ensure this dissertation is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2023

Copyright © Colin Payton, 2023. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
NOMENCLATURE	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER 1. BALANCING THE HISTORICAL FOCUS: BETWEEN TEXTBOOKS, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND INDIVIDUALS	1
1. 1. The argument of the present study.....	4
1. 2. Historiographical developments in Land-Grant College History and Composition History	7
1. 2. 1. Historiography of Land-Grant Colleges.....	8
1. 2. 2. Historiography of Composition History	14
1. 3. Addressing the historiographical gaps: Institution type, institutions over time, and WPAs.....	26
CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGIES	39
2. 1. Introducing the WPA as a lens of analysis	39
2. 1. 1. Recognizing the WPA by definition: Anachronism or unnecessary distinction?	39
2. 2. Archival methodologies.....	45
2. 2. 1. Procedural transparency: The archives and documents used in this dissertation.....	53
2. 3. Limitations and warnings	58
CHAPTER 3. THE PEDAGOGICAL LANDSCAPE FROM WHICH IOWA STATE GREW..61	61
3. 1. Doubling down: Insulating the Liberal Arts from Change	67
3. 2. Institutional Revolution and the Birth of our Paradigm: The Rise of the German University	80
3. 3. What the People Wanted(?): The Land-Grant Colleges	88
3. 3. 1. Chaos in the origins: Land-grant colleges reject the liberal arts for an uncertain future.....	91
3. 3. 2. The changing value and definition of science	95
3. 3. 3. Division within: Pure or applied research	101
3. 3. 4. Composition in the land-grant institutions	102
CHAPTER 4. BEFORE THE WPA: 1869 – 1898	107
4. 1. The Birth of the State of Iowa Agricultural College	107
4. 2. Shaping of the 1869 Composition Curriculum	111

4. 3. Composition Instruction at IAC before the WPA	124
4. 3. 1. 1869 through 1889: Welch, Wynn, and the embattled classical curriculum.....	125
4. 3. 2. 1890 through 1898: Margaret Doolittle, required composition, and elective literature.....	146
4. 4. Composition at Iowa State: Literature, Latin, Grammar, or Rhetoric?	156
CHAPTER 5. ORIGINS OF IOWA STATE’S WPA: 1898 – 1939:.....	159
5. 1. From IAC to ISC: Higher education, land-grants, composition, and Iowa State at the turn of the century	159
5. 2. 1898 – 1913: The Arrival of Alvin Noble and the first WPA’s curriculum.....	167
5. 2. 1. Background of Alvin Noble	167
5. 2. 2. Arrival and early changes in departmental structure	171
5. 3. Service, status, and a disciplinary FYC course: The Iowa Board of Education and the Division of Industrial Science, 1914 – 1929.....	181
5. 3. 1. Service status: The dean and the division	182
5. 3. 2. The Board of Education	184
5. 3. 3. Administrative constraints and WPA invention: The origins of disciplinary writing at ISC	189
5. 3. 4. Labor advocacy: “For this additional burden we have no additional help”	196
5. 3. 5. A period of productivity	209
5. 4. A brief look ahead: Derby and the end of disciplinary writing, 1929 to 1939	216
5. 5. Who or what caused the composition curriculum?.....	227
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION: INTRODUCING A PAROCHIAL HISTORY TO THE WIDER CONVERSATION	230
REFERENCES	246
APPENDIX: Letter from Alvin Noble to President Storms, 1905	276

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1. The first page of Alvin Noble's c.1929 attempt to track the number of teachers who have stayed at Iowa State three years or more. (Noble, 1929b)	49
Figure 4.1. A 1889 course catalog description of the agricultural courses. The course of study that led to a degree in agriculture was cut this year. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1889, p. 45)	148
Figure 4.2. Doolittle's first term workload, 1893. (Doolittle, 1893a, p. Rhetoric 2)	155
Figure 5.1. Students complaining about Noble grading them harshly in the Bomb. This small excerpt shows that students did not read literature in composition courses. Instead, they wrote short themes. The highest grade was an A1. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1904a, p. 68)	168
Figure 5.2. 1918 catalog description of disciplinary studies in English. Note that Agriculture lagged behind the other divisions in changing their course numbers. Also notable: ISC dropped many courses during World War 1 for a variety of reasons; several English department faculty had enlisted at this time. ..	195
Figure 5.3. Portion of Noble's 1900 data display in an annual report to President Beardshear. Note that Noble quantified papers and exercises but not hours of labor. (Noble, 1900, p. 101)	201
Figure 5.4. Portion of Noble's 1902 data display in an annual report to President Beardshear. Note that Noble paid more attention to in-class versus out-of-class labor. (Noble, 1902, p. 152)	201
Figure 5.5. Table summarizing the instructional labor in Noble's 1904 annual report to President Storms. Here Noble added average hours per day; totals in students and course load became easier to compare. (Noble, 1904, p. 177)	202
Figure 5.6. Recommended salary scale for the English department at ISC the was published in the 1912 Board of Education biennial report. (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, p. 315).....	207

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1. Variation among land-grants from 1862 to c. 1870, based on Sorber's (2018) survey of Northeastern land-grant colleges and my analysis of IAC. Xs mark the presence of the feature in the header.	94
Table 4.1. Summary of Welch's comparisons between liberal arts colleges' beliefs and IAC's beliefs.....	120
Table 5.1. Noble's 1899 composition sequence. (Iowa State College, 1899, pp. 199–200).....	173
Table 5.2. Replication of 1919 catalog description of the English curriculum. The subscript letters refer to different iterations of the same course sequence, not repeats of the same course (excepting the fiction course, which was repeated).	195

NOMENCLATURE

FYC	First-year composition
WPA	Writing Program Administrator
IAC	Iowa Agricultural College
ISC	Iowa State College
ISU	Iowa State University

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I left to begin my graduate school journey, I joked with all who cared to listen that earning a PhD was a bit like climbing Mt. Everest. The journey cannot be sprinted. Friends and family can only support from afar. It is isolating. There is some degree of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strain involved. The final stretch of the journey is the most perilous; ABD is the “death zone,” and the summit — instead of being serene — can be windy and hostile. And, to reach the top, one needs an extensive funding source for training, housing, and personnel costs. The bulk of my financial support, of course, came from Iowa State’s English department and my GTAs in public speaking, composition, and writing center tutoring. However, I also must thank my current institution, Simpson College, for understanding my challenges as a full-time writing center director while also finishing a dissertation. I am grateful that my dean, John Woell, gave me May 2023 to work on the dissertation.

One also needs well-stocked basecamps and waypoints. The richest of these was the Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives. Their archivists have supported strange requests over the past two years, but their day-to-day work of collecting, organizing, and digitizing materials has been utterly invaluable. Other stops on this journey are easy to overlook, but they benefited me. Baristas across Iowa and my home state of Ohio have refueled and caffeinated me, and I am thankful that such an institution exists, because they prevented me from having to bring my work home with me. I am especially grateful to Kelsey Mazur who let me work for two days in a real yurt, nestled in the woods alongside the Mad River in Yellow Springs, Ohio. That was about as close to being on a mountain as I got for this project.

But, in addition to funding and housing, the main support comes from people, both from on-mountain experts and off-mountain cheerleaders who, despite all one’s many flaws and

failures and countervailing evidence that is ruthlessly exposed on the journey, believe that you can reach the summit.

To my guides: Thank you to my committee members. Each member has designed and directed composition or teaching programs, and they understand that more goes into education than the selection of a textbook. They fielded obscure questions, patiently listened to my obsessive descriptions of quirks in Iowa State's history, and gave me meaningful conversations to join when I could not see the purpose of a house history in composition. My major professor, Dr. Jo Mackiewicz, has been my stalwart supporter since my first days at Iowa State. In my very first graduate school course, she assigned one of her articles on technical communication, which I critiqued some small part of. Who can know what tomfoolery I said; it was surely incorrect. However, she responded graciously and openly to the new ideas while also deftly defending her own, and from that moment on I trusted her to guide my scholarly development. She took me on for research projects, presented with me at conferences, and mentored me through moments of doubt and insecurity. Astoundingly, she turned every draft of this dissertation around in three days or less, each with meaningful comments and edits. I cannot thank Jo enough for her support — without her showing me the crevasses and reminding me to stop to breathe, I would not have finished this dissertation.

I would also like to thank Mark Pleiss, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at Simpson College, for teaching me how to write, which is to climbing Everest the equivalent of learning to put one foot in front of the next. This is easier said than done. For a year into ABD, I planned on writing. Reading and researching were easy, but I kept waiting for the right block of time — which never came. Graduate school had taught me how to procrastinate, but I never considered it as such. Instead of the night before, I was writing thirty-page term papers in a

month. Mark helped me break the binge writing habits and the psychological blocks that encourage it. Thirty minutes a day, every workday, beginning at 7 a.m. He held me accountable, to the point of paying me to attend a faculty development writing group who were all struggling to keep the daily writing habit. Because of Mark, I do not have a dramatic “I wrote a dissertation in two weeks” story, but I do have a sustainable writing habit that will benefit me for the rest of my career.

There is one, final, brutal fact of climbing Mt. Everest: it is a selfish act. Off the mountain of this dissertation, I must acknowledge those who accepted my six-year indulgence to better my career and pursue my passions. My friends — Carter Foughty, Mike Mattison, Kelsey Mazur, Max and Mae McCarty, Tucker Mindrum, Joe Slusarski, Claire Ziller — talked me through every stage of this process. My fellow PhD climbers at Iowa State, especially Thomas Cox and Austin Harrington, understood the journey better than anyone, and they knew when to take a walk or grab a beer with me, both of which I readily accepted. My family, both immediate and extended, gave me up to this mountain. None had climbed it before, but they supported me as if they were veterans. My mom, Alix Payton, sent elaborate care packages; my brother, Seth Payton, listened to me rant about things neither one of us really understood; my dad, Dan Payton, was as ready to take my phone call as he was to drive a truck and trailer across the country to help me move. To all these beautiful humans and the others who remain unmentioned, I thank you. I did not deserve your support, and I look forward to never having to put off plans or events or tragedies or celebrations with the phrase “after my dissertation” ever again.

And to my wife, Katie, thank you. In rhetoric, *to dynaton* means “the possible.” A good rhetor must know what to point an audience towards, to give them hope, to paint a vision for a better future. The mountain is a large, opaque object; you constantly help me see what is beyond.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a history of Iowa State University's composition program from 1869 to 1939, including its origins in the idea of the land-grant college. Unlike many histories of composition and rhetoric, instead of exclusively tracing the rhetorical theories that influenced the composition curricula, this history also investigates the political pressures imposed upon the English department due to Iowa's land-grant politics, as well as the writing program administrators' (WPA) adaptations to these external influences. I found repeated examples of the land-grant college mission, which was itself a hotly contested ideal, wielded by various interest groups to either protect or to attack the composition curriculum. External influences, however, did not pour unmitigated into the first-year composition (FYC) program. Emerging from this investigation was the importance the WPA as a mitigator of external influences, including their cultivation of new pedagogies, curricular designs, and faculty labor rights. To accomplish this uncommon historical perspective taking, I developed three methodological heuristics that guided my investigation: (1) centering the institution's influence on a composition program's history, (2) observing the program's changes over time and across administrations, and (3) focusing on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations. These methodologies allow this history to rejoin composition's larger narratives, especially conversations about how ideologies enter the composition program and the origins of writing program administration.

CHAPTER 1. BALANCING THE HISTORICAL FOCUS: BETWEEN TEXTBOOKS, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND INDIVIDUALS

In 2023, a composition instructor at Iowa State University can encounter the legacies of their predecessors and never know it. Many in the Iowa State community dawdle at the popular café Stomping Grounds on Welch Avenue, eating, reading, and people watching the passersby without considering the street’s namesake. Adonijah Welch, the first president of ISU, then named the State Agricultural College of Iowa (or Iowa Agricultural College, IAC, for short)¹, was the first person to assign and grade an English paper when the College opened in 1869. He was a rhetorician and pedagogue; he taught courses in Latin, rhetoric, and literature during his presidency, and his wife, Mary Welch, taught freshmen composition from 1875 to 1878. Other forerunners of the composition programs are also hidden in plain sight. The picturesque staple of Iowa State’s quad, the Campanile, was commissioned to honor Margaret Stanton, IAC Secretary Edgar Stanton’s wife. Both Stantons taught freshman composition; Edgar filled in throughout his long career despite being a mathematics professor, while Margaret began teaching composition in 1872, along with French and mathematics, until she retired in 1878 to raise the Stanton children. More connections — names, dates, places — will become familiar throughout the history told in this dissertation, and perhaps future compositionists will not feel so invisible on campuses like Iowa State, ones dominated by monuments celebrating giants in agriculture and engineering.

Throughout this dissertation, to the doubting reader, I will undoubtedly prove over and over again the dangers of writing “house histories,” or institution histories written by in-house

¹ For the first several chapters, I will call Iowa State IAC. In Chapter 5, the institution changed names to Iowa State College, and I use ISC for that period. In 1959, the college was officially renamed Iowa State University of Science and Technology. IAC, ISC, and ISU — Iowa State University — refer to the same institution. Using the appropriate name during the period, however, is important; IAC indicates a period where the mission differed from ISC. When referring to a span of years that includes both IAC, ISC, and ISU identities, I try to use Iowa State.

historians: sentimentality, bias, and lack of analytical distance. At the outset, I admit my fascination with the history of composition instruction at Iowa State, and I admit affection for Composition Studies and my love for this school that nurtured my academic growth for the past six years. The teachers and pedagogies from the era which this dissertation examines — 1869, when IAC opened its doors to students, until 1939, the end of J. Raymond Derby's tenure as WPA — are some of the most roundly attacked and belittled in the historical scholarship of Composition Studies. A doubting reader will notice that I am not as willing to lambast this era of educators as have many historians in Composition Studies. My biases against research being more important than teaching will be made clear to the doubting reader when we arrive at Fred Lorch, the Writing Program Administrator (WPA) whose archival record contains thousands of pages of studies on Mark Twain and lectures on Twain, but only a single reference to his composition teaching, which is, unsurprisingly, scrawled on the back of a request to a librarian for more information on Mark Twain. The WPAs were all white men, and some of them probably stodgy. To ignore them would be difficult, but I do my best to focus on all instructors of composition at Iowa State, and I do not hesitate to point out the disparities and double standards.

In Peter Elbow's (1998) appendix essay to *Writing without Teachers*, titled "The doubting game and the believing game — An analysis of the intellectual enterprise," Elbow writes that, "[a]n intellectual is someone who tries to figure out what is true by means of the best processes available, and uses them in a rational, disciplined way to try to avoid deluding himself [*sic*]" (p. 148). He argues that to avoid deluding oneself, scholars must continually tack between doubt and belief. The process by which I came to this finished product, which will have been examined and critiqued by my committee and my peers, run through extensive reading in higher

education history and composition history, and written with repeated and frustrating run-ins with artifacts that disconfirm my hypotheses exemplify the “doubting game.” It seeks truth by seeking error; this is the dominant game in all academic processes. I have, in short, tried to discipline the enthusiasm out of myself to gain a shred of objectivity and perspective about Iowa State’s history, all to contribute any small thing of value to the field of Composition Studies. Yet, we face a frustrating fact: at the moment, Iowa State has no codified history of its composition program from its origins to present day, which leads to the second game. Elbow asks academics to play the believing game *as well* as the doubting game, which means welcoming new knowledge and new contributors to the conversation. He argues that the function of an academic “is not to discredit a bad reading but to make better readings more available,” and in the dearth of a non-history, I am trying to contribute a better reading than those provided by histories in Composition studies that have overlooked Iowa State (p. 166). Throughout this first chapter, I will articulate a “so what?” for why Composition scholarship should not overlook Iowa State. Regardless, as incomplete as this history is, I know full-well that I am not writing “the” history but perhaps a sketched map for future scholars to complicate, revise, and make ‘better readings’ of our history more available.

I do not want to hide behind this plea as a means for producing shoddy work. Yes, quixotic composition instructors, future first-year composition TAs, and WPAs dutifully understanding Iowa State’s program’s history will find this history interesting for all the academically wrong reasons: they might love the school. I admit it plainly: biased and sentimental reasons, such as being curious about one’s own past, inspired my historical investigation. However, I believe even this incomplete history of Iowa State’s composition program will add worthwhile readings to Composition Studies, especially WPA history.

1. 1. The argument of the present study

I return to this. In 1869, Iowa State was called the State Agricultural College of Iowa, and the first person to assign and grade an English paper was its first president, Adonijah Welch. There were fewer than 200 students at the College. In 2023, Iowa State is a large R1 research university with approximately 23,000 undergraduate and 4,000 graduate students (Office of the Registrar, 2023). Its first-year composition (FYC) program, ISUComm Foundations, instructs thousands of students each year, and its WPA coordinates, prepares, and assesses nearly 100 FYC instructors *every semester*. The initiating question for this dissertation is, “how has Iowa State’s FYC program changed from its origins?” And, due to the scope of this massive undertaking, I have chosen 1939 as the endpoint of these investigations, which is when J. Raymond Derby ended his tenure as Iowa State’s second WPA.

The question of when to end a history is a matter of compromises and negotiations. For Iowa State, many alluring years could serve as the end of this history. I chose to narrow the options to significant changes in the FYC curriculum or the English department, and several possibilities remained. In 1929, Alvin Noble, the first WPA and originator of a writing in the disciplines FYC sequence, retired. His tenure spanned 30 years of innovations and adaptations to a rapidly growing school. Another option is 1957. Members of the English department established the English major. The department members sensed the significance but also danger of this moment: “it was agreed that all deliberations at the meeting, and the proposal itself [for the English major], must remain strictly confidential” (Mallam, 1957, p. 2). It was dangerous work because, as I discuss in this history, generations of precedent, dozens of speeches, and countless reminders scattered through course catalogs and annual reports all promised that English at Iowa State would *never* be a major line of study. But I chose 1939: the changes in 1957 began because of the upheavals following World War II. Historians have long linked the

war and composition developments because of rapid, radical changes in programs across the country. During the war, many departments conducted communication training for servicemen, and afterward, the G. I. Bill flooded institutions with veterans. The scale of growth reified the existence of WPAs, to the extent that Heckathorn (2004) argued that the “Early Era” of WPA work began in 1940 and ended in 1963 (discussed more in Chapter 2). Derby’s retirement in 1939 is a calm before that storm.

I attempt two tasks with this project. First, I will write a history of the FYC program at Iowa State from 1869 to 1939. I had hoped when I first started this project several years ago to uncover pedagogies from the past that might improve our (really, my) instruction techniques today. Too little, however, exists in the record to reconstruct robust classroom pedagogies, that is, what *actually* happened in classrooms. This history is not likely to help those who want to teach composition differently by learning hidden pedagogies from the past; it may, however, help WPAs see themselves as influential agents of change. Directing one of the only required classes for an increasing number of students — who later came to represent an increasing source of revenue for the English Department — politically savvy WPAs at IAC possessed significant autonomy in curricular and staffing decisions.

However, this history also shows that WPAs negotiated external politics and needed to remain aware of the public’s perceptions of IAC and its institutional mission. This lesson is cyclical. Relatively recently, Graham, Birmingham, and Zachry (1997) shared one such cautionary tale for future WPAs, recounting an upper administration initiative in 1995 that all Iowa State tenure-track faculty teach at least one section of a “frontier course,” or a first-year course. Built on interviews with administrators, graduate TAs, and English Department members, Graham et al.’s (1997) work reveals a disparity between the participants and their

perceptions of the English department's relationship to the institution. The upper administrators framed their initiative in terms of the University's land-grant mission, which they argued the faculty had a responsibility to uphold. Members of the English Department tended to view "service" courses only as status-deadening and regressive, especially in lieu of the recent professionalization of Composition Studies. Both are true; a WPA is a key decision maker who mediates these viewpoints. Graham et al. (1997) called for WPAs to be more sensitive to "how political and economic pressures affect departmental and disciplinary structures" (p. 29). Missing from Graham et al.'s (1997) narrative, however, was a sense of the historical precedents for this cautionary tale. IAC as a land-grant institution has experienced and acceded to many calls to revise curriculum based on external pressures, several of which I recount in this dissertation. One of the findings from this history is that, when they navigated external politics well, WPAs at IAC held and exercised more power than Composition Studies believes about past WPAs, which leads me to my second task.

In addition to writing a house history of IAC's FYC program, I engage with Composition historiography, hoping to reshape a small section of Composition history methodology and theory. For decades, FYC history began at Harvard in the 1870s, indicating the decline and fall of rhetoric until its revival (Berlin, 1987; Goggin, 2000; Kitzhaber, 1990). As revisionist historians demanded more nuanced histories (Donahue & Moon, 2007; Gold, 2008, 2012), the importance of local, institutional context became more apparent. However, the flood of microhistories had little in common theoretically or methodologically, and they proved difficult to use together to create a coherent Composition narrative. So muddy had all these histories made *the* historical project that Compositionists demanded that "local histories of individuals or institutions speak back to the dominant historical narrative of the field" (Mendenhall, 2011, p.

131). I believe that it is possible to balance the needs of the field with the nuance of a single institution, yet to do so requires new methodological approaches to writing Composition history.

The historiographical arguments I will make in this dissertation are that (1) centering an institution's influence on a composition program's history is imperative to understanding its pedagogies and curriculum, (2) observing a single program's changes over time reveals significant gaps in the current, broad historical scholarship that discusses rhetoric across all colleges and universities, and (3) focusing on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations is a powerful explanatory framework, further revealing gaps in current historical scholarship. To support these arguments, I have chosen a hybrid methodology of archival research supported by interdisciplinary scholarship in Higher Education Studies, Composition Studies, and Writing Program Administration Studies. I explain my methodologies at greater length in Chapter 2.

1. 2. Historiographical developments in Land-Grant College History and Composition History

Centering an institution's influence on a composition program, observing that influence over time, and taking particular stock of how its WPAs (re)acted to each other and the institution are not typical, either alone or in conjunction, in the field of Composition Studies. In this section, I review the canonical history of FYC, locating spaces for these three gaps in succession, starting with the importance of land-grant histories and moving to Composition Studies. The gap I identify in Composition Studies leads to what should be a historiography of WPAs but, as I review below, little has been done to view the WPAs *as* WPAs in the history of composition. Thus, the historiographical concerns become part of the methodological concerns of my historical argument, and I explore more about who WPAs are and how they have been identified in the histories of composition scholarship in Chapter 2.

1. 2. 1. Historiography of Land-Grant Colleges

Composition's historical scholarship was built upon and developed after Veysey's (1965) paradigm-shifting history, *The Emergence of the American University*, which rejected higher education's practice of writing so-called "house histories." House histories were (and remain to be) adulations or odes about a single institution, usually written by a member of that institution. As such, they are largely descriptive instead of analytical, and they are rarely critical. Iowa State's house history is Ross's (1942a) *A History of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts*, and it falls squarely in this tradition. His narrative presented as a factual history of the College, Ross selectively obfuscates and downplays IAC's blunders and dismisses its detractors. Ross pays almost no attention to the reasons for populist activism against IAC, instead framing many of the "grangers" (agricultural pressure groups) as impeding IAC's unambiguous march toward educational progress (see for instance Chapter 6). He glosses over the fact that IAC's promised education for farmers actually siphoned farmers' children away from farms, never to return (Rudolph, 1990; Sorber & Geiger, 2014). Ross also glosses over the financial difficulties and poor professional training of early educators at IAC (see Chapter 8), ignoring the repeated pleas from many IAC department chairs in their annual reports to the president, begging for more instructors, more teaching resources, and better wages. House histories, though, are far from useless, even when biased. Historians in Higher Education rely on these histories as some of the most robust and well-funded explorations of institutions, many of which leverage impressive library research resources and prestigious historians to conduct the investigations (Sorber & Geiger, 2014). Ross, for instance, falls into this latter category, and he remains one of the most cited scholars in land-grant history with his (1942b) *Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage*. And, of some relevance to readers from Iowa State, he is the namesake of the English Department's home in Ross Hall. But most

important to Higher Education history, house histories support comparative and analytical historians because they serve as reliable pillars upon which to build comparative investigations.

Veysey (1965), collating and analyzing many house histories in addition to his own extensive archival investigations of presidential memoirs, posited new analytical frames across institutions that fundamentally changed higher education historical scholarship (Dorn, 2017; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). Before Veysey's *Emergence*, when comparative work was done across institution types, such as liberal arts colleges or land-grant institutions, it was adulatory and uncritical (refer, for instance, to Eddy, 1957; Ross, 1942b). Veysey (1965) transformed the field of Higher Education history by applying sociological critiques across institution types, developing themes that explained institution types and the people within them. Classical colleges, in Veysey's handling, became bastions of discipline and piety; the new universities stood for utility, research, and culture. He was the first to synthesize the rise of the administrative bureaucracy that bonded so many institutional organizational charts, and he told a spell-binding narrative of the late-1800s optimism through a seemingly inexhaustible list of higher education presidents, professors, and students. While others wrote valuable histories after Veysey's, such as Rudolph (1990) and Cremin (1988), Reuben (2005) recently (and wryly) remarked in a retrospective on *The Emergence's* legacy, "why write when Veysey has already said anything that could be possibly said?" (p. 413).

Yet, despite its canonical status in the history of higher education, Veysey's work was not exhaustive. Dorn (2017) explicates the many limitations of Veysey's *Emergence* that scholars have discovered in the intervening half century, including serious doubt about the tripartite institutional motives of utility, research, and culture. The most obvious limitations, however, were on Veysey's research subjects: he chose elite universities for the focus of his study, such as

Cornell, Yale, Harvard, the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, and Stanford. To scholars interested in land-grant institutions, Veysey (1965) is nearly silent; he barely mentions the Morrill Acts, and most land-grant scholars choose to build their histories on Ross (1942b) and Rudolph (1990) rather than Veysey.

Composition's early histories relied heavily on Veysey, and even into the early 2000s researchers cited the history uncritically (McLeod, 2007; Russell, 2002). As Composition Studies professionalized throughout the 1980s and 1990s and established its own histories, the dependency on Higher Education history scholarship lessened, perhaps to Composition's detriment. Much has happened in Higher Education historiography, especially in relation to the land-grant college, an institution type that remains undifferentiated from other public institutions in composition scholarship (Mendenhall, 2011).

Contemporary Higher Education historians continue to compete with their canonical histories, struggling to make other scholars aware of more nuanced and up-to-date historical work. In a recent historiographical review by the two leading historians of land-grant institutions, Sorber and Geiger (2014) reflect on how the romanticized notions of land-grant colleges as idealized, a-political, *good* institutions persist in institutional marketing materials, legislative efforts to renew the 'golden days' of vocational education, and popularized histories of higher education. The canonical histories of land-grant colleges (Eddy, 1957; Edmond, 1978; Ross, 1942b) positioned the colleges as a unified effort to respond Jacksonian Democratic upwelling, and each college answered the Morrill Act's dictates for agricultural and mechanical education similarly. The Act's text states that:

the leading object [for the colleges] shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are

related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life. (Morrill Land Grant Act, 1862, sec. 4)

The linchpin of “industrial classes” has caused generations of historians, politicians, laypeople, and members of these institutions believe in the “democracy” thesis that land-grant colleges arose from a unified democratic impulse. Land-grant historians have since found that there was almost no unity in organization or curricular direction among these colleges.

Of the 36 to originally accept the land grant, some states immediately created institutions based on the new research university model, such as Cornell and MIT, while others took exceedingly literally the vocational bent, eschewing most education beyond hands-on farming experience (Sorber & Geiger, 2014, p. 395). Some states created A&M colleges that either focused on farming or applied industrial technologies (i.e., the mechanical arts — engineering as a discipline had yet to come). All these A&M institutions struggled to balance their relationship to the liberal arts and general sciences, choosing to see their purpose instead in applied sciences. They benefited from their practicality in the short-term, especially as the 1870s through 1890s saw nationwide upheavals against research university-styled land-grant colleges by populist pressure groups (Nelson, 2013; Sorber, 2018). Long-term, however, A&M colleges struggled to retain top-flight faculty and serious graduate students. IAC was of this latter A&M group, but it is unclear whether it struggled in the same ways as other agricultural science colleges. For curious historical reasons, IAC “placed more emphasis on agricultural research than any other A&M, even venturing into doctoral education well before its peers” (Sorber & Geiger, 2014, p. 398). In fact, alongside the Michigan Agricultural College (MAC, now Michigan State), some

land-grant historians admit that maybe only IAC and MAC aligned with Ross's (1942b) "democracy" thesis of the land-grant founding. Thus, while not a useful thesis for *all* land-grants, Ross's (1942b) history is particularly useful to the Iowa State historian. However, each college, land-grant historiographers argue, needs to be examined according to its unique responses to the highly interpretable Morrill Act, the populist movements against it, and its identification with research. I examine the pedagogical and curricular pressures that shaped IAC in much greater depth in Chapter 3.

Overall, Sorber and Geiger's (2014) review highlights five major beliefs that land-grant historians have revised since the canonical histories were first published:

1. Historians no longer believe in a widespread "democratic push" for utilitarian education in the form of land-grant colleges; instead, historians have uncovered consistent popular pressure *against* the land-grant colleges from their tax bases. They reject the utilitarian ideal that Veysey (1965) articulated and composition historians (Berlin, 1987; Crowley, 1998) amplify, arguing instead that the rhetoric of utility belonged to educational reformers "seeking to advance science, the agricultural and industrial economy, the bureaucracy, and the nation-state" (Sorber & Geiger, 2014, p. 394).
2. Historians doubt that early land-grant colleges expanded access to lower economic populations, African Americans, and women. This is a romantic ideal that compositionists have also long been suspicious of. Land-grant historians have found that neither wealthy nor poor students attended land-grants (Behle, 2013); far more common were students from the emerging middle class, especially well-off farmer's children who wanted to find white-collar jobs. Further, while women were admitted from the very beginning into land-grant colleges, they had complex reasons for attending, and their

curricular choices and opportunities were varied (Radke-Moss, 2008). And, as will surprise few, the HBCUs faced immense challenges to gain land-grant resources promised to them, and their locations across the country mattered: those building out of the post-Civil War South fought Jim Crow backsliding while those in the North fought latent racial hostility and segregation.

3. Historians know that few of these colleges produced students who farmed, and these colleges did not instigate a farming revolution in America through educating the common man. Interestingly, this was never true for historians but was propagated in retrospectives, partisan huckstering, and pamphlets (Geiger & Sorber, 2013; Sorber, 2018). In fact, many early land-grant presidents and educational reformers actively fought against an agricultural stigma attached to the land-grants (Gilman, 1867). If left to their own devices, few members of these academic communities would have either noticed or cared about the dearth of farmers in their alumni catalogs. IAC was no exception: even though they were one of the few to maintain an experimental farm and require manual labor, only six years after opening, IAC dropped its Agricultural Science degree in 1874.
4. Thus, these colleges were not initially welcomed by their publics, and those that embraced high standards and research were critiqued by grangers in the 1880s and 90s. Some were forced to close or dissociate from their liberal arts college institutions, and some even capitulated to vocational curricula for a period. The populist pressure was relieved by the 1914 Smith-Lever Act's guarantee of federally funded extension and outreach saved the land-grants. Instead of a widespread adoption of vocational curricula in the collegiate courses, land-grants turned toward research. IAC, like several of the A&Ms discovering the benefits of specialized research, was able to pursue scientific

research, training traditional undergraduates, and serving the public through federally funded extension and outreach efforts.

5. Even though many have large enrollments and R1 statuses, historians do not believe that land-grants advanced at similar paces into what we now consider the standard research university. Many struggled until the 1960s before fully establishing themselves as flagship research institutions (Geiger & Sorber, 2013). Those that chose research from the beginning fared far better; IAC was one of the only — and the healthiest — of the institutions that remained dedicated to the A&M model, largely because of its agricultural research efforts.

IAC emerges from this broad historiographical parsing of land-grant history as not quite unique but certainly not identical to other land-grant institutions, and yet the notion that composition may have been different at land-grant institutions, let alone IAC, has not been acknowledged in the field of Composition Studies. The clues that IAC was worth investigating for its own sake have been present: before the field of Composition Studies existed, Kitzhaber referenced in his introduction to *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850–1900* a revolutionary spirit in the FYC program at IAC that inspired his graduate research. However, a historiographical review of Composition Studies reveals good reasons why Compositionists did not write composition histories of single institutions.

1. 2. 2. Historiography of Composition History

Nuances among institution types are not often addressed in early histories of Composition, largely because the purpose of these histories was to carve out space for rhetoric and composition scholars in literature-dominated departments during the 1970s and 1980s (Crowley, 1998; North, 1987). As Crowley (1998) put it, “full-time faculty realized that there was no

professional future in teaching a course that produced no research,” and the professionalization of Composition and intense examination of its past began (p. 4).

The early waves of Composition historical scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized the homogeneity of composition pedagogies across all U.S. institutions, and differences or exceptions or innovations were glossed over. The artifact of preference to study was the textbook, and historians, trained as rhetoricians and recuperating the depth of rhetorical theory, analyzed these textbooks and theorized their pedagogical implications — usually negative implications — for students, classrooms, and programs (Berlin, 1984, 1987; Carr et al., 2009; Connors, 1981b; Kitzhaber, 1990). Kitzhaber’s dissertation, the first major work in Composition, published in 1953, focused almost exclusively on textbooks from 1850 to 1900. Kitzhaber (1990) examined rhetoric textbooks to reveal the transition from *belles lettres* and Scottish common sense rhetoricians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the infusion of British rhetorics and finally a coherent American rhetoric from the “Big Four” of Hill and Wendell of Harvard, Genung of Amherst, and Scott of the University of Michigan.

Connors (1981b, 1982), likewise, wrote excellent, article-length that surveyed textbooks. His frequently cited work, the 1981 “The rise and fall of the modes of discourse,” builds on Kitzhaber’s dissertation and brings the textbook analysis up to World War II. The modes of discourse, which were narration, description, exposition, and argumentation, were popularized by the “Big Four” American rhetoricians, and they gradually fell out of favor in the 1920s to textbooks focused on, ironically, one of the modes instead of all four (e.g., a textbook devoted only to exposition) or what Connors (1981) called “thesis texts,” which arose through the 1940s and 1950s (p. 449). Thesis textbooks argued that texts were organic, not mechanical, and arranged around a single commanding idea, or a thesis, and this framing of the ideal text remains

ubiquitous in higher education, even in the 2020s. Composition historians in the 1970s and 1980s also firmly identified themselves as/with rhetoricians rather than with departments of literature, creative writing, communication, or linguistics. Even though other artifacts, such as journal articles, national surveys, were used for added context in these histories, this period of historical scholarship is best described as “textbook history.”

From the broader perspective of understanding how students learned how to communicate through the written word, which in turn is a broader definition of composition, analyzing textbooks and extrapolating pedagogical trends from them has definite historical merit. Foremost, careful examination of course catalogs can uncover which textbooks were used in a certain class during a certain year. In the old college, recitation reigned; a literal recapitulation of textbooks was the norm. But as education changed through the mid-1800s, recitation fell more and more to lectures by specialists, and the exact relationship between a textbook and the classroom experience became less certain. Some composition instructors across the ages expressed that they did not use the textbook in their courses, several examples of which arise throughout this history. Depending on the educational background of the instructor (and for years it might only be one person), what counted as “composition” shared hues of literature, linguistics, rhetoric, grammar, and occasionally flecks of creative writing. These doubts aside, it is reasonable to assume that many schools did in fact quickly adopt the rhetorical theories in new textbooks, as Wozniak (1978) charted by looking at textbook adoptions among institutions on the east coast. Additionally, Kitzhaber (1990) identified that many rhetorical textbooks simplified their theories down to unity, coherence, and emphasis, and catalogs at IAC began to reflect these categories in their course descriptions. Much more influential were the ideas of the “modes of

discourse” (Connors, 1981b), and department chairs around the country built entire courses around them, to the point that they put “narration” or “description” in the class titles.

While many FYC programs did use similar books and did face similar challenges in the late 1800s and early 1900s, such as the phenomenal and rapid influx of students, it is the argument of this dissertation that the composition pedagogies *before composition professionalized* in the 1960s and 1970s were heavily influenced by unique institutional pressures, such as the personality of the school’s WPA, the institution type (i.e., small liberal arts college or university), and the institutional mission (e.g., to educate farmers versus to prepare young men for political leadership). As Russell (1989) wrote of the early progressive reforms in composition instruction, “American mass education, like the industrial organization it is largely modeled on, is specialized by its function. Individual schools and specific programs within schools have different clienteles, organization, curricula, and—most importantly—purposes” (p. 400). Rhetoricians and their textbooks were part of, but not the entirety of, early composition programs across the country.

Crowley (1998) posited an alternative to textbook history that nears the perspective of this dissertation. FYC, which is usually said to have begun in 1870 at Harvard, did not arise from composition teachers using the same rhetoric textbooks, but instead FYC arose from the institutional pressures of higher education. Crowley (1998) argues that:

The required introductory course in composition is an institution whose rationale did not emanate from some subject matter, discipline, or field of study, as most university courses do. Over the years, then, first-year composition has been remarkably vulnerable to ideologies and practices that originate elsewhere than in its classrooms. (p. 6)

Her contextual history argues that to understand composition's history, a deeper understanding of higher education's history, as well as the political influences that permeated public universities, is needed.

In contrast to textbook histories, Crowley's (1998) work represents a "composition as a response to higher education" history. Her work argued that changes in higher education, such as the formation of disciplines and the elevated status of English literature departments across the country, dictated composition practices, such teaching composition through reading literature. Crowley's (1998) *Composition in the University* stemmed from archival scholarship from the University of Iowa, and it synthesized secondary sources and Crowley's personal experience from decades teaching and administering writing programs, participating in *CCCC* committees, and developing the Wyoming Resolution to end FYC. Russell's (2002) *Writing in the Academic Disciplines* is a similar work inasmuch as Russell explored the mismatch between the rise of the specialized research university and the generalized writing instruction offered in FYC. Russell investigated textbooks, journal articles, and archival artifacts from around the country to demonstrate that composition teachers or disciplinary instructors had not adapted to specialized genres. Whereas the earlier histories were built upon textbooks, "composition as a response to higher education" expanded what counts as a historical artifact of relevance. Added to textbooks and speeches are the early efforts at Composition professionalization, such as journal articles, conference proceedings, and some archival materials, and these scholars engaged much more deeply with interdisciplinary scholarship from the history of higher education, namely Veysey (1965), Clark (1983, 1984), Cremin (1988), and Rudolph (1990). The goal of these histories was to match trends in higher education to trends in composition instruction.

Trends in higher education are essential historical additions to the textbook histories; however, two additions can be made to “composition as a response to higher education” histories. First, these histories did not differentiate clearly about institution types when generalizing their claims about the relevance of higher education. For example, Crowley (1998) was highly critical of composition, especially the first-year composition course; indeed, she aimed to end the practice. Having been an author of the 1987 Wyoming Statement to end first-year composition, Crowley (1998) argued that composition “originated as punishment for failure to master a highly idealized version of the written dialect of a dominant class” (p. 231). However, Crowley (1998) had conducted most of her research at the archives at the University of Iowa, a research university that transformed from a liberal arts college model to the German research model in the late 1800s. The University of Iowa rapidly grew a robust literary studies English department, which took the old liberal arts ideals and added the seriousness of a research institution to each subject. Literature at the University of Iowa held status above composition; composition was mere teaching whereas literature allowed for scholarship and research.

At first, I noted the Iowa connection as a happy coincidence, but as I reread and reviewed Crowley’s (1998) claims about a liberal culture, housed in power-hungry English *literature* departments, I could not see the same culture at Iowa State. For instance, Iowa State did not allow the literature major until 1957, so the perceived status from literature research operated differently at IAC. Until I began comparing the institutional histories of these two institutions did I realize how important their institutional context was: they were separate sub-categories higher education institutions, and what occurred at one should not be generalized for the other. For instance, as Chapter 5 discusses, beginning in 1910 the Iowa Board of Education (now Regents) separated these two institutions via legal mandate, to the point that board cut programs to prevent

them duplicating their subject matter. The University of Iowa represented a certain *type* of institution; Iowa State represented another.

Second, both “textbook” and “composition as a response to higher education” histories have traditionally assimilated differences rather than explored individual institutions, and historians often dismissed individual institutions that bucked the trends. For instance, Crowley stated that “[w]ith the notable exception of communication skills, Freshman English underwent almost no theoretical development between 1900 and 1970. In the 1950s and 1960s, introductory composition was still being taught according to the dictates of the current-traditional theory of discourse it inherited from the people who had given the course its original shape in the late nineteenth century⁸” (*sic, including note*, p. 103). Crowley’s note number 8, which says, “Of course there were local exceptions to this generalization, as at Amherst. See Varnum” (p. 272), minimizes Varnum’s (1996) historiographical work, *Fencing with Words*. Varnum (1996), on the other hand, argued that significant theorization and innovation was happening in composition courses across the United States. Varnum’s archival exploration of Amherst College attempted to demonstrate that historical claims about a universal pedagogy were inconsistent with investigations into individual schools.

Historians produced few histories like Varnum’s (1996) — archival investigations into a single institution — were written by the 1990s, though. Composition as a field was still hungry for totalizing, unifying histories of composition, as North (1987) and Miller (1993) discussed in their historiographies of the field. Until the major inroads of the 1970s, Composition as a field, including its instructors, WPAs, and scholars, struggled to gain professional status and security within their institutions. No one disputes that historical scholarship supported the field’s professionalization and institutional status. Composition needed historians to establish a growth

narrative (Brereton, 1995; North, 1987). Frisicaro-Pawlowski (2011) argued that the vast majority of Composition's historical scholarship sought to legitimize Composition as a distinct scholarly and deeply theorized field, but a curious bias led to an unintended consequence of these early histories. According to Paine's (1999) critique of early Composition historians, the histories often portrayed past Compositionists as, at best, unenlightened, and at worse, dead set against the flourishing of their students. To combat their villainous or apathetic predecessors, historians often concluded their works by advocating for new movements in the field, such as process over the modes of discourse (Connors, 1981b), personal expression over imitation (Kantor, 1975), rhetoric over literature (Crowley, 1985, 1998), postmodern over formalist (S. Miller, 1982), or Marxist over capitalist purposes for writing instruction (Berlin, 1984, 1987, 1988), to name a few. The historians were biased toward their present; the historians were distancing composition from its past.

Historians advocating for pedagogical change can be seen in the Octalog forums (1988, 1997, 2011) on historiography. In the first Octalog (1988), eight historians (James Berlin, Bob Connors, Sharon Crowley, Richard Enos, Susan Jarratt, Nan Johnson, and Jan Swearingen, and Victor Vitanza) debated the value, evidence, and purpose of composition and rhetoric histories, and a repeated call was to reject the totalizing history, the "facts speak for themselves"-type of history they saw as unrhetorical. But, there was distinct discomfort in their self-awareness as canon creators. Crowley questioned whether her histories would become more authoritative than she ever intended because of the "pedagogical bent of our profession, where the first question asked of any research is 'What use is it in the classroom?'" (Octalog, 1988, p. 7). She worried that no amount of hedging would prevent teachers from adapting her history to meet their pedagogical needs. Berlin, however, accepted that closing a historical narrative was necessary,

but he cautioned that ending a historical work is merely “arriving at a rhetorical solution, a stay against chaos, against confusion, against disorder, a tentative position” (Octalog, 1988, p. 33).

Only Victor Vitanza in 1988 pushed back against the narrative that historians should or could “write history to make the world a better place,” arguing that historians convinced of their ideological rightness were embarking upon a naive errand: “I fear [...] its totalization, its homogeneity; for we’ve been there before-always already-in history! Let’s don’t, through deflection, repeat the mistakes of the past, right?” (1988, p. 42). Brereton (1995), reviewing the early waves of historical work in the 1970s and 1980s, accepted this bias as a harmless “natural emphasis”; Bob Connors dismissed that the “propaganda” of Composition history reflected anything more than “an institutional inferiority complex” at a time of growth (Octalog, 1988, p. 30). Other historians, however, argued that the pedagogies of earlier eras were unfairly dismissed in order to justify a professionalized field of Composition Studies (Matsuda, 2003; Pullman, 1999; Varnum, 1992b). The historical work of this generation was always meant to be revised, but these historians underestimated how important their historical work and its biases were to establishing the field against its unruly, undisciplined, unprofessionalized past.

The clarion call for change was Royster and Williams’s (1999) “History in the spaces left: African American presence and narratives of composition studies,” which demanded a greater articulation of minoritized³ perspectives to combat generalist histories (which usually focused on white discourse at large universities). A similar call came from Paine (1999) who argued for culturally rich, contextually dense histories that gave a “human face” to histories of

³ Several terms could apply here, but I like the advice from the American Medical Association’s 2021 “Advancing health equity: A guide to language, narrative and concepts.” This guide suggests either using “marginalized” or “minoritized” to represent the agency of dominant groups in oppressing historically underrepresented groups. Simply saying “minority” could be applied to any statistically small group, such as the wealthiest 1% of Americans. “Minoritized,” I feel, expresses that groups could have experienced equity, parity, equality, inclusion, or status had it not been for the actions of others.

rhetoric and composition (p. 38). Revisionist historians began to want to see the exceptions, the hidden gems, the one-offs, and the underdogs. The early 2000s historical scholarship became an era of revisionist histories in composition, and revisionist historians began expanding or filling in or rewriting significant gaps in the previous generation's scholarship. Concurrent to this, an outpouring of archival methodologies flooded the field (Gold, 2012).

Gold's (2012) review of the field's revisionist enterprise demonstrated that many of the histories written since Royster and Williams (1999) seemed to be local histories (sometimes called "microhistories") of single institutions (McComiskey, 2016; Shepley, 2016; Skinnell, 2011, 2016; Stock, 2012). One style of microhistory that emerged in this revisionist upswelling was the biographical narrative. Paine's (1999) call for "human faces" in rhetoric demanded narratives of composition instructors that allowed the historian and the reader to complicate the classroom rhetoric, and his own work fleshed out two of Composition's villains: Harvard's Edward T. Channing and Adam Sherman Hill. Many biographical investigations flourished in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as Stewart and Stewart's (1997) *Life and Legacy of Fred Newton Scott*, Campbell's (1996) introduction to *Toward a Feminist Rhetoric: The Writing of Gertrude Buck*, Maher's (1997) *Mina P. Shaughnessy: Her Life and Work*, Varnum's (1996) *Fencing with Words*, Popken's (2004a) "Edwin Hopkins and the costly labor of composition teaching," and McLeod and Hughes's (2017) "Understanding the stories of two WPA pioneers: Ednah Thomas and Joyce Steward." These historians used biographical narratives to merge the social and material contexts of early composition instructors and WPAs with the composition and rhetoric pedagogies at their institutions. Paine (1999) argued that these microhistories supplanted the sweeping generalizations made about the relationship between nineteenth-century American cultural ideologies and their manifestations in the composition

classroom. He asked, “how does society-wide culture get into the university—wholesale, without interpretation, without significant alteration?” (p. 31). How did capitalism or positivism or current-traditionalism get into the classroom? By investigating individuals and their social and material contexts, he argued that historians could better understand that there are rarely heroes or villains in composition scholarship, and that teaching composition and rhetoric “is neither wholly hegemonic nor wholly subversive; rather, diversity and consolidation are always in tension” (Paine, 1999, p. 41).

Arising from these local histories was a sense that the grand narratives — those of the textbook histories and those of “composition as a response to higher education” histories — did not explain the complexities of these institutions. These revisionist historians often felt that high theory and generalizing narratives were too eager to talk about politics or philosophy or macroeconomic critiques rather than what real teachers of writing have done. McComiskey (2016) takes such an epistemologically revisionist stance when he asked, “Has real teaching been abstracted out of our narratives of composition history? [...] Has each individual classroom been obliterated by the abstraction *pedagogy*?” (2016, p. 8). These microhistories questioned whether the abstractions of pedagogy, such as “current traditional rhetoric” (Berlin, 1980; Crowley, 1985, 2010; Nunes, 2015) framed by earlier Composition historians, made sense when viewed at the level of individual institutions.

Gold (2012) and Ritter (2018) expressed suspicion of this outgrowth of microhistories, suggesting that maybe differentiation and parsing had gone too far. They argued that while these local, context-sensitive histories revised the grand narratives and revealed the multiple and distinct truths from the local contexts, they fragmented the field to the point of chaos. Gold (2012) asked what purpose individual classrooms served the discipline if every teacher,

classroom, or school is considered by each historian as a unique context? Likewise, Ritter (2018) called for the microhistories to begin speaking back into the larger discourse rather than poking holes in every narrative. McComiskey's (2016) collection, *Microhistories of Composition*, sought to address this concern, but its range of microhistory subjects — from paying homage to a single instructor to looking at one composition conference proceeding to exploring how grammar was taught in a single class — demonstrated the opposite. The variety without theoretical unification recalls Henry Adams's historiographical reminder that historians must run "order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity" (1999, p. 12). As historians unveil the social processes and material constraints (those twinned contextual factors that add color and individuality to each history), historians need to speak into the intellectual culture that Composition's theorists and practitioners find themselves within (T. P. Miller, 1993). About the emergence of the early revisionists, Miller (1993) argued that:

Rhetoricians justify their positions by locating them in the shared traditions of the group. To speak for the group, they must invent a discourse authorized by the shared traditions. To understand this social process, we must try to reinvent the traditions within and against which the rhetorician worked, traditions that may have been silenced by the dominant discourse. While we can never step into the [citing Clifford Geertz] "native's point of view," we need to know more about the values, experiences, and assumptions shared by specific communities if we want to understand their characteristic rhetorical practices.

As historians revise the very histories that unified the field(s) of Composition and Rhetoric, we cannot forget our own community's needs and uses for histories. At this moment in Composition's historical scholarship, a balance must be struck between (1) lenses of analysis that

reliably explain changes in composition pedagogy across institutions and (2) totalizing histories that treat microhistorical investigations as dismissible exceptions.

1. 3. Addressing the historiographical gaps: Institution type, institutions over time, and WPAs

I argue that three key strategies can help historians create nuanced microhistories that also usefully speak into larger Composition histories: 1) center the institution's influence on the composition program's history, (2) observe a single program's changes over time, and (3) focus on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations.

This first step requires that historians correlate their histories with higher education history, especially within the much more nuanced work that has since been done on institutional types. Crowley (1998) argued that composition practices take place within institutional contexts, and she laid the groundwork that it is a myth to perpetuate heroic individual educators as acting of their own accord with no relationship to their departments, institutional missions, or their institution's response to the larger changes happening in American higher education.

Composition historians need to remain attuned to Russell's (1989) and Crowley's (1998) call for institutional and higher education awareness, and some recent Composition histories have been more careful about distinguishing institutional types and recognizing their influences on the composition curriculum (e.g., Donahue & Moon, 2007; Gold, 2008; Leahy, 2017; Mendenhall, 2011). Unfortunately, the *importance* of institution type, whether it be normal schools, liberal arts colleges, or land-grant institutions, has not indelibly shaped the way Composition talks about its histories.

My dissertation argues that the land-grant mission at IAC did impact its composition practices. Building on Mendenhall's (2011) argument that Ohio State's land-grant status influenced its composition curriculum, I have found that IAC's land-grant origins, its

administration's sense of public duty, its rapid growth, its agricultural and applied industries focuses, and its emergence as a research institution all impacted IAC's composition curriculum. In the early years, before IAC's financial and political stability, farming activist groups, together called "the grange," attacked land-grants across the nation, and each college adapted to and compromised with the grange in ways that Composition historians have not begun to explore. Welch, a trained rhetorician who had published a textbook on grammar before his IAC presidency, taught many composition sections himself, and he hand-selected the first English teachers based on his background in literary studies. He was also the advocate for the "liberal studies" vision of what IAC's land-grant status meant, which also meant he competed against a state seemingly unified in opposition to his opinions. For years, external populist politicians targeted all nonagricultural subjects, especially the English courses.

Various stakeholders competed over the appropriate curriculum of IAC and other land-grant institutions, and some of these battles turned out the same across the land-grant colleges. These colleges emerged too late to be burdened by the liberal arts tradition but too early to have embraced the research model whole cloth. Confined to a legislative mandate that was anything but clear (E. L. Johnson, 1981; Sorber, 2018; Sorber & Geiger, 2014), land-grant universities experimented with curriculum differently than those colleges and universities featured prominently in Composition's canonical histories. However, the social and cultural pressures on all land-grants did not guarantee uniform adoption and pedagogies at each institution. Mendenhall's (2011) history at Ohio State showed a substantially different program than that which developed at IAC, despite both being land-grant colleges. This leads to the second methodological contribution of this dissertation.

The second methodological step requires that Compositionists return their focus to single institutions and watch how they change over time. Microhistories often take place within single institutions, but these histories have not explored the institutions *per se*, meaning they did not examine the institution's impact on the composition subjects. They have focused on individuals. As such, most microhistories began or ended with the retirement of a figure or the conclusion of a program, which does not sufficiently explain an institution's relationship to the composition program's development (Donahue & Moon, 2007; McComiskey, 2016). Such brief sprints into an institution's history gave an illusion of idiosyncrasy; idiosyncratic histories rendered them exceptions; exceptions have been easy to dismiss. At best, they appended the existing narratives, but they did not revise them. This dissertation posits that one improvement in historical writing would be to look at how a single institution navigates changes in higher education and composition pedagogy *over time*.

Broadly speaking, histories often fall into vertical or horizontal investigations (Thelin, 1990, Supplemental bibliography): by vertical, historians mean 'observed over time', and an example of a vertical history in Composition is Murphy's (2001) *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Modern America*, which is a broad survey. But, they can also be as narrow in scope as the house histories of a single institution — although very few of these have been written in composition. Horizontal histories, however, examine a short period or a single event and consider it from as many influential factors as possible. Composition's horizontal histories pick a feature that is shared across institutions, such as time period (e.g., the birth of the FYC course the university during open admissions) or student demographic (e.g., first-generation students, remediated students, race or gender classifications), and then analyze or argue for the significance of that feature. Composition historians have mostly organized their

histories around theories about how to teach student writing. To name but a few of these, elocutionary or Romantic rhetoric pre-1870 (Johnson, 1991), current-traditional rhetoric in the early 20th century (Berlin, 1984, 1987; Brereton, 1995; Crowley, 1998; Kitzhaber, 1990), skill-and-drill and the modes of discourse from the 1930s through the 1950s (Connors 1981, 1997; Masters, 2004), the reintegration of linguistics via tagmemics along with the birth of expressivism through the 1960s and 1970s (Murphy, 2001), and then a large push from process theories, transfer theories, writing across the curriculum (WAC) (Matsuda, 2003), writing in the disciplines (WID) (Russell, 2002), and critical theories to the present day (Frisicaro-Pawlowski, 2011). Excepting Harvard — the progenitor of the composition program (Brown, 1995, p. 8) — individual schools and their unique composition programs have rarely impacted the horizontal histories of Composition.

Composition, however, began its historical life *after* Veysey's (1965) turn from parochial house histories, but it was upon a robust foundation of house histories that higher education historians could make a maneuver to robust, comparative historical work. Many composition programs have no self-knowledge of their institutions' composition practices; they have no vertical institutional histories. Composition relies heavily on the strong — but gap-filled — general histories, and individual educators or program administrators cannot place their institution within or against the dominant historical narratives. So, while the revisionist historians already made strong arguments for the limitations of our largely white, big, wealthy school histories based on identity-based gaps in the narrative, another call for revision can be made by looking at individual composition programs over time. These vertical histories will help revisionists do comparative work to shore up previous narratives of Composition. A vertical history of Iowa State can help other land-grant composition historians understand how their

programs developed or differed, and Chapter 4 onward retells the vertical histories of IAC's composition program.

The third methodological step requires the composition historian to recognize the WPA as a central, influential figure in Composition history. Unfortunately, histories of Composition “deal with writing program administration only tangentially,” observed McLeod (2007, p. 24). WPAs seem to be everywhere in the histories, whether as the stand-ins for primary pedagogical evidence or as the historians themselves⁴, but histories rarely center WPAs as the dominant reasons for a certain pedagogy or textbook at a given institution. Despite the appearance of more WPA-focused histories in the last two decades, Ritter (2018) argues that “we have been unable to gather these histories of practice in any kind of comprehensive or dialogic way” (p. 38). Most of these have been microhistorical biographies, celebrating individuals in isolation from the rest of their programs (B. L'Eplattenier & Mastrangelo, 2004; McLeod & Hughes, 2017; Popken, 2004a). No definitive history of WPA work has been written; by all accounts, McLeod's (2007) chapter in *Writing Program Administration*, Heckathorn's (1999) dissertation, and Heckathorn's (2004) chapter in L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo's (2004) *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration* serve as the most complete histories to date. Whether we call it revisionist history (Gold, 2012) or developing a “collective memory” (Ritter, 2018), work done by WPA-focused

⁴ James Berlin was director of Freshman English at the University of Cincinnati from 1981 to 1985 (*Inventory to the James Berlin Paper, 1978–1994*, 2011); Bob Connors directed the University of New Hampshire Writing Center and established the Writing Across the Curriculum program (*Guide to the Robert J. Connors Writing Center Files, 1994–2010*, 2022); and Susan Miller directed composition at the Ohio State University, the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, and the University of Utah (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2013), to name just a few. It might be a worthwhile exploration to chart the institutional ethos of Composition historians. Some notable figures resist association with WPAs and WPA work, such as Sharon Crowley. Crowley has lobbied adamantly against required FYC (Crowley, 1998, 2002) and endorsed James Sledd's pejorative term for WPAs as “boss compositionists” (Crowley, 2001), which may give some perspective on why she neglected the WPA in her historical thesis about the origins of composition: “The required introductory course in composition is an institution whose rationale did not emanate from some subject matter, discipline, or field of study, as most university courses do. Over the years, then, FYC has been remarkably vulnerable to ideologies and practices that originate elsewhere than in its classrooms” (1998, p. 6). I, instead, argue that WPAs, if they were present, *did* guide the ideologies of composition at their institutions.

historians needs to theorize how focusing on the WPA contributes to or complicates the pedagogy-focused histories that have been written while also revealing the institutional, namely administrative, context of teaching composition.

I believe the WPA-focused history valuably contributes to composition history, especially one that accounts for the time before the outgrowth of professionalism in the 1960s and 1970s of both Composition and Writing Program Administration. Systems and ideas influenced individuals, but individuals mattered. As McLeod (2007) wrote, “because there were not yet professional organizations for WPAs, the history of writing program administration during the period from the beginning of FYC up to World War II is necessarily a history of individuals assigned to that task in individual programs” (p. 45). The *individual* WPA and their influence can serve as an ever-present lens in Composition history writing. In some ways, the individual already is a focus of our histories because these are the major characters that our histories discuss. We unite them under pedagogies but not under administrative strategies. The WPA as a lens allows the earlier biographical microhistories to belong to a broader tradition of scholarship, and work like McLeod and Hughes’s (2017) show how the biography and the WPA blend to reveal a complex yet generalizable narrative of composition pedagogy. However, Composition histories do not generally acknowledge the WPA’s centrality to the success, survival, and pedagogical rigor of a composition program.

Consider a historical problem in Composition that we can solve by looking at individuals over pedagogical developments across the field: the phenomenon of writing programs disappearing after the death or retirement of a single WPA. Fred Newton Scott, one of Composition’s most written about innovators and early rhetoricians, influenced the University of Michigan so strongly that, in 1903, Michigan created a Department of Rhetoric to allow Scott the

disciplinary space he needed to pursue composition and rhetoric apart from literature. For thirty years, Scott inspired and educated many, including the famous rhetorician Gertrude Buck, but after his death in 1931, the institutions quickly erased his presence with new initiatives, and Michigan reabsorbed composition and rhetoric back into the English department (Dyehouse, 2014; Kitzhaber, 1990; Stewart, 1985).

For composition historians, textbook histories and “composition as a response to higher education” histories have explained Scott’s erasure by pinning the usurpation of Scott’s department on a growing Literature program or current-traditional rhetoric (see Crowley, 1998, especially). There is some truth to this argument. Literature faculty engaged in their fair share of furtive dealings to establish English departments in their own image (W. R. Parker, 1967). But, Scott’s sudden retirement and death were followed by a curious episode of institutional ignorance. McLeod (2007) wrote that “the Department of Rhetoric *was* Scott, and under his leadership it flourished for thirty years. But it flourished only as long as his energy could sustain it as a one-man show; there was no institutional or professional structure to sustain it” (p. 49). Stewart’s (1992) investigation recounted how a new upper administrator at Michigan did not understand the purpose of the division between Rhetoric and English, and he saw siloing between departments as a harmful practice. No one in either the Rhetoric or English department could articulate its defense. Scott, the individual, visionary WPA was gone, and the program went with him.

The arrival of the WPA at IAC indelibly shaped its FYC history. Before the WPA, the land-grant mission was defined by IAC’s Board of Trustees, presidents, and public stakeholders, and it influenced the early curricular offerings. The composition instruction, despite the educational bluster against it from within and without of IAC, was of the old liberal arts

tradition, and it was taught as the old colleges did: literary classics texts (in English, though!) and drill in grammar, plus rhetorical themes. However, coping with its rapid growth in the late 1800s, IAC instituted in 1898 what amounts to a WPA⁵ position. These WPAs were often the sole moderators between IAC's institutional needs and developments in composition practices. Writing in the disciplines, speech paired with English composition, remedial composition, and current-traditional rhetoric in theme writing arose and evaporated with changes in WPAs. As individuals, these WPAs were innovators or conformers, but more importantly, their composition programs came to greatly reflect *their* predilections. Only a longer lens than what Compositionists usually apply (i.e., a single influential figure's directorship) can reveal how important the individual WPA was in relation to the local and national influences on composition.

In this dissertation, I argue that the emergence of the WPA, a figure common enough to examine across contexts, emerged from the tumults of the late 1800s and early 1900s higher education revolutions, and this figure satisfies the historical reality of institutional diversity (institution types, teaching materials, instructors, faculty development, pedagogies, curricula, past institutional influences, etc.) and the need for Composition to stabilize as a field (research paradigms, pedagogical innovations, scholarly conversations, competing theories, etc.). A history of Composition from the late 1800s to the early 1950s should not ignore the tension between dynamic WPAs and systemic institutional forces, both from composition as a field and higher education evolutions. Compositionists have long focused on pedagogical ideologies found in textbooks and articles and professional organizations, but adding a focus on the WPA will more

⁵ In Chapter 2, I argue at greater length for why composition historians should consider using the moniker "WPA" for administrators who performed the tasks of WPAs before 1940. Because this argument calls for a historical lens, I felt it more appropriate to discuss in Chapter 2, which explains my specific methods and methodologies.

fully explain the relationship between our scattered microhistories and the systems of influence that Composition historians have long explored.

Amherst College serves as a useful example to illustrate the utility of these three methodological strategies to fill gaps in Composition's historical gaps. Amherst has already been captured by textbook historians, microhistorians, and higher education historians, but no one has collated these histories. Kitzhaber (1990) and Connors (1981b) both focused on Amherst while charting the rise and fall of the modes of discourse. Connors (1981) singled out John Genung of Amherst:

The turning point, the text that really marks the paradigm shift most clearly, did not come until 1885, with the publication of *The Practical Elements of Rhetoric*, by the redoubtable John Genung. [...] Genung popularized the modes throughout America. [...] Genung himself adopted the four terms of the standard modes himself in 1893 in his *Outlines of Rhetoric*, the follow-up text to *The Practical Elements*. (p. 447)

Based on these texts, including publication numbers and revised editions, a broad story of American composition unfolds. At the institutional level, horizontal historians who told the story of Amherst's composition program (Berlin, 1987; Hawk, 2007; Kitzhaber, 1990) looked at John Franklin Genung's work as prototypical examples of current-traditional rhetoric in composition teaching methods. However, once the textbook historians dissected the textbook's flawed rhetorical assumptions, Amherst no longer remained relevant to the narrative. According to the textbooks, America was a current-traditional place, and Amherst was a current-traditional place.

Genung's rhetorics were popular with other composition instructors, and there is evidence that he tested early drafts on his students (Rockas, 1981), but he seemed more interested in the principles and philosophies of his students' writing than the skill-and-drill

techniques associated with current-traditional rhetoric. However, under Russell's (2002) investigation into the new lecture pedagogy in America, a pedagogy that arrived with the German research university, we learn that Genung stopped assigning writing in his classrooms in the mid-1890s, and for the last twenty years of his teaching, he assigned no writing at all; he moved into literature courses, away from composition courses (p. 184). If Genung moved onto teaching literature instead of composition, we need more investigation about what happened in the composition classrooms. But here, for the sake of argument, let us assume the worst: composition at Amherst under Genung was about as current-traditional as a classroom could be until Genung's death in 1918.

So, we have an institution dominated by the influence of Genung's rhetoric textbooks, Genung's professorship, and Genung's legacy. Was Amherst shaped, as Crowley (1988) argued all institutions were, by a repressive institutional context? Robin Varnum's (1996) *Fencing with Words* examined Amherst College's English 1–2 program from 1938 to 1966. She found that not only were students not being hammered by skill-and-drill pedagogies or the current-traditional rhetoric from Genung's textbooks, but the WPA Theodore Baird was innovating composition pedagogies beyond the published theories of his era. Varnum (1996) did not rely on textbooks or readers as historical evidence because Baird did not use them; instead, she unearthed Amherst's unusual program with interviews and letters to staff and former students, thematic analyses of books written by English 1–2 instructors in later eras, and archival artifacts from the English 1–2 era, such as syllabi, essay prompts, student writing, grade comments, and administrative communications. Why wasn't Amherst sucked into the current-traditional paradigm? Varnum (1996) asked Baird himself, to which he responded, "I think it would be very hard to trace local influences back to Genung, back to George Whicher [another instructor], except by reaction. No

one wants to do what his predecessor, his teachers did. You get forgotten in five minutes flat” (p. 55). Baird chose his own way, for better or worse, and those compositionists he influenced saw him as a revolutionary (Coles, 1978; Gibson, 1966, 1985; Sale, 1969).

Varnum (1992a, 1996) argued that her history disrupted the Composition histories of the era, but as I have already noted, her history has not been influential in the wider Composition literature. *Fencing with Words* was treated as an exception. I am not so convinced that Baird was such an anomaly, at least not as an incoming WPA who does *not* want to do what a predecessor did. However, Varnum did not frame Baird within a long-term lens, and she did not address Genung, despite his frequent appearances in Composition scholarship, nor any of the prior WPAs between Genung and Baird. Varnum (1996) does discuss the dissolution of Baird’s program, though. Like Scott’s program at Michigan, Baird’s program was disbanded immediately upon his retirement — though Varnum did not explore the writing program after his retirement. In her history, Varnum focused on attacking current-traditional rhetoric, but her history could have unveiled more about how Composition developed in the United States at small liberal arts institutions than proving that one instructor at one college did not use current-traditional instruction. It would be interesting and productive for the field to build on Varnum’s excellent history of Baird’s time at Amherst by connecting the writing programs before and after him, exploring the relationships between WPAs and their institutional context.

What historians can learn from the transition from Genung to Baird is that factors such as higher education influences, professionalization in the field, *and* pedagogical innovations in textbooks and journals can fail to explain a composition program, especially one run by a headstrong WPA. However, the institutional factors that necessitated the WPA at Amherst can be reliably seen across many institutions. Examining WPAs before the 1970s requires a much

more individualized approach to historical argument than researchers have typically conducted. In Amherst's case, the WPA dominated its history until 1966: the WPA determined the relationship between past institutional norms (Baird wanted to be different from his predecessors), scholarship at the time (Genung was highly involved, whereas Baird remained an isolated and noncontributing member to Composition scholarship), and the pedagogy of the school (Genung's book influenced his school and many others, but Baird mandated a uniform curriculum and pedagogy for all composition instructors to follow verbatim). Although Baird's pedagogy lived on through some of his instructors and students, for Amherst, the individual WPA's relationship within the institution, not debates in the field, explains the changes.

To some, *of course* composition instruction practices would be scattered, incoherent, inconsistent, and idiosyncratic before the field professionalized. However, these shifts in perspectives might encourage researchers to investigate their own institutions' composing practices before the 1960s and 1970s. I dove into Iowa State's archives and found many confirmations of composition's general histories, but I also found many unique and innovative practices that took place at Iowa State that are not captured in other histories. Sometimes the practices that I uncovered in the archives offer compelling alternative histories than those told in the general histories.

We need more composition histories that (1) center the institution's influence on the composition program's history, (2) observe a single program's changes over time, and (3) focus on WPAs and the transitions between their management of individual composition programs. From a historiographic perspective, following these three methodological techniques will allow other Composition historians to more firmly establish horizontal narratives and grand theories, as historiographers such as Gold (2012) and Ritter (2018) have argued for. From a pedagogical

perspective — perhaps the overriding concern for most Composition instructors who read Composition histories — these histories can resuscitate good ideas that died for non-pedagogical or rhetorical reasons (e.g., budget cuts, external historical events, new technologies, new institutional values, new student pressures, etc.), and they can remind us to avoid bad ideas whose cautionary tales are easily forgotten. These contextual, individual, vertical histories benefit both Composition historians and practicing WPAs. These histories can reveal just how influential individuals were to how composition pedagogies changed over time, demystifying the assumption that programs have always changed for the sake of pedagogical progress or whole cloth adaptations to higher education evolutions.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGIES

This chapter will explain my methodological decisions when narrating the history of IAC's composition program. Foremost, I need to define what counts as a WPA because I am using a term that administrators did not use themselves and which WPAs have traditionally limited to administrators during and after the 1970s. Next, I describe my archival methods, which includes an overview of my visits to the archives, the types of documents I examined, and the secondary sources that I used to support my primary materials. Finally, I describe several limitations on the methods that I used.

2. 1. Introducing the WPA as a lens of analysis

2. 1. 1. Recognizing the WPA by definition: Anachronism or unnecessary distinction?

Methodology in historical work influences the conclusions one is likely to find, and the choice to look at WPAs is both theoretical and methodological. The term "writing program administrator" did not become a *de facto* term until the 1970s, and my choice to investigate WPAs in the late 1800s and early 1900s applies an anachronistic term to administrative positions that did not use that name for themselves in the past (Bishop, 1987; Heckathorn, 1999, 2004; McLeod, 2007). Collaborative administrators and educators throughout the 1970s unified for WPA professionalization, and their work culminated in the founding of the Council of Writing Program Administrators in 1976 and the first issues of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* the following year. Thus, 1976 is an easy place to say WPA was, as a profession, began.

Historians who drew the line at 1976 have argued that there exists a dichotomy between the "task" of what WPAs do rather than the WPA "position" title (McLeod, 2007, p. 8; Schwalm, 2002). In other words, faculty or staff asked to do the work of WPAs as part of their service allocation are doing a task; those hired into a specific administrative role whose main purpose is

to do WPA work qualify as holding a position. Part of this distinction is based on a false estimation of the amount of work that administrators did in the early 1900s to direct composition programs. Corbett (1993), for instance, wrote that “I suspect that in the 1920s and 1930s, and the first half of the 1940s the composition program was such a relatively small operation in our colleges and universities that [...] some factotum in the department could run the program out of his or her back pocket” (p. 63). Since no histories about WPAs had been written, he inferred about WPA history from the histories of composition told from within the large universities, and he relied on what he called “oral histories,” or the lore he and other post-WWII students remembered of their FYC experience. Based on his investigations, “some of the larger tax-supported universities may have had some faculty member appointed specially to direct the writing program, but I have no evidence, either written or oral, that such was the case” (p. 64). Since virtually no one held the job title of “Writing Program Administrator” before the 1976 professionalization, in its strongest sense, the task or position distinction has led to the claim that there simply weren’t WPAs before World War II (Ritter, 2018).

The distinction between task and position became essential to those battling for WPA professionalization and labor rights in the 1970s, but now that the battle is largely won, the grounds for another “us” versus “them” separation between past administrators and current, professional administrators can be reconsidered. There *were* titled, administrative positions of FYC before World War II who did WPA tasks, just not using the *term* Writing Program Administrator. The distinction between task and position holds little value as a meaningful way to separate the past from the present. For example, well before the WPA professionalization in the 1970s, Iowa State instructor Fred Lorch was titled the “Director of Freshman English” before he became head of the English and Speech department in 1942, and he passed his Director of

Freshman English title to Albert Walker (Information Service, 1942). What is a “Director of Freshman English” but a euphemism for a FYC WPA? And, in the present moment, small institutions commonly blur position titles with position tasks, such as the prevalence of writing center directors who develop, assess, and administer writing programs (Gladstein & Regaignon, 2012). Small schools can establish hybrid positions that fully encompass WPA tasks while maintaining other duties on campus. Such manageable hybrid positions do not carry the same labor rights issues that spurred the 1970s professionalization efforts at larger institutions. Boiling the whole debate to its essences, L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo (2004) argued that “[r]ecognized or ignored, titled or untitled, appreciated or unappreciated, paid or unpaid—someone classified students, assigned teachers, worried about standards, and did all the other administrative tasks inherent to writing programs. Someone, much earlier than 1976, functioned as a WPA” (pp. xviii–xix). Other historians have introduced more nuance to the task versus position conversation.

One alternative has been to expand the WPA definition to the intellectual work of the position instead of focusing on the position title. Heckathorn (2004) identified two eras of WPA work that existed before our current conception of WPAs. First, she argued for an Early Era, which spanned 1940 until 1963. This era was demarcated by the founding of *College English* in 1939 and *College Composition and Communication* in 1950, each of which published articles that tangentially discussed administrative elements of composition while mainly focusing on composition pedagogies. Corbett (1993) agreed that WPAs probably began in this era, popping up because of the enrollments of G. I. Bill veterans returning to school. WPAs in the Early Era held titles, though used sporadically, that usually did not indicate their administrative roles, such as “Professor of English.” No conference or organization or program offered training or best

practices; many of the WPAs of the Early Era discussed workload issues, but they only slowly began to recognize each other across institutional boundaries. The era ended with an important meeting of English department chairs to establish new WPA guidelines (p. 200). Heckathorn's (2004) second era of WPAs began in 1964 and ended in 1979, which she called the Transitional Era. She noted that three more journals began in this period — *Research in Teaching of English* in 1970, *Freshman English News* in 1972, and *Journal of Basic Writing* in 1975, culminating in the *WPA: Writing Program Administration* in 1976. Universities posted job openings that specifically hired for WPA work, local and national conferences held standing meetings for WPA topics, and more frequently administrative duties included supervising and training graduate student labor. Though few of these Transitional Era WPAs were tenured because of their administrative duties, many of them began receiving compensation for their work rather than its previous status as service. Finally, near the end of the 1970s, WPAs began to research and publish beyond conferences; Heckathorn's (2004) Transitional Era ends not when *WPA: Writing Program Administration* began in 1977 but when it became a refereed journal in 1979 (p. 206). From the modern perspective of research institutions and publishing as the route to professional status, Heckathorn's historical categories align with developments in the intellectual work of WPAs.

Beginning the Early Era at 1939, however, omits many potential WPA forebearers. Heckathorn's (2004) categories, delineated by disciplinary journals, do not consider other elements of the WPA identity, or what Paine (1999) called the social and material realities of these positions, such as the interpersonal networks, the influences of institutions on WPA work, and the rapidly changing higher education environment that these administrators found themselves within. One example of an overlooked WPA is Ed Hopkins at the University of

Kansas, who taught from 1889 to 1937. Popken (2004a, 2004b) found that Hopkins was a beleaguered, nervous, and overworked instructor of many classes in Kansas's English department, but he specialized in freshman composition and came to administer it throughout his career. Early on, he handled all the freshman students himself; "Hopkins had five courses for Fall 1890—five preparations, including about 120 writing students" (Popken, 2004b, p. 10). By 1901, he had an instructor underneath him, and by 1925, he directed a composition program with 12 instructors (Popken, 2004a, p. 635). In 1904, he published a text to unify his instructors across sections, titled *Handbook on the Teaching of English*, in which he argued for personal attention to all students rather than instructing through the university's preferred method, the lecture.

Hopkins is best known for his advocacy for labor rights for composition instructors across the United States. He failed year after year to convince his own president that composition instructors, due to the nature of their pedagogies, could not be saddled with the same course loads and number of students as other instructors. Losing battles at his own institution, he began a crusade from 1909 to 1923 to improve labor rights for all composition instructors. He began a committee to survey composition teachers' labor and teaching loads through the Modern Language Association in 1909, parlayed it into a larger committee with the newly formed National Council of Teachers of English in 1911, announced his committee's preliminary findings in 1913, and finally published his findings in the 1923 *The Labor and Cost of the Teaching of English in Colleges and Secondary Schools* (Hopkins, 1923).

Several elements from Hopkins's work provide evidence for WPAs earlier than 1939: the members of Hopkins's MLA and NCTE committees were directing FYC at their institutions, including one of the subjects of this history, Alvin Noble. Further, professional publication outlets were available to WPAs to discuss WPA concerns, such as the *English Journal*, whose

inaugural issue began with Hopkins's (1912a) article "Can good composition teaching be done under present conditions?" Finally, these early administrators held positions *above* other instructors, coordinated the curriculum, trained new staff in teaching methods, managed budgets and salaries, and reported to stakeholders regarding the writing program. As Purdy (1986) was probably correct to acknowledge, many WPAs at the beginning of the twentieth century were "rank amateurs" (p. 793). Yet, wasn't everyone an administrative amateur when colleges between 1890 and 1910 doubled in size, and by 1920 had nearly doubled again (McLeod, 2007, p. 27)? Being the first to manage the tasks of a writing program administrator, even if poorly (to borrow Purdy's polemical outlook), does not mean they did not earn our estimation of them as WPAs. The tasks of the WPA, then, demark the WPA far better than the job title alone.

So, what are the tasks of a WPA? Wendy Bishop's (1987) articulation of the WPA's tasks remains quite useful (McLeod, 2007; Ward & Carpenter, 2002). To be considered a WPA, one should be largely responsible for placing students and keeping records, developing the writing teachers (hiring instructors, training TAs, holding faculty development for non-English department WAC teachers, etc.), assessing the program and communicating these assessments to higher administrators, and developing curricula. As I discuss in Chapter 5, Alvin Noble met these requirements better than his predecessors; though they ran a writing program, the professors before 1898 did not delegate the program to other instructors, train other instructors, or assess the writing program. Beyond these tasks, however, many aspects of a WPA's job are entirely context-dependent, such as the specific definition of a "program" or even what constitutes "writing" (McLeod, 2007; Schwalm, 2002).

I followed the tasks of a WPA to guide my archival research. This decision may have led me into the historical sin of "presentism," what McLeod (2007) calls judging the past by the

standards of the present. However, I think operationalizing a WPA based on their tasks is a more robust way of determining who counts as a WPA, both in the present and in the past. When I dove into the past and searched for WPAs, Bishop's (1987) tasks helped differentiate WPAs from non-administrative teachers and non-teaching English department chairs, which, at least at Iowa State, became separate titles and positions, further demonstrating the utility of investigating the past based on WPA tasks and not WPA titles. By finding evidence of these tasks in the early 1900s, the WPA moves beyond a professionalized identity of the 1970s and becomes a relatable figure to WPAs in the present.

2. 2. Archival methodologies

As L'Eplattenier (2009) argued, one of the most important roles of revisionist historians is to correct Composition's generalizations, such as the claims that current-traditional pedagogy dominated all colleges from 1900 to 1950 or that all colleges followed Harvard's FYC lead from 1870 onward. The chief corrective tool of revisionist histories since the early 2000s has been archival methods. Archival research in Composition has gained some momentum in recent years, and each published work calls for more (Clary-Lemon, 2014; Derroda, 1995; Donahue & Moon, 2007; Gaillet & Horner, 2010; B. E. L'Eplattenier, 2009; Ramsey et al., 2010). Archival investigations have been especially important to those currently recovering minoritized groups for inclusion in the histories of Composition (Cifor & Rawson, 2022; Rawlins & Wilson, 2014; VanHaitsma, 2019, 2020, 2021). However, composition and rhetoric archival researchers often lament that archivists do not value the same artifacts that they do. Student papers, syllabi, departmental memos, and teaching notes are rarely preserved or catalogued, compositionists argue, because this work represents a low status enterprise (compared to, say, the materials of a Nobel Laureate or an alumnus president). As such, the archives present many challenges to

Composition scholars who embark on archival investigations, and in this section, I discuss the material and methodological considerations that influenced what materials I used and how I supported my archival work with other sources.

Finding out what an archive holds requires visiting an archive; assumptions can be misleading, even if based on the archive's own finding aids. Some barriers, such as material availability, have less to do with archivists devaluing composition materials and more to do with what the donors valued. The traditional view that archivists do not care about composition artifacts was complicated by Morris and Rose (2010). Morris was a composition scholar and Rose was an archivist, and their article described how they processed a new donation. They argued that what is considered valuable by archivists depends on many factors, the most important of which being what the original donor included, not necessarily the status of the individual or the status of the materials. My own experience with Iowa State's archives has born this out. Alvin Noble (taught at Iowa State 1898 to 1936) kept all materials related to his English department labor struggles whereas Fred Lorch (who taught at Iowa State from 1921 to 1964) kept only materials related to his research and lectures on Mark Twain. Both served long terms as heads of the English department, and both taught decades of composition and literature courses, yet their archived donations depict entirely different *and* insufficient stories, largely because of what each man (or the department or their families) decided to donate. The archivists at Iowa State kept both donations, regardless of the status of the materials. Per policy, they only discarded published materials that existed elsewhere, such as clean, unannotated journal articles.

Finally, when exploring a gap in the material record, it is best to assume ignorance rather than malice. Compositionists find value in looking at old student writing and instructor feedback on that writing, and finding such materials can be precious. However, Henry (1928), surveying

Midwestern colleges and universities in the 1920s, asked WPAs if their program returned or destroyed student writing at the end of the year. Sixteen of his respondents destroyed them, including Iowa State (p. 303). Thus, due to a departmental policy, an archival researcher at Iowa State will not find student writing at certain periods through no fault of the archivists or instructors. The status of compositionists or student writing has nothing to do with this material absence.

But, a common trap for archival researchers is over-reliance on archival artifacts, or what Biesecker (2006) described as a complacency about the historicity of the archives. As Biesecker (2006) wrote, “history is what is *not* in the archive, *not* in any archive, *not* even in all the archives added together” (p. 127). History is what is written. An archive is merely a curated repository, not a material representation of the past (Biesecker, 2006; Clary-Lemon, 2014; Gaillet, 2012; McKee & Porter, 2012). A historian’s claim, if it is built on archival evidence, must recognize the fact that an archive is a mediated, selected space, and this fact is where all archival historiographers begin their methodological critiques: why were the materials donated or collected for the archive? What was the chain of custody (or, in archival terminology, the provenance) from the originator to the archive? How does the archive reflect the original order of the donation? To what extent has the archivist(s) processed the materials? However, once these methodological questions are addressed, the larger question then becomes, “so what?” For scholars like Biesecker (2006), history can never overcome the mediations that influenced an artifact’s inclusion in an archive. She wrote that, “[o]ddly compelling, indeed, [...] is the suggestions that historical work today follows the formula of fetishistic disavowal: ‘I know very well that the archive is not the space of referential plentitude, but still . . .’” (sic, p. 126).

Building on Derrida's critiques of the archives, Biesecker (2006) reminded historians that the archival artifact is a trace of the past, not the past itself.

The curated nature of archives works against Composition work — limiting what can be known from the archives — which is why I commit to (1) **cross-referencing**, (2) **validating archival artifacts externally**, and (3) **procedural transparency**.

Katherine Tirabassi (2010) described archival cross-referencing as “the practice of searching across documents for contextual traces that clarify an archival document's rhetorical situation or that confirm, corroborate, clarify, or contradict a fact or point cited in a given document” (p. 171). This largely refers to cross-referencing *within* an archived collection. As Richard Enos (2002) wrote, “To engage in rhetorical archaeology we must reconstruct not only the discourse and the cultural context but also the mentalities that are indigenous to the period” (p. 70).

For example, one document in the Department of English is a handwritten list by Alvin Noble, titled, “Teachers who have remained in the English department three years or more” (Noble, 1929b). See Figure 2.1. On its face, it seems to be a partial attempt to track who taught from 1898 to 1929, the year reflecting his tenure as head of the department. It is unclear, however, whether the three-year mark is an indication of success or despair to Noble. Cross-referencing this document with others enlivens the rhetorical situation of the original.

Teachers who have ~~stayed~~ remained
in the English department three years
or more. (1)

A. B. Noble	'98 —	31 years
Bessie B. Larrabee	'98-'08	Ten years.
Eda S. S. Simonsen	'99-1901	2 years
Elizabeth Maclean	'99-1915	16 "
Helen G. Reed	1900-1905	5 "
Ada J. Miller	1901-1904	3 "
Rose Abel.	1903-06	3 "
Elizabeth Moore	1904-14	10 "
Dora G. Tompkins	1905- 14	24 "
Julia Ramsey Vaulx	1905-1914	9 "
W. R. Raymond	1907- 1907	23 "
Ruth B. Safford	1908 —	21 "
Esther L. Cooper	1909 —	20 "
J. E. Brown	1910 - '20	10 "
Anna Maud Earhart	1912 - '16	4 "
Nabel Fleming	1912 —	17 "
A. Starbuck	1913 —	16 "
L. B. Greenfield	1914 - '18	4 "
J. H. Atkinson	1914 —	15 "
Maurice Wexen	1914 - '18	4 "
Jessie Mac Arthur	1914 —	15 "
(?) Yaulz, Mrs. Edwin S	1914 - '18	4 "
J. L. Eason	1915 - '19	4 "
Elizabeth Fuller	1916 —	18 "
W. G. B. Carson	1916 - '19	3 "
Julius V. Kubioka	1918 - '22	4 "
Maud McCornick	1918 —	11 "
Helen S. Larson	1918 - '21	3 "
Mrs. Jennie ^{Fedson} Kirkman	1918 —	11 "
(?) Mildred Semmons	1919 - '22	3 "
P. J. H. Lange	1920 - 27	7 "
Karl Brown	1920 - '23	3 "

Figure 2.1. The first page of Alvin Noble's c.1929 attempt to track the number of teachers who have stayed at Iowa State three years or more. (Noble, 1929b)

In a draft of what appears to be a draft of his resignation announcement, he cited some of his data from these data, writing afterward that he:

sought to find well-trained, earnest, capable teachers and to give to each teacher no more students than he could handle successfully. One indication of the results attained is this statement of Mr. P. H. Lange, who, while studying for the doctor's degree at the University of Chicago last year, wrote as follows:" (Noble, 1929a, p. 3)

What did Lange say? We do not know. This is a partial artifact of a larger story. His letter, after the colon of "follows:", left a half-page space blank, supposedly left for someone to paste on Lange's supportive comment. The rest of the announcement was probably collated by a secretary; we do not have that official announcement.

The retirement announcement paints a positive picture of the 1929 list of instructors in Figure 2.1. Three years at Iowa State can be viewed as a success. However, other surrounding documents in Noble's folder show many other attempts to quantify or qualify the labor, working conditions, and turnover in teaching staff that he experienced in his 31 years. I discuss these at length in Chapter 5. But for now, suffice to say that many of these documents were pleas for help. Unlike any other department head in the annual reports, Noble produced mixed methods arguments to the presidents for more financial support for composition instruction. The turnover of his instructors grew more and more cumbersome to administer, especially since Noble started in 1898 with only two instructors under him and ended with 22 full-time instructors and five part-time instructors. He quoted his own research on the average tenure of instructors, though, adding to the cross-referencing stability of each artifact.

Taken as part of the larger context of where the 1929 list's traces can be felt, we cannot be sure if Noble meant that three years was a good thing or a bad thing. In fact, it could just have easily been both depending on the circumstances. Noble could have chosen a three-year mark as a sign of success to some audiences and as a reason for more institutional support to other audiences. Instead of viewing artifacts like these as "striking gold," Kenneth Lindblom (Ramsey et al., 2010) called historians to view important artifacts as "spinning gold from old straw," meaning that historians should build thorough context from the surrounding archival material to better understand the context and relevance of documents (p. 250). It should not be surprising, then, that Lindblom (2010) recommended new archival researchers to "keep oneself from assuming a position too early in the process of study" (p. 252).

Cross-referencing leads naturally to the second tool, which is validating an archival artifact externally from the archive itself. Nan Johnson (2002; Ramsey et al., 2010) perused antique stores and used bookstores all over Ohio to complement her archival work for *Gender and Rhetorical Space*, Neal Lerner (2001; Ramsey et al., 2010) visited old home addresses and utilized Freedom of Information Act requests to complete "Searching for Robert Moore"; Robin Varnum (1996) interviewed past students, colleagues, and administrators, and she wrote letters to her subject, all to flesh out the Theodore Baird she presents in *Fencing with Words*. An archive's limitations need to only limit the archive, not the historian. Knowing that the archive is incomplete, the historian holds the archive at a distance; cross-referencing and externally validating enriches and strengthens the narrative.

To give an example from my work on IAC's early composition instruction, I found a draft of a eulogy written by W. H. Wynn, who was professor of English, literature, and history from 1872 to 1900, for President Welch, who died in 1889. Wynn's (1889) draft included large

sections referring to Welch's battles to retain the humanities within an agricultural and mechanical college. These sections were also crossed out in another pen, and another hand wrote the words "omit" next to these sections. Much could be made of an editor's commands to omit politics from a eulogy. In particular, Wynn made a claim about an incident in 1883: "Finally, in '83, upon some such trumpery charge of 'drifting away,' the grand old man was removed from his place, and the sad thing about is, we have to put the bitter emphasis on that word removed" (Wynn, 1889, pp. 17–18). To externally validate my interpretation of these edits, mitigate Wynn's personal editorialization of these events, and understand what exactly Wynn was referring to, I had to find many documents to surround this source, such as secondary histories of the school, student newspaper articles, and even the final version of Wynn's eulogy to confirm what had or had not been omitted. I discuss this incident, Welch's removal from IAC's presidency in 1883, in Chapter 4.

External validation can happen like the above, which is from the archives outward to external sources, but I also found that the archives could serve to externally validate claims from the outside about events in IAC's past. Ross's (1942a) general history mentioned a legislative investigation into IAC's curricular practices based on farmer group (granger) pressure. I tracked down the 800-page deposition. The document consists of transcript interviews with IAC instructors about what they taught, why they taught the way they did, and their opinions on the curriculum. However, to understand why this document existed, I began reading more about land-grant history, eventually finding Sorber's (2018) *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt*, a text which challenges Ross's (1942b, 1942a) thesis that land-grant colleges maintained a harmonious relationship with their farming constituents. Sorber's (2018) text revealed several other granger movements across land-grant institutions to overthrow these colleges, and the

original report (Iowa General Assembly, 1874) took on new yet complicated importance. To externally validate, then, means to never rely wholly on a single artifact without locating additional context. The archival work I have done is externally validated by many of the published composition histories, but I have also engaged with higher education history, local histories, and textbooks, and more to validate archival findings.

In sum, archival work needs to be scaffolded with many more sources than those available strictly in the archives to tell an ethical, archive-based history (McKee & Porter, 2012). However, a final ethic not often discussed yet often implied in archival scholarship is procedural transparency. For scholars to build on, critique, revise, or subvert my history, I want to share at least enough of my investigative procedures to reveal what ground I attempted to cover, including my limitations and procedural boundaries. Throughout my dissertation, I've tried to be transparent in my methodologies by citing previously unknown archival artifacts for future scholars to revisit, as well as sources that cross-reference and externally validate these archival artifacts. The ethos of citations, however, can imply a totality and authorization of my telling as exhaustive, as *the* history (Biesecker, 2006; Octalog, 1988) that I do not seek to tell. Therefore, in addition to the references seen throughout my text, in the following section, I want to describe what archives I utilized and what documents I investigated by narrating my research journey.

2. 2. 1. Procedural transparency: The archives and documents used in this dissertation

Archival work is messy, despite the efforts that archivists have made to make finding aids and digitized collections precise and accessible. The work is also imprecise and uncertain, meaning every archive, every box, and every folder contains different fragments of the past. For a researcher, it takes time to learn what an institution has collected about itself and how those topics were cataloged and organized. After my graduate coursework, I brought many assumptions from Composition and Rhetoric scholarship about where subjects *should* be located

and how they *should* be organized, but it took me months of visits to unlearn many of those assumptions. For instance, in my mind, everything of or related to the English department should have existed in the Department of English records (RS 13/10). I knew very little about what reports were generated in the 1800s and early 1900s, such as annual reports or curricular descriptions, nor did I know where they were located. To best explain my methodological choices about which texts I used in this history, I need to narrate my journey from broad ignorance to relative familiarity.

My first visit to Iowa State's Special Collections and University Archives was in October of 2021. Throughout October and November of 2021, I visited ISU's reading room multiple times per week, focusing solely on the files located in the Department of English records (RS 13/10). These records contain nearly 70 document boxes (each of which may contain a dozen or so folders on different subjects), but most of this archival collection relate to people and programs after 1970. I began with the earliest dated records and tried to find any and all references to specific composition teaching practices. At the time, I was most interested in finding examples of teaching practices that differed from known pedagogical strategies. However, the Iowa State archives are not organized as Composition Studies organizes its histories; the archives were organized by people, not by pedagogical subjects, like course descriptions, textbooks, syllabi, or student papers. As such, I came to see what was valuable to the administrators and instructors in the English Department, inasmuch as one can assume what remained in the archives reflects in any way the values of the people themselves. Occasionally an instructor would keep some student papers in a file, but the larger conclusion I came to after this first visit was that the Department of English records were not a systematic collection of pedagogical artifacts, especially for historical materials before 1970. One administrator, Alvin

Noble, stood out, however, because he kept fairly detailed notes on the composition program and his arguments with the administration for better funding. This first visit helped me chart the general limitations of the English department records, but I still did not understand much about the program based on the scant records. Looking back on my notes and hypotheses about the program from this time, almost all my conclusions about the program were erroneous.

The next time I visited the archives was summer of 2022, where I spent most of June and July visiting the special collections. I had taken the position as Writing Center Director at Simpson College in January of 2022, which limited my access to the archives. Before the summer visit, I spent my evenings and weekends reading much more into higher education history (Kliebard, 2004; Lucas, 2006; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965) and Iowa State history (Goedeken, 1979, 2017; Ross, 1942a), and I had begun to understand the importance of presidents in the early days of IAC. On my summer visit, I pulled the thread of Alvin Noble, who arrived in 1898, by examining the files of the presidents who overlapped with Noble, as well as the course catalogs related to Noble's tenure. It was during these months that I discovered IAC's annual and biennial reports, specifically the annual reports of the instructors to the president and the biennial reports of the president to the Board of Trustees. These reports were hundreds and hundreds of pages each, and finding specific references to the English composition program took a great deal of time. The time was worth it; the English department came alive in these reports. When reporting to the presidents, department heads stated their material and financial needs, their staffing concerns, and their estimations of the students in their courses. Very rarely did these reports contain anything about the pedagogies or educational theories, though. The official annual and biennial course catalogs, however, *did* contain pedagogical and theoretical

information in the forms of student-facing course descriptions. I gathered most of my primary materials on the years 1898 to 1929 over this summer visit.

As my duties at Simpson began again in Fall of 2022, I began investigating the materials in the digital archives, largely out of necessity because of my limited daytime access to Iowa State's special collections. My notion of "archive" also expanded during this time, as well as my methodological considerations, and I found myself part of the contemporary movements toward the digital humanities ("Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities," 2015). Through the work of the HathiTrust Digital Library and Iowa State's partnership to their services, I was able to access digitized versions of old documents from libraries across the United States. Some of the most important documents in this dissertation were digitized documents, such as the 1874 "Report of the Joint Committee [...] of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm," discussed in length in Chapter 4, and general registers and school catalogs from other institutions, such as records of Adonijah Welch's relationship to the Michigan Agricultural College. Throughout 2022, I used to digital archives both from Iowa State's digital collections and HathiTrust to find primary artifacts that my secondary histories referenced. I found speeches, newspaper articles, legislative documents, textbooks, and course catalogs that related to IAC's composition instruction, administrative rationale for the composition curricula, and perspectives from students and local stakeholders on the composition curricula. These documents strained my methodological focus; I at times had to follow documents that only tangentially related to IAC's English department. Many of these artifacts, while providing me with context of IAC, are not referenced in this history.

As I began writing the dissertation in October of 2022, I learned which archival artifacts could serve as foundational documents (course catalogs and annual and biennial reports, along

with secondary histories) and which artifacts could give context and color to the history (personal correspondence, reports, student publications, and speeches). For the first time, I appreciated what the phrase “writing to learn” meant. I wrote drafts as if I were painting: a wash of background facts, some chronological sketches to establish sub-sections, and many, many passes over sections as I moved from the foundational sources to the more colorful details. I also learned how many gaps in knowledge I had, and I created a list of fact checking artifacts that I needed to find in Iowa State’s archives. One of the lenses of analysis I had not appreciated was land-grant college history and historiography. I spent much of the winter between 2022 and 2023 reading articles and books on land-grant colleges, most of which soothed my dissatisfaction at the general higher education histories that neglected the Midwest (Eddy, 1957; Edmond, 1978; Geiger, 1986, 2000; Geiger & Sorber, 2013; Ross, 1942b; Sorber, 2018).

My final trip to the Iowa State Special Collections took place throughout May 2023, primarily focused on fact checking areas where I knew I was assuming rather than knowing about IAC’s past. I also had more interest in the larger administrative politics of the institution than I had in my earlier visits, so I returned to the Alvin Noble era of 1898 to 1929 to find how IAC compared to other land-grant institutions of the time. I visited the archives for three weeks, around six hours per day, reading through niches of the administration that I had not known existed. Near the end of May, I discovered fewer useful artifacts per hour. Either I discovered materials that duplicated evidence I already had, or I poured through box after box in areas I knew would not contain materials relevant to this dissertation. Unless I was going to begin investigating areas in my limitations section, I felt that I had reached archival saturation. I last visited the archives on May 18, 2023.

2. 3. Limitations and warnings

Two methodological choices created large gaps in my history. First, I did not cross-reference local politics by finding the debaters' main organs of discussion: newspaper articles. The second is closely related: I accepted other historians' biases regarding grangers. As chapter 4 shows, many curricular changes occurred because of local politics, such as the 1873 ousting of three problematic professors, the 1883 ousting of President Welch, and the 1890 Stock Breeders' Association coup. In each case, farming activists — grangers — voiced their opinions on IAC's curriculum through local press, such as the *Iowa Homestead*. These newspapers were not accessible to me while I worked at Simpson, and I could not justify the return on investment to track all these arguments down (many of them written anonymously across months of weekly publications). They *may* have contained more specific references to composition and rhetoric pedagogies, but more likely I would have seen a clearer articulation of the purpose for the agricultural college. These debates were summarized by secondary historians, especially Ross (1942a) and Goedecken (1979, 2017), and I relied on them unless I felt I needed to see a quotation in context.

Unfortunately, this decision has consequences. If one reads about the grange from academic historians, it becomes immediately apparent that those *within* the higher education context to not think highly of the grangers. Historians view grangers as a populist problem, an inconvenient annoyance that distracted from the manifest destiny of land-grant colleges as the democratic saviors of the industrial classes. The hypocrisy is that grangers *were the industrial classes*. The very population the land-grant colleges were founded to support have been stigmatized by higher education historians. An additional problem is that granger histories do exist (Nordin, 1974). They share historicist problems that many early land-grant college histories exhibit: they were written to praise the grangers. Revisionist histories in land-grant colleges have

corrected many of the adulatory earlier histories, but I did not pursue the granger revisionists in this history due to time constraints. Both limitations should be resolved in future versions of this historical work. It would be interesting to apply a stronger labor and class-based analysis of how granger political activism, directed at English departments, may complicate critiques that later composition historians have used to dismiss composition programs that trained students for remedial or industrial ends (Berlin, 1984, 1987, 1988; Crowley, 1998). These concerns are present even in today's composition programs; students have not ceased attending college to secure a job or arriving differently prepared from previous cohorts of students. WPAs still need to balance their concerns with rhetoricians' predilections against capitalist, neoliberal instructional pedagogies.

One of the larger, general warnings against viewing this history as *the* history of Iowa State University's composition origins is the sheer scale of materials spread throughout Iowa State's archives, digital archives, and early composition and rhetoric publications. Across seas of text, an archival investigator will find no references to composition, English, or rhetoric. For example, a discovery I nearly missed was Alvin Noble's involvement in the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), especially his service on Ed Hopkins's labor rights committee in the early 1900s. Noble is not named in secondary sources on Hopkins (Popken, 2004a, 2004b). As discussed above, many histories of composition argue that WPAs and instructors did not professionalize before 1940; the organizational efforts of NCTE suggests otherwise. Noble began designing his annual reports to the president in with the mixed methodologies of the Hopkins committee; these starkly contrasted with Doolittle's earlier and failed efforts at persuading the president for more resources. Hopkins's influence appears inconsequential according to some histories of early compositionists (Connors, 1990; Purdy, 1986), but I located a biennial report

from 1914 where the interim president, Ed Stanton, cited Noble's summary of the Hopkins labor report, which led to more composition instruction staff and better pay (discussed at length in Chapter 5). These professional networks were not as visible nor as well documented as they are today, but they existed, and they established the foundations for movements decades later. More archival investigations of institutions need to take place across the country to find similar examples of pre-professionalized networks. But the warning remains: buried under detritus of a century of administrative bloat, the artifacts that explain the WPA's relationship to their institution and other scholars are difficult to find and easy to miss. Based on the numerous surprise findings I encountered in this work, rather than being confident that I found "the history" of IAC, I feel the opposite. I certainly overlooked many valuable artifacts by using the lenses of historical analysis that I preferred, but I can attest that other historians will find no dearth of material to build on, critique, and revise what I present in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3. THE PEDAGOGICAL LANDSCAPE FROM WHICH IOWA STATE GREW

To understand an organism, you observe the ecosystem that fostered its growth. Starting at the founding of Iowa Agricultural College (IAC) would be a mistake, for its early founders settled themselves on the prairie betwixt and between several curricular revolutions, none of which were settled into the easy distinctions of “liberal arts college” or “current-traditional rhetoric” that we can see today. In this chapter, I abbreviate both higher education’s and Composition’s histories, winnowing out the many *could have beens* that sprouted into other institutions across the country in order to explain what occurred at IAC.

First, this chapter corrects the erroneous oversimplifications between the “old college” and the 1870s research university. By doing so, I reveal how the progress in the old colleges supported the new universities and how the new universities relied heavily on the old colleges for their curricula. These broad movements from the early 1800s’ liberal arts colleges are often ignored to highlight the German university model, but I argue that even this narrative of “liberal arts versus German university” is too broad. Relevant elements of Chapter 1’s historiographies weave in and out of Chapter 3: this chapter expands on why our common conceptions of land-grant history, which is already so distinct from liberal arts and university histories, is insufficient; I argue that Iowa’s land-grant emergence requires attention on its own. As I narrow each movement is to IAC’s context, I rearticulate what other scholars already know about the composition curriculum in those eras and institutional models. The end of this chapter sets the stage for IAC’s founding. This contextual background, this interweaving of higher-education history and composition history, matters to a WPA history because it establishes the potency of the IAC land-grant context: public pressure groups, administrative whims, and student demographics fundamentally altered composition practices at land-grant colleges in ways that

other institutions did not face, and these influences drastically differentiate each land-grant from the others.

By the early 1850s, higher education in America had already confronted three broad revolutions since its colonial roots. First, the public versus private institutional divide was established. This divide had long-lasting impacts on higher education, continuing to the present day. In 1816, New Hampshire legislators attempted to impose a state-appointed board of trustees and president onto Dartmouth University, and, in 1819, the Supreme Court ruled in *Dartmouth v. Woodward* that private institutions were not subject to state control (Gladstein & Regaignon, 2012). Where private institutions would be beholden to donors and student tuitions, state institutions began their sometimes supportive, sometimes tumultuous relationships with their public benefactors. The divides between states and localities, as well as between public and private institutions, were, of course, messy and uncertain. For instance, legislatures promised a certain contribution if the college could match the state's donation with a private donor. This match was a tall ask — too tall for many. For example, at Gardiner Lyceum, a vocational college in Maine, its namesake benefactor, Robert Gardiner, donated a tract of land but squandered his wealth and could not match Maine's public contribution of \$2,000. Maine refused to become the sole patron of the college, and it closed in 1832, the same year it was chartered (Sorber, 2018, p. 27). Eccentric and unreliable businessmen like these as often shuttered a college's doors as did low enrollments.

Whoever financially supported the institutions heavily influenced curricular decisions in both private and public institutions, and presidents at public institutions developed a politician's sensibility toward public opinion that effected real as well as superficial changes in the institutions (Veysey, 1965). Take, for instance, land-grant movement's federal purpose to

educate vocational students, which was a distinction between choosier, aristocratic institutions. Before the Civil War, all colleges were essentially what we consider small liberal arts colleges today (Lucas, 2006; Rudolph, 1990), but as institutional missions shifted between private and public charters, small colleges chose to remain small whereas public institutions were obligated to accept all incoming students. To maintain funding and remain well-regarded by their constituencies, these colleges created elaborate academy, or preparatory, schools, parallel curriculum for noncollegiate and non-degree-seeking candidates, and remedial courses for underprepared students. Of the many implications of the choice accommodate all applicants throughout the decades of booming enrollments to come, public institution instructors and administrators had to cope with developing multiple sections of the same classes, perpetual understaffing, and overfilled classrooms. Further, as will be discussed below, land-grant colleges faced unique pressures from agricultural interest groups that the research universities more commonly featured in composition histories did not encounter. These interest groups lobbied for and won legislative sanctions against the land-grants' day-to-day methods and curricular content, and the end of this chapter explores several major events that reveal how little mediation there was between public opinion and the composition classroom before the WPA.

Second, the *purpose* of education was changing; the new nation had something to prove as both a democracy and as an economy. The colonial liberal arts tradition was, according to Kimball (1986), an "oratorical tradition" meant to pass wisdom and gentlemanly character from one generation of elites to the next. The old college was scantily attended; between one or two percent of white males enrolled in the colonial era (Sorber, 2018, p. 22). Harvard in 1771 graduated 63 people, and it wouldn't reach that high of a number again for another 40 years (Rudolph, 1990, p. 22). As Jacksonian democracy swept the 1830s, a fervor arose for broadly

educated young men and women (white, but for the first time poor as well as wealthy) to run a democracy. Coeducation, of course sputtering against systemic habits, gradually took hold, and women began attending for complex reasons and with diverse reception (Radke-Moss, 2008). Thus, educational reformers, journalists, politicians, industrialists, and special interest groups questioned the old colonial emphasis on aristocratic education for men studying to be doctors, lawyers, and clergymen. However, Jacksonian democracy carried with it an overt anti-intellectualism that treated all educational attainment as elitism (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). Instead of tradition, the byword for educational attainment became “utility” (Veysey, 1965).

From the early 1800s onward, nearly every educational reformer couched their pedagogical or curricular innovations in terms of democratic service and public utility. The old college had to rapidly refashion its aristocratic origins by arguing that what was good for democratic service was a broad education in the principles of all life’s domains. A new era of progressive educators wanted more direct, practical, and specialized training for democratic, which increasingly meant “economic,” service. The small college changed: higher education historians have more recently argued that Eastern liberal arts colleges maintained an aristocratic stance much longer than the Midwestern and Western small colleges, but by the 1840s these newer, rural colleges had not an aristocracy but a middle class to serve, and they stretched the liberal arts into practical, even vocational, territories far beyond their Eastern counterparts, earning the titles of “multipurpose colleges” (Sorber, 2018, pp. 24–25). Beyond these transformed multipurpose colleges were a slew of new school types preceding the land-grants, such as “scientific schools, lyceums, agriculture schools, and polytechnic institutions” (Sorber, 2018, p. 12). Regardless, by the Civil War, most educators viewed themselves as reformers, and they all wanted to educate everyday Americans, and depending on where the college stood in

America, they may have at least succeeded in educating the middle class. IAC emerged onto the higher education landscape with a refined, legislated sense of public duty, but that sense had been developing for decades before the Morrill Act.

Last, but perhaps most impactful on the long-term formation of the higher education in America, the curriculum changed to include science. Curricularly, the Enlightenment caught up to the liberal arts, and for the first time in human history, a fear grew (to culminate in Henry Adams's 1907 *Education*) that it was impossible to know everything; at least, if a student wanted to *know* something, that student would need to prefer some subjects over others. The scientific revolution in higher education occurred far earlier than is commonly believed, however, which meant that science was incorporated first into the liberal arts (Rudolph, 1990; Sorber, 2018). What was taught in the old *colonial* curriculum became irrelevant to post-Revolution industrial growth: the ever-expanding scientific and mathematic curriculum began imposing upon the traditional study of Greek and Roman classics, which meant a reduction in philosophy, history, literature, and Greek and Latin languages (Connors, 1982). Before the land-grants and universities embraced the German university model (discussed below), pioneering amateurs and liberal arts educators gleaned all they could from the generalist colleges in America, traveled to Scotland, England, Holland, and, as the 1800s wore on, Germany. They returned with sciences for the liberal arts colleges. Hosack at Columbia taught botany in 1792; Silliman at Yale taught natural sciences in 1801; Dandridge at Harvard taught natural history in 1804 (Sorber, 2018, Chapter 1). These were not men of research. The first revolution science instigated was not organizational (like the German university model) nor political (like the land-grant utilitarians). Scientific amateurs brought back new sciences to their teaching institutions. The first revolution was pedagogical.

Aristotelian Scholasticism dominated the colonial colleges. Advanced mathematics, budding social sciences, and the scientific method came to oppose colonial Scholasticism, which was the technique of using dialect and deduction to arrive what *ought* to be done or what *ought* to be true (Rudolph, 1990). Instead, induction was in: “A new spirit was arguing for a philosophy of experience, of experimental evidence, of ‘is’” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 31). Scholasticism trained statesmen, lawyers, and rhetoricians who debated in public forums, and this colonial liberal arts tradition has been dubbed the “oratorical tradition”; scholars have since called the scientific alternative the “philosophical tradition” (Herbst, 2004; Kimball, 1986). But the liberal arts could not contain the sciences. Curricular reformers and students wanted the chance to specialize in something, to “finish” one area of their education at the expense of others. Specialization was not the liberal arts way. For all its pioneering advances in bringing natural science to American higher education, the liberal arts would not specialize its faculty or its students like the German universities. When the land-grants arrived, the Morrill Act again put it in a somewhat constrained relationship between public universities and private colleges; land-grant benefactors did not want “fancy farmers” who knew nothing of agricultural practices (Lucas, 2006, p. 153), but they wanted “a place where a farmer's son or daughter can go [...] and get a liberal education in something besides plowing” (Goedeken, 1979, p. 120). The question of what to *do* with science and how to balance the rest of the curriculum around it perhaps best explains the chaos of educational reform after the Civil War.

These three revolutions — in public duty, in purpose, and in scientific curriculum — intertwined, but not without progressives and conservatives emerging at different colleges throughout this period. For the first part of this chapter, I discuss the conservative and progressive trends in higher education. The liberal arts and the specialized university are beaten

paths that Composition historians know well. IAC, as I argue, intentionally carved a middle path, initially barely distinguishable from the multipurpose liberal arts college and later indistinguishable from the university, but it developed a mission that contrasted it from its peers, and its composition program differed, too.

3. 1. Doubling down: Insulating the Liberal Arts from Change

Although intrepid in its experimental farm and bold agricultural curriculum, composition in the early years at IAC borrowed a great deal from the liberal arts college. The conservative perspective of higher education leading up to IAC's founding is represented by the famous Yale Report of 1828, which both haunted and influenced higher education for the decades leading up to the Civil War. In many ways, it still influences the liberal arts today; Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) argue that small liberal arts colleges remain heavily committed to the core arguments of the Yale Report, at least in the sense that a liberal arts education is meant to train students *how* to learn instead of instilling a deep knowledge of a profession's or discipline's contents (p. 6). Educational leaders throughout the 1800s repeated and amplified the Yale Report's arguments, and educational progressives began to substitute the Report's arguments for the "old college" that they were progressing past. Harvard, in the 1870s under Charles Eliot, built an institution in radical opposition to the old college ideal; Johns Hopkins in 1876 deliberately rejected the notion of undergraduate education, which was the staple of the liberal arts (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). On the prairie, at IAC's little farm and schoolhouse, however, earnest educators, desperate to prove an agricultural and mechanical education could be both rigorous and practical, pilfered from the old college from 1869 to 1898, especially where the humanities were concerned. IAC leaders, however, did not replicate the liberal arts college. It is important to understand the curriculum and pedagogies of the liberal arts to recognize how IAC's composition curriculum differed from the old college model. In this section, I review the core

arguments of the Yale Report of 1828, the theory of mind that it proselytized, the role Latin and Greek played on composition instruction, and the liberal art's prescribed curriculum.

The Yale Report of 1828 defended the teaching of Latin and Greek, subjects which came to symbolize the impotence of the college program to the public and competing institutions. Educational leaders at Yale created an internal committee to survey its faculty on their opinions regarding classical language education, but the report became a full-throated defense of its entire curricular system. The writers of the Yale Report, though recognizing themselves as part of an older historical tradition, rejected the accusation that “the course of public instruction remains, after the lapse of two centuries, nearly the same” (Sillman, 1829, p. 337). From 1714 until 1828, the report argued that many changes were made at Yale, notably the inclusion of contemporary sciences.

Herbst (2004), reviewing the historical context and impact of the Yale Report, affirmed that Yale's was not reactionary conservatism. The Yale Report did not argue for the liberal arts merely on the basis of received wisdom and tradition for tradition's sake, as so many of its opponents claimed. Instead, the Yale Report argued that training in the classics was an education of intellectual habits and the underlying principles of core knowledge areas. Yale considered its educational initiatives progressive and innovative. If the new country wanted educated leaders and businessmen, it would need to be broadly and morally educated, as well as disciplined in how to learn — which, Yale argued, was best done through its course of study.

No student, though, would be taught how to do their job directly. A liberal arts institution was *not* a “finishing” school, according to the Yale Report authors:

The object is not to *finish* his education; but to lay the foundation, and to advance as far in rearing the superstructure, as the short period of his residence here will admit. If he

acquires here a thorough knowledge of the principles of science, he may then, in a great measure educate himself. He has, at least, been taught *how* to learn. [...] Our object is not to teach that which is peculiar to any one of the professions; but to lay the foundation which is common to them all. (p. 308)

To the writers of the Yale Report, both the practical educators who lobbied for applied instruction and the emerging advocates for specialized research were viewed as stilted and small-minded. An important caveat should be noted, however, because the “liberal arts” are often associated with the humanities alone. Science at this time was not so synonymously related to specialization, empiricism, and research as it is today (Veysey, 1965, pp. 133–149). The liberal arts were not opposed to the sciences. The Yale Report of 1828 defends the addition of “chemistry, minerology, geology, political economy, [etc.]” on the basis that such an education furnishes students with theoretical principles undergirding human endeavors, not practical applications (Sillman, 1829, p. 299). These small schools *did* invite the sciences in — but not industry, not the professions, and certainly not specialization.

To educate in a single direction was an education at the expense of others; to be unbalanced was to be unfit for democratic duty. As noted earlier, education for democracy was on the lips of all pedagogical reformers of this era. The Yale Report writers were no exception. The President of Bowdoin, Joseph McKeen, wrote in 1802: “It ought always to be remembered, that literary institutions are founded and endowed for the common good, and not for the private advantage of those who resort to them for education. It is not that they may be able to pass through life in an easy or reputable manner, but that their mental powers may be cultivated and improved for the benefit of society” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 58). Rather than hampering civic engagement, the old college viewed the progressive educators who wanted specialized,

vocational education as teachers failing to uphold their democratic duty to students. Winding, recursive, and repetitive, the Yale Report repeatedly challenged the industrialist's claims that an education must be practical: "Is a man to have no other object, than to obtain a *living* by professional pursuits? Has he not duties to perform to his family, to his fellow citizens, to his country; duties which require various and extensive intellectual furniture?" (Sillman, 1829, p. 309).

To modern educators, the word furniture is unusual, but it represents one half of the psychological framework that made Yale see itself as so progressive and pedagogically sound in 1828. The "furniture" is the subject matter taught in the curriculum, such as rhetoric or philosophy or natural science, and the furniture of an education was meant to train students in broad principles that underlaid all academic, democratic, and industrial realms. The writers of the Yale Report believed that their curricular furniture contained axiomatic principles which undergird an understanding of "a thousand or ten thousand particular cases" (Sillman, 1829, p. 311). Who would want to individually learn each of these thousand applied, practical skills if the student only needed to learn a few laws from Newton and Archimedes? Conveniently, the argument for principles instead of applied practice allowed conservative educators to retain all classical works in the curriculum. Throughout the Yale Report, the authors welcomed new subjects to the curriculum so long as none sought to *replace* the classics; the worst sin of educational reformers was arguing that modern texts or languages were equivalent to classical Latin and Greek texts. Sciences of all stripes could be added so long as they were reduced to fundamental principles and did not touch the classics.

At this point, to fully explain the furniture of the curriculum, I need to introduce the second half of Yale's psychological framework. "The two great points to be gained in

intellectual culture, are the *discipline* and the *furniture* of the mind; expanding its powers, and storing it with knowledge” (Sillman, 1829, p. 300). The second half was the pedagogy of “mental discipline”; mental discipline was the pedagogical tool prescribed by a field called faculty psychology.

Arising in the 1700s and gaining wide attention in the early 1800s, faculty psychology breathed new life into the curricular traditions of oratorical training. It was the then-cutting-edge theory of mind that the brain is a muscle with various faculties, such as memory, taste, will, imagination, and discipline (Kliebard, 2004; Veysey, 1965). Faculty psychology is relatively unheard of now by that name, buried deep in the educational jargon of the past, but its means and methods are ancient. Plato in the *Meno* advocated for students to study geometry as a means of improving general intelligence (Kliebard, 2004, pp. 2–5). It also arose, phoenix-like, in conversations about the transfer of specific knowledge to general skills (Geisler, 1994). If one practiced a certain method repeatedly, the dominant faculty transferred to many other domains. The mind-as-muscle metaphor carried with it other bodily fitness assumptions, such as the belief that overtraining one faculty would hamper the development of the whole person:

If the student exercises his reasoning powers only, he will be deficient in imagination and taste, in fervid and impressive eloquence. If he confines his attention to demonstrative evidence, he will be unfitted to decide correctly, in cases of probability. If he relies principally on his memory, his powers of invention will be impaired by disuse. In the course of instruction in this college, it has been an object to maintain such a proportion between the different branches of literature and science, as to form in the student a proper *balance* of character. (Sillman, 1829, p. 301)

Instead of training for the factory-like execution of a single skill, the writers of the Yale Report aimed at loftier learning outcomes for students, such as character, morality, gentlemanliness (liberal arts colleges resisted coeducation well into the 1900s, preferring to establish schools for women instead of integrating the sexes), and other aspirations from liberal culture (Crowley, 1998; Veysey, 1965).

The god-term of faculty psychology was *discipline*, and little served the disciplinary educator better than memorization. Students were asked to absorb and master material, either from reading a textbook or by listening to a lecture on the subject (Herbst, 2004). They proved their mastery through recitations, which were in-class oratorical deliveries of the texts and lessons they had memorized. An excellent example of this pedagogy demonstrates not only the method but the late era to which these methods were adhered: in 1871, L. H. Bagg recounted his time as a student at Yale, including detailed accounts of his classroom experiences:

In a Latin or Greek recitation one [student] may be asked to read or scan a short passage, another to translate it, a third to answer questions as to its construction, and so on, or all this and more may be required of the same individual. The reciter is expected simply to answer the questions which are put to him, but not to ask any of his instructor, or dispute his assertions. [...] Sometimes, when a wrong translation is made or a wrong answer given, the instructor corrects it forthwith, but more frequently he makes no sign, though if the failure be almost complete he may call upon another to go over the ground again. Perhaps after the lesson has been recited the instructor may translate it, comment upon it, point out the mistakes which have been made, and so on. The “advance” [lesson] of one day is always the “review” of the next, and a more perfect recitation is always expected

on the second occasion; —[this preceding] remark which is not confined to the languages but applies equally well to all the studies of the course. (pp. 552–553).

Memorizing was a means of disciplining the mind; disciplining the mind in each of the various subjects throughout the curriculum improved the general faculties.

The authors of the Yale Report used mental discipline to protect the classical curriculum from attack. By pairing classical furniture with mental discipline, nearly any topic (furniture) could be taught so long as it could be justified as disciplining on the mind. The furniture of the curriculum and the disciplinary method of instruction found perfection, at least in the eyes of the Yale writers, in teaching in Latin and Greek. The oratorical tradition heavily emphasized learning all subjects in Latin and Greek: entrance assessments were conducted in those languages, literature was taught in them, and most of the literature, history, and mathematics texts were written in them, too. Educational reformers, on the other hand, attacked Latin and Greek as useless furniture for a curriculum. If one wants to read a catalog of historically defeated arguments, the Yale Report’s defense of Latin and Greek on their own terms (i.e., the dead languages as better than modern languages) are worth investigating: modern foreign languages (such as French and Italian), for instance, were too easy to learn; modern languages were not as beautiful; and modern languages “[were] studied, and will continue to be studied, as an accomplishment, rather than as a necessary acquisition,” whereas Latin and Greek will be forever necessary for the lawyer and doctor to speak and read (Sillman, 1829, p. 333). Noah Porter (1878), Yale’s President from 1871 to 1892, wouldn’t even defend Latin and Greek in these terms, calling these rhetorical strategies “trite” (p. 44).

Defending dead languages as qualitatively superior to modern languages was not the argumentative tactic that kept Latin and Greek in the curriculum across the country until nearly

1900. The Yale Report of 1828 instead argued that Latin and Greek disciplined the mind better than any other subject and elevated students' aesthetic taste, which purportedly transferred to other subjects. Porter (1870) focused solely on this line of argument, contending that "for the years appropriated to school and college training, there is no study which is so well adapted to mental discipline as the study of language" (p. 40). He continued to argue that *classical* languages in particular "should be preferred to any other as a means of discipline [...] and should continue to be made prominent and necessary in the American colleges" (p. 42). Porter (1878) argued the benefits over modern language study at length, including such claims as classical languages imparted improved rapidity in thought, intelligence, knowledge retention, judgment, imagination, aesthetic culture, and more (pp. 40–51). Additionally, all the time spent translating ancient works would transfer the sound moral character of the ancients into the modern student.

It should not be surprising, then, that English composition instructors taught by translating famous Greek or Latin works into English, a pedagogy which was famously critiqued by Harvard's 1892 "Report of the committee on composition and rhetoric" as "Translation English" (Brown, 1995). The logic behind translation English proceeded thus: classical Latin and Greek texts are paragons of human artistic achievement, and since classical texts were written excellently, if students translated those texts verbatim into English, their writing skills would transfer into English. Adams et al. (1995) conducted a study of 450 English A students at Harvard from its 1890–1891 cohort, asking them about how they were taught English in preparation for college (pp. 77–78). The committee reported that of the 160 preparatory schools represented in the survey, each trained high school students almost exclusively in translation English because this is what colleges, such as Yale and those in the oratorical tradition, had

previously required. Up until the mid- and late-1800s, no time was given to teaching composition in “the mother tongue” of English (C. F. Adams et al., 1995, p. 94; Kitzhaber, 1990).

Educational progressives complained that translation English was turgid and unreflective, and this composition pedagogy became a flashpoint between conservative and progressive education. Harvard, in its three reports in the 1890s, quite naturally recommended that preparatory schools switch to its technique of theme writing in English on daily topics, which some (e.g., Brown, 1995, p. 31; McLeod, 2007, p. 33) claim was invented by Harvard’s Barrett Wendell in the 1880s. As with so many arguments against the liberal arts, the Harvard progressives missed the point of why more conservative institutions kept Latin and Greek: these languages better disciplined the mind for *future* eloquence, not necessarily practical applications at the time. Further, as with the sciences, the liberal arts had already embraced some theme writing in vernacular English by the mid-1800s, but they included it so long as it did not displace Latin and Greek.

Composition in the vernacular at the conservative schools was taught through spontaneous response to lectures on Rhetoric or short prompt essays (probably themes). These themes were written according to what Connors (1981b) terms the “modes of discourse.” Here is the student Bagg (1871) again, who wrote that,

On the Saturday noons of this term, in place of the regular recitations, the class attended one or two lectures delivered in Alumni Hall by the professor of Rhetoric, and also wrote ex-tempore compositions there at his direction; but afterwards the compositions, on subjects previously announced, were read in the division rooms. About a third of each division were required to write each week, and those who were not called upon to read their productions were expected to hand them in to the officer at the close of the session.

Choice could be made from several subjects, which were of various kinds—historical, political, literary, social—and were supposed to be devised by the professor of Rhetoric. On a particular topic a *descriptive* piece was required to be written; on another, an *argumentative*; and so on. (emphasis added, pp. 559–560)

The four modes of discourse are Narration, Description, Exposition, and Argument (Connors, 1981b), and these modes would come to dominate much of the composition landscape throughout the early 1900s.

Finally, the prescribed curriculum and generalist professorate distinguish the liberal arts college that influenced IAC’s foundations. The conservative college, which believed in a broad education that disciplined the faculties, concluded that no student needed a differentiated, self-selected course of study. All students in the conservative tradition took a “prescribed curriculum,” or a mandated course sequence that was the same for all students. Examples of this type of prescriptive curriculum abound, but I will share one from my current institution, Simpson College, a Methodist liberal arts college situated a county south of Iowa State. Simpson began its collegiate instruction at nearly the same time in 1867. It had two courses of study, one a classical course and the other a scientific course. Here is a sample of its prescribed curriculum in 1869 for the scientific course:

First Year.

First Term.

Physiology, *Jarvis* [italics indicate the textbook used]

Algebra, *Loomis*

Chemistry, Inorganic, *Porter, and lectures*

French, *Fasquelle*

History of Greece, to 20th chap., *Smith*

Second Term.

Geology, *Agassiz and Gould*

Geometry, *Loomis*

Chemistry, Organic, *Porter and lectures*

French, *Fasquelle*

History of Greece, to 37th chap., *Smith*

Third Term.

Geometry and Algebra completed, *Loomis*

French, *Fasquelle*

Rhetoric, *Whatley*

Constitution of United States, *Young*

History of Greece, completed, *Smith*

Second Year.

First Term.

Trigonometry and Surveying, *Loomis*

Physics, *Silliman*

English literature, *Spalding*

German, *Comfort or Whitney*

History of Rome, *Liddell*

Second Term.

Analytical geometry, *Loomis*

Physics, *Silliman*

American literature, *Cleaveland*

German, *Comfort or Whitney*

History of Rome, *Liddell*

Third term.

Differential and integral calculus, *Loomis*

Botany, *Wood's Botanist and Florist*

Logic, *Whatley*

German, *Comfort or Whitney*

History of Rome, completed, *Liddell*

(Simpson Centenary College, 1870, pp. 18–19)

All students took these courses, regardless of their intended profession or interests beyond college. You can also see how the liberal arts kept a great many nonscientific courses in the scientific course; these preserved the mental discipline of the students.

The prescription model exploded across the ever-expanding nation. The colonies sustained only nine colleges leading into the Revolution, but by the Civil War, more than 250 colleges existed in the United States, and a staggering 700 others had been tried and failed in that same period (Lucas, 2006; Rudolph, 1990, p. 47). Rudolph (1990) argued that state rivalries, the difficulty of travel, the missionary movement, and denominational territorialism account for why it seemed that a small Lutheran or Baptist or Methodist college popped up in every town large enough for a church. The question many critics of the time asked, however, was, “are these colleges any good?” Americans tended to answer this question in utilitarian terms: “At that heart of the issue that developed over the prescribed curriculum was the relevance of college study to the later life of the student” (Veysey, 1965, p. 38). Unity to the liberal arts — both in character

and in curricular training — was viewed as far more relevant to a student’s future contributions than self-interested specialization or vocational training.

Consistent with their rejection of specialization, faculty at small colleges taught multiple subjects and rarely earned graduate education in a field, and the tenor at these schools bordered on anti-intellectual (Lucas, 2006; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). An intellectual culture — learning for its own sake — did not afflict faculty, and colleges often contained libraries that were only open one day per week. The conservative college’s sense of moral and public duty sometimes conflicted outright with intellectualism: “The very cultivation of mind has frequently a tendency to impair the moral sensibilities,” Dartmouth’s president, Nathan Lord, spoke in his 1828 inaugural address (B. P. Smith, 1878, p. 154). These arguments reveal an uneasiness with the Enlightenment project and especially a suspicion over the materialism of empiricism. College presidents, who were usually trained as ministers, often taught courses on ethics and moral philosophy, often guarding a student’s route to graduation with a senior seminar on moral texts. While they were likely unaware of the rhetorician Giambattista Vico, Vico’s 1732 inaugural address to the University of Naples student body argues that students should devote themselves to their education not for economic gain, political power, or even learning for its own sake, but instead to “[p]rove [themselves] to be heroes by enriching the human race with further giant benefits” (Vico, 1976, p. 902). This was the liberal arts spirit, but the peculiar mixture of democratic fervor and populism at times left the colleges intellectually emaciated. Student-led literary societies sprang up as part of an extracurriculum feverish for deeper interaction with texts. It was common that a school’s literary society would have a larger library than the college’s library, and the most famous example of a literary society outstripping its college’s library was at Yale (Rudolph, 1990, pp. 143–144). Students were to learn a prescribed liberal arts

curriculum for all four years, not because it was immediately practical or even applicable to any single future career, but because this disciplining of the mind would prepare students to become lifelong, philosophically sound leaders who had also developed an upright character.

Thus, composition in the liberal arts curriculum remained largely the same as it always had, with the exception of adding vernacular languages and theme writing, especially the direct instruction of English and modern English literature. A student at a liberal arts college was immersed in communicative exercises from their first day all the way through senior exercises. Crowley (1998) and Russell (1990) reveal extensive writing and speaking pedagogies at liberal arts college throughout the 1800s, including a forensic examination system, literary societies, translation and recitation pedagogies, and capstone thesis exercises. These historical foundations kept composition at liberal arts schools even when it became unpopular elsewhere. In the 1960s, almost a third of all four-year colleges dropped or reduced their composition requirements, “with many of them abolishing freshmen composition altogether” (Russell, 1990, p. 272), but Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) remind us that Writing Across the Curriculum programs began at small liberal arts colleges in the 1970s and 1980s, leading the revitalization of writing largely because they had never abandoned it.

3. 2. Institutional Revolution and the Birth of our Paradigm: The Rise of the German University

Two forces which did not fully align in universities until the end of the 1800s confronted the small college’s prescribed curriculum: the elective curriculum and specialized research in academic disciplines, especially scientific disciplines. These forces began emerging in higher education before the land-grants were founded (Nelson, 2013), but they came to the fore while many land-grant colleges were just establishing themselves in the 1860s and 1870s. Discussing the rise of the Americanized German research university is not synonymous with land-grant

colleges, but some land-grant colleges, especially those in the eastern United States, became premier models of the German model (Sorber, 2018). Before transitioning to the land-grant colleges in particular, the foundations of the German model need to be understood. The myriad trajectories that land-grant colleges took until standardization in the mid-1900s is explained by the ways the Boards, Presidents, faculties, and public determined the value of research, specialization, and students' rights to choose their own coursework, all of which came from the German university model.

Around 9,000 students traveled to Göttingen, Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, and Heidelberg to study between 1820 and 1920 (Röhrs, 1995, p. 11), and these young men — usually college graduates or small college professors — saw German universities as a means of gaining specialized scientific education that they could not attain in the United States. The German university model, established by Wilhelm von Humboldt at the University of Berlin in 1810, can be distinguished from the liberal arts based on its one ideology on *Wissenschaft* and its two key components, *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*. The overarching ideal of the German model was *Wissenschaft*, sometimes captured by the terms “research” and “scholarship,” was a “state of mind, and intellectual orientation of sound reason and judgment, and an active, rigorous pursuit of knowledge” (Sorber, 2018, pp. 38–39). Veysey (1965) also emphasizes that *Wissenschaft* was a nonutilitarian ideal, and scholars were meant to pursue research without bowing to the immediate needs of the surrounding society (p. 126).

In its most idealistic sense, *Wissenschaft* was antithetical to all conceptions of the American college, whether that be the strains of educating for broad principles or training young people for democratic service. Worse, the anti-intellectualism and moral philosophizing made a great many small college faculties and presidents suspicious of a secular materialism in the

German universities, but as more scholars returned, the mood throughout the middle 1800s softened towards research. The German professors valued knowledge for its own sake, and they pursued truth with experiments, neglecting the authority of received wisdom (Röhrs, 1995).

What we now call academic freedom was born from this tradition of free inquiry and unfettered research; professors were free to specialize, free to explore new knowledge instead of pass on wisdom, free to experiment without the burden of needing to make money or solve a utilitarian problem. Decades would have to pass, well into the 1900s, before faculty academic freedom came to compete with the vocational and anti-intellectual ambitions of students or the utilitarian politicking from upper administration (Veysey, 1965, Chapter 7).

Wissenschaft's freedom of inquiry blended seamlessly with *Lehrfreiheit*, or teaching freedom (Rudolph, 1990, p. 412). Professors in German universities could choose the subjects and methods of their instruction, which, once again, differed greatly from the American college model. When given the freedom to teach how and what they wanted, German professors largely ignored recitation, choosing instead to teach with either the lecture or the laboratory. They used the former to disseminate new knowledge; they used the latter as a method of discovering these new ideas amongst a group of truth-seekers. Because *Wissenschaft* was not limited to the sciences in the German model, rising in conjunction with the laboratory was the humanities seminar. The seminar was to social, moral, and linguistic fields what the laboratory was for the experimental scientists, and by the 1880s, the seminar became the dominant mode of graduate education (Russell, 1990, p. 84).

While *Wissenschaft* protects teaching freedom, research and teaching were severely imbalanced. The German model prized above all progress in research, not undergraduate education (Crowley, 1998; Herbst, 1965). When Willian Rainey Harper introduced the

University of Chicago to the world in 1892, he said “[i]t is proposed in this institution to make the work of investigation primary, the work of giving instruction secondary” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 352). At the same time at Johns Hopkins, the premier Americanized German research university, to put research above undergraduate education “was soon recognized as a necessary concomitant of the university idea” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 403). The president of University of Arkansas in 1884 complained that his newly minted doctoral faculty from research institutions showed a “lack of concern for supervising students outside the classroom and excessive devotion to the high standards of scholarship” (Lucas, 2006, p. 181). Russell (2002) writes that the German model began “the century-old conflict between teaching and research” (p. 29). The notion of pursuing or achieving progress through scholarship is a deeply held belief in the German research university, and it is this system that we still operate today.

The imbalance between teaching and research was not a concern in German universities because of *Wissenschaft*’s second component, *Lernfreiheit*, or a student’s right to choose their courses and to research alongside their professors. German students were older than typical American undergraduates, and they were unburdened by the liberal arts ideal of an education for the whole person. *Lernfreiheit*, when introduced to the American context, became the “elective curriculum,” which opposed the dominant prescribed course of study in the liberal arts (Herbst, 1965; Rudolph, 1990). Whether professors should pursue research for its own sake became a matter of intense debate in American colleges, and especially so at land-grant institutions like IAC. However, what motivated *most* debates until the Civil War and the concurrent Morrill Acts was students’ freedom to choose their own course of study.

When students returned from Germany, they brought with them these revolutionary and liberatory visions of specialized academic freedom, but they found institutions resistant to their

ideals. Early educational reformers attempted German-styled institutions in the United States, foremost among these were led by Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia in 1819 and Henry Tappan at the University of Michigan in 1852 (Röhrs, 1995; Rudolph, 1990). These failed. The view of education espoused in the Yale Report of 1828 was hegemonic, and it defeated generations of educational reformers who advocated for the German model. However, another, nonacademic force defeated the German-styled institutions: no one in the industrial, utilitarian United States wanted to fund pure research institutions that didn't lead to vocational or economic dividends. At least liberal arts institutions attempted to argue that their training befitted students for vocations by an indirect training in principles; administrators in the pure German model meant to insulate students and professors from societal concerns about applying research findings. Clark University's decades of setbacks and struggles to maintain a pure, graduate research institution warned other presidents and legislatures off radical adherence to the German model; it succumbed to undergraduate instruction in the face of financial crisis (Veysey, 1965). Instead, the Americanized German research university needed to make a series of compromises and adaptations to flourish in democratic, utilitarian, capitalistic soil. Students needed to choose their own course of study, and whatever else professors chose to research, they needed to offer instruction that would help ambitious students enter middle-class vocations.

Composition instruction in the research university is a peculiarly American phenomenon. The German universities did not provide American progressives a guideline to follow, so universities began first with what the liberal arts did and then lurched in new directions. The most famous example of the desolation of the liberal arts composition curriculum in the new research ideal comes from Harvard. Rudolph (1990) best summarized the effects of the elective curriculum and specialization:

Step by step under [President] Eliot's leadership Harvard abandoned prescription and expanded the domain of election. In 1872 all subject requirements for seniors were abolished. In 1879 all subject requirements for juniors were abolished. In 1884 the sophomores were liberated, and in 1885 subject requirements were materially reduced for freshmen. By 1894 a Harvard freshman's only required courses were rhetoric and a modern language. By 1897 the prescribed course of study at Harvard had been reduced to a year of freshman rhetoric. (p. 294)

Most histories of composition point to Harvard as the progenitor of the FYC sequence, calling this a birth, but the "birth" of composition can just as easily be viewed as the survival of composition in an Americanized German research university.

English departments, however, began to spring up and flourish in the new universities. English transformed alongside the rest of the new university, gaining status and security by instituting new research specialties. Old subjects that diffused across the prescribed, unscholarly liberal arts curriculum, such as philology and English literature, became disciplines. Doctoral degrees in English literature or philology started spreading in the late 1800s (Crowley, 1998; W. R. Parker, 1967; Russell, 1990). Parker (1967) noted that literary criticism dates to at least the sixteenth century, but it wasn't until Johns Hopkins in 1876 demanded that its English professors had graduate school preparation that English began to professionalize. Until then, "the literacy and oratorical skills and genteel acquaintance with literature that clergymen presumably had were considered preparation enough" (Parker, 1967, p. 344). Likewise, German university-inspired philologists began treating Anglo Saxon as a serious, specialized research subject, and the 1883 birth of the Modern Language Association signified the professionalizing status of both literary and philological research endeavors. Of the nearly 40 people in attendance at the first

MLA meeting in 1883, “almost all were on the faculties of universities and liberal arts colleges located primarily in the Northeast” (Lindemann, 2010, p. 511).

As the literary and philological researchers rose in prominence throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, nonresearch subjects at the universities plummeted in status. MLA, which had entertained composition instructors amongst its ranks for two decades, abolished its pedagogy section from its conferences in 1903 (Brereton, 1995, p. 22; Crowley, 1998, p. 85). FYC composition, only competing against mathematics in number students enrolled in classes, was bemoaned almost everywhere in the research universities. Parker (1967) called it “slave labor,” Russell (1990) wrote that “[w]riting instruction was viewed as an unwelcome intrusion on their [English faculty’s] professional lives and a distraction from a much higher professional calling” (p. 177), and Crowley (1998) wrote that the “general detestation of composition was the drudgery connected with its teaching” (p. 86). Students were perpetually underprepared, theme grading never ended, and everyone wanted to escape to upper-level subjects.

The required FYC course in research universities remains a curiosity from the perspective of higher education curricula, for, despite the ire against it, FYC remained in nearly every college and university while every other vestige of the prescribed curriculum collapsed against the elective curriculum. As disciplinarity grew, “faculty tended to mistake the inevitable struggles of students to acquire the rhetorical conventions of a discipline for poor writing or sheer ignorance” (Russell, 1990, p. 18). Russell (1990) critiqued the generalist FYC course because it was (is) based on a “naïve view of language” in which an undifferentiated language instruction was meant to serve differentiated and specialized discourse communities (Ch. 1). However, institutional leaders, the new faculties in specialized disciplines, and composition instructors themselves all asked “why Johnny can’t write,” and a mandated FYC arose as the

solution. A painful irony for Composition is that, without the myth of missing general writing skills and the belief in FYC as the solution (Rose, 1985; Russell, 1990), students may not have elected into composition courses on their own, endangering the entire discipline.

Teaching methods for English loosened as the German university ideal spread. In the late 1800s, literature teachers announced their release from the pedagogical shackles of the old curriculum as well as the freedoms that the new disciplines offered:

“Methods vary, as they must, with the individuality of the teacher.” — Albert Cook, Yale University (Payne, 1895, p. 38)

“It has long been held by the teachers of English at Harvard that each teacher’s best method is his one ... One man finds recitation useful, generally interspersed with frequent comment; another gives lectures; a third prefers personal conference; a fourth finds the best results coming from properly directed discussions of special topics by his class, — and so on.” — Barrett Wendell, Harvard University (Payne, 1895, p. 48)

“And as to the method of conducting classes, each instructor teaches as he pleases; any man’s best method is the one that appeals to him at the time.” — Martin Sampson, University of Indiana (Payne, 1895, p. 95)

“...and while each of the instructors is held responsible for a certain subject and certain sections of students, it is the policy of the department to observe a reasonable *Lehrfreiheit*.” — Charles Mills Gayley, University of California (Payne, 1895, p. 101)

Again, however, English literature's release from the old college's pedagogies did not necessarily equate to developments in composition instruction. PhD-conferring institutions did not value composition as a research topic.

3.3. What the People Wanted(?): The Land-Grant Colleges

In the forward to Rudolph's (1977) book *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636*, historian and Chair of the Carnegie Council on Policy I in Higher Education, Clark Kerr, writes that "the curriculum is nothing less than the statement a college makes about what, out of the totality of man's constantly growing knowledge and experience, is considered useful, appropriate, or relevant to the lives of educated men and women at a certain point in time" (p. ix). The rest of this chapter explores how the land-grant college emerged and how differently land-grant colleges defined a scientific education. If the heart of the curricular issues in the liberal arts were, as Veysey (1965) argued, "the relevance of college study to the later life of the student" (p. 38), then the heart of the land-grant issues is the relevance of college study to the later life of the industrial economy.

As I narrow to IAC's curriculum from its origins to 1898, I am arguing that IAC requires examination as an individual institution, one not easily lumped together with other land-grant colleges. The unique historical pressures and contexts of IAC in many ways explain why a strong rhetoric program, such as Ohio's Agricultural College (Ohio State University), did not develop early on. Instead, IAC's program maintained a robust liberal arts air for decades before transitioning into extension and discipline-specific writing pedagogies. Because IAC chose an unusual interpretation of the Morrill Land Grant Act, its FYC program reflects a unique response to its institutional exigence. What is usually considered a homogenous movement, the chaotic, uncoordinated, idealistic outgrowth of the early land-grants instead offers Compositionists justifications for more house histories of their composition programs.

Historians have not agreed upon which factor defeated the small college model leading up to the Civil War. Did small colleges underestimate the populist fervor welling in the United States for a middle class education (Edmond, 1978; Ross, 1942b), or did educational reformers manipulate populist economic demands to create their ideal research universities (E. L. Johnson, 1981; Sorber, 2018; Sorber & Geiger, 2014)? Other arguments about the demise of the land-grant model are possible, such as growing state intervention in higher education, western expansion leading colleges in the West far more inclined toward vocational education than the stable stalwarts in the East, and more. Whichever was most influential, no one trusted the liberal arts college to guide the growing nation. As Rudolph (1990) wrote, “The truth of the matter was that very little which the colleges did helped to bridge the gap between them and the people. The choice, said Francis Wayland [President of Brown University] in 1850, was between adopting a course of study that appealed to all classes or adhering to a course that appealed to one class. The colleges took the second choice, but by the 1850’s they were becoming aware of the consequences” (p. 218). Kliebard (2004) argued that the 1800s curriculum increasingly became a political vehicle for competing interest groups, none of whom shared much in common beyond the desire to change things toward their ends, and the things to change in this era were the purpose, content, and pedagogies of the liberal arts college, but what *exactly* should be put in place instead remained vague and experimental.

One word dominated the curricular conversation: *science*. Several types of reformers emerged on the educational politics scene to create the land-grant colleges, including industrial lobbyists, farmers, democratic idealists, progressive educators, and research university proselytizers. Initially, these pressure groups aligned, and all used a conception of “science” to justify their political reforms (Rudolph, 1990, p. 247). However, no unified conception of

“science” existed in the American educational psyche, and land-grant colleges suffered tumultuous early years as presidents, granger groups, students, professors, and FYC instructors came to understand what Morrill’s 1862 Land Grant Act meant by a scientific curriculum. In the name of an underdefined science, the mid-1800s manifested frequent misunderstandings, unusual collaborations, and bold educational experiments.

Of the many types of education reformers, one industrial lobbyist and political Whig, Justin Morrill, did the most to bring about the land-grant colleges by securing for them federal funding, but he has been romantically interpreted by early land-grant historians, commemorative histories by political institutions, and land-grant colleges themselves (Sorber, 2018; Sorber & Geiger, 2014). Put most bluntly, “Justin Morrill was not a progressive champion of democracy,” Sorber (2018) wrote (p. 49). A businessman who retired from a successful merchant enterprise before 40, he ventured into politics as a defender of capitalism and industry. To add salt into the contemporary reader’s wounded estimation of Morrill, he voted against women’s suffrage and the eight-hour workday. And, despite the inclusion of “the industrial classes” in his 1862 Land Grant Act, he relentlessly fought granger attempts to expand vocational education in the land-grant curriculum, later personally rebuffing Iowa grange reform efforts that directly impacted IAC’s FYC curriculum.

However, Morrill, with no background in education or science, believed in a scientific education, or at least a version of scientific education loftier than vocational work but below the loftiest ideals of scientific principles that the liberal arts taught. Applied research most interested Morrill. Impressed by European agricultural innovations and European market dominance, he wrote that scientific research, “working unobtrusively, produce[d] larger annual returns and constantly increase[d] fixed capital, where ignorant routine produce[d] exactly the reverse”

(quoted in Sorber, 2018, p. 50). Science was a means to greater national wealth, and Morrill believed that the federal government should fund land-grant colleges to protect the economic interests of the nation. To Morrill, “science” meant bridges, canals, and communications to streamline the national economy; it meant new industries and skilled laborers for those industries. Failing to secure early land-grant bills throughout the 1850s, he managed to capitalize on Southern exclusion from congress to reintroduce his 1862 legislation, and Lincoln signed the Land Grant Act of 1862 during the Civil War.

Curricular problems began immediately. Every stakeholder excited by the Act believed they knew what Morrill meant by it, and they all differed. Morrill was in part to blame. On the floor of Congress, “he presented no sample curriculum, no admission requirements, and no guidance on student labor or coeducation” (Sorber, 2013b, p. 97). Morrill’s 1862 Act was too vague, and every state interpreted the *point* of the Land Grant Act differently, resulting in myriad responses to the initial funding, as well as multiple contextual factors that limited or exacerbated local responses to the land-grant colleges. A glance at how other institutions responded to Morrill’s may help illustrate the importance of viewing IAC as one of many unique curricular interpretations of the land-grant mission.

3. 3. 1. Chaos in the origins: Land-grant colleges reject the liberal arts for an uncertain future

The first curricular fracture, naturally, was between the liberal arts on one side and a cobbled-together alliance for the agricultural and mechanical sciences on the other. The Morrill’s 1862 Act offered federal funding to states and allowed them to interpret and implement the Act. More money did not resolve tensions about liberal arts colleges serving America’s educational future; tossing financial sustenance into the state legislatures cauterized the division between the liberal arts and these new land-grant colleges. Existing colleges and state universities competed

against proposals for new institutions, and political invective flew in the presses. Sometimes a new institution was born from the grant, usually because agricultural society advocates stirred fear that the existing college would favor the liberal arts too much. In Maine, the state legislature rejected Bowdoin College's proposal to add a model farm and agricultural courses to its current infrastructure because agricultural societies argued that it was too tied to the traditional college model. Instead, the state instituted the Maine Agricultural and Mechanical College from scratch (Sorber, 2018, p. 59). Both Harvard and Amherst College lost land-grant funding to create what would become the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, because the local agricultural societies feared the liberal arts would override the practical sciences. Yale, on the other hand, won initial land-grant funding for its Sheffield Scientific School; no local support was mustered against it. Whether the grant went to an existing liberal arts institution depended largely on the strength of the agricultural societies' capacities to stoke aristocratic fear into the legislature. Only Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, and Pennsylvania gave the grant to either existing or chartered agricultural colleges.

Once states and their publics decided the land-grant recipients, the colleges differed significantly in their implementation of the Morrill Act's broad recommendations of study. Sorber (2018) compared Northeastern land-grant colleges against each other, following them from their foundings through the early 1900s' bureaucratization and standardization of the university model. Sorber (2018) discovered that early land-grant colleges differed from each other in numerous categories, from their funding stability to their Latin and Greek requirements. Colleges appended to existing liberal arts colleges were far more likely to keep the liberal arts and tended to reject any vocational training whatsoever. Some of these turned toward the research ideal, but more often German-styled research institutions needed to begin as

independent institutions with the funding, such Cornell and the Maine Agricultural and Mechanical College. Rarest of the Eastern colleges were those that included vocational education or parallel courses for non-degree-seeking farmers or machinists. Western land-grants pursued vocational education, but even they included substantial liberal arts curricula despite garnering reputations as “narrow-gauge” and low-brow institutions to the research-oriented reformers. Table X collates the many variations that land-grant colleges experienced from each other.

The reality was that, despite the romanticized tale that land-grant colleges were agricultural and mechanical schools from the outset, these colleges had no other curriculum to base theirs on than the liberal arts. The politics were intense but brief; the initial agricultural societies’ influence was rather modest beyond determining whether a college would associate with an existing college or not (Nelson, 2013; Sorber, 2013b; Sorber & Geiger, 2014). Very few farmers or laborers knew anything of the land-grants. Thus, in the 1860s, new land-grant colleges shared most of their curriculum with liberal arts colleges that were already including more and more scientific studies. For the most part, a “scientific education” until 1873 meant replacing the classics, Latin, and Greek with assorted sciences that could be construed as “agricultural.”

Table 3.1. Variation among land-grants from 1862 to c. 1870, based on Sorber's (2018) survey of Northeastern land-grant colleges and my analysis of IAC. Xs mark the presence of the feature in the header.

College	Funded an existing college	Started a new college	Combined colleges	Vocational education (manual labor, machine shops, factories)	Agricultural or mechanical sciences (botany, chemistry, mathematics)	Wissenschaft science curriculum	Liberal arts curriculum plus a few sciences	Model farm	No additional funding stipulations	Funding from philanthropist	Funding from subscription campaign	Agricultural society members elected to the Board of Trustees	Latin or Greek required
Connecticut, Yale's Sheffield Scientific School	X					X	X		X				
Maine Agricultural and Mechanical College		X			X	X	X		X			X	
University of Massachusetts, Amherst		X			X	X	X			X			
New Jersey, Rutgers	X				X, no ag		X	X	X				
New Hampshire College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts			X (With Dartmouth, and split 1893)		X	X	X	X		X		X	
Cornell College				X (Until Ezra Cornell died)	X	X	X			X			
Pennsylvania Agricultural College	X (Farmer's High School)			X			X	X			X		
Brown University	X				X		X		X				
University of Vermont and State Agricultural College	X				X		X		X				X
Iowa Agricultural College		X		X	X		X	X			X	X	

3. 3. 2. The changing value and definition of science

By 1890, education for utilitarian ends dominated the educational landscape, and not just in land-grant institutions: publicly funded institutions and educational reformers justified colleges and universities in terms of their civic worth (Veysey, 1965, Chapter 2). In the two decades from their 1862 funding, the land-grants rapidly adopted new institutional forms to prove their democratic and economic utility. Thus, the next dialectical revision of the term “science” occurred between vocational education advocates and experimental research advocates. Summed up by Noah Butler (1895), the definition of what science meant rested on the proper boundaries of a “college” education against all other educations: “Utility [...] may be given either a very broad or a very narrow meaning. There are utilities higher and utilities lower, and under no circumstances will the true teacher ever permit the former to be sacrificed for the latter” (p. 109). However, circumstances forced this question, notably the willingness of legislatures to continue funding the institutions during economic recessions. The process that private and state non-land-grant universities went through to redefine science in terms of democratic utility was apparently calmer than at land-grants; Veysey (1965) writes that “the transition from college to university thus represented no basic social upheaval; rather, in accord with the changing temper of the post-Civil War period, it marked a transfer of academic leadership from one strain of gentility to another” (p. 69). Veysey (1965), however, did not investigate land-grant colleges; the transition of land-grants from pseudo-liberal arts colleges or vocational farming schools into research institutions was anything but painless.

The problem began, as many problems do, because of a romanticized belief in a nonexistent ideal. For the land-grants, this ideal was the Michigan Agricultural College (MAC). Founded as an agricultural college by the state in 1855, MAC represented the first radical vision of what the land-grants could be: it had agricultural society support, it had stable financial backing from the state, it had an experimental farm, it had manual labor, and it

balanced liberal arts with agricultural sciences (Beal, 1915; Kuhn, 1955; Lauzon, 2021). However, this glossy exterior hid nearly a decade of turmoil, mistakes, and compromises. The institution began debating the relationship between the liberal arts, agricultural education, and scientific research before any other land-grant, but its debates were naively understood by those who viewed it as a model (the IAC naivety is discussed in Chapter 4). Take, for instance, the idea of an experimental farm, which seemed unnecessary to most of the 1862 land-grant presidents. Lauzon's (2021) archival investigation reveals that, when MAC opened to students in 1855 on state appropriations, it showed the public a water-logged, timber-strewn "farm" that had not been cultivated. The Board of Education (who were MAC's trustees) had told faculty to focus on the curriculum, not the farm. Local journalists and farmers attacked the farm, to the point that in 1859, the Board requested President Joseph Williams's resignation, along with the resignation of the horticulture professor.

The narrowest agricultural curriculum in the history of land-grants was then developed in overreaction. The Superintendent of Education for the Board of Education, John Gregory, took control of the leaderless college and instituted a two-year professional school. Two-thirds of the existing curriculum was cut, including all the liberal arts of English, history, and philosophy, retaining only agricultural chemistry, botany, zoology, and engineering (Kuhn, 1955; Lauzon, 2021). The impact was immediate. MAC up to this point had to turn away dozens of applicants to retain a 100-student cap on the college, but once Gregory announced his two-year plan, only 19 students showed up for the first day of classes. Gregory and the Board had misread the granger interests. They wanted agriculturally educated men who were also broadly educated for industrial leadership. As Lauzon (2021) uncovered, the State Agricultural Society wrote that, "Our sons should not be satisfied with anything less than a full course in science and literature" (qtd. in Kuhn, 1955, p. 62). President Williams and the general course of study were reinstated in 1861; the faculty shored up the experimental farm,

and the faculty and president instituted the most notable aspect of Michigan's "plan": manual labor for students alongside a broad agricultural sciences and liberal arts curriculum.

So, when it finally gained land-grant status in 1862, some — including Morrill himself — viewed MAC as a model, while others situated their institutions in opposition against it. Daniel Colt Gilman, who at the time Secretary of Yale's Sheffield Scientific School and later president of Johns Hopkins, coined MAC's manual labor "the Michigan Plan," and he railed against land-grants being defined in agricultural or vocational terms (Gilman, 1867). He underestimated the political context of MAC's agricultural compromises, and he advocated that land-grants should be called "National Schools of Science" without any reference to farming. Morrill, too, agreed with Gilman's view in the "National Schools." Morrill spoke at a Yale gathering the following year and affirmed that the land-grant funds were not meant to make agricultural schools; they were "intended to make the useful sciences the equal of literary studies" (Sorber, 2013a, p. 59).

Before 1873, dismissing agricultural interests was a stance land-grants could make. Not so afterward: grangers stripped Yale of its land-grant status and funding in 1893. The idealization of MAC, on the other hand, was also premature. Gilman's (1867) warnings to MAC and the land-grants following it were prophetic: "the sons of farmers in this country, if they spend three or four years in acquiring an education, will not return to the homestead except as managers of the paternal estate" (1867, pp. 519–520). MAC's graduates were as likely to become farmers as were the graduates of Yale's Sheffield Scientific School, and the satisfaction with gentlemanly ex-farmers wore off as the 1860s closed.

When the Panic of 1873 hit the United States, the ideal of land-grants as being in farmers' best interests collapsed, and farmers turned on the land-grant institutions. Agricultural society memberships ballooned with populist fervor, and the grange was born. Grangers wanted control of the institutions their tax dollars funded. Grangers and

opportunistic industrial businessmen took up the vocational side of the curricular debate, and defenders of industrial research and development, namely land-grant presidents and agricultural science professors, took up the other. At stake was the very existence of these institutions. The debate hinged on the wording of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act, which stated that the land-grant purpose to teach “such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts [...] in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (Morrill Land Grant Act, 1862, sec. 4). What role did the “industrial classes” have in defining the curriculum ostensibly meant to benefit them? And who decided what were the “several pursuits and professions” in their lives? What counted as a useful scientific education?

The Patrons of Husbandry, commonly referred to as “the grange,” unified in indignation against the land-grants, dispelling any notion that the land-grants were “democracy’s college” before at least 1900. In Sorber’s (2018) *Land-grant colleges and popular revolt*, he wrote “Grange leaders argued that the scientific and liberal arts curricula of regional land-grant colleges were exacerbating rural outmigration, enticing students away from farming and into middle-class careers in business, engineering, academia, or government” (p. 88). Simply put, graduates of the land-grant colleges weren’t returning to the farm. To grangers, a useful scientific education should improve the rural farm, and abstract arguments in favor of the “national good” fell on deaf ears in increasingly depleted rural communities.

A common rhetorical strategy arose in townhalls and in legislative sessions across the country. Grangers would present evidence of no or few graduates in agricultural science from a land-grant, demonstrate that no or few graduates became farmers, and propose that funding be removed from the college. They wanted the funding put toward agricultural schools that offered manual labor, hands-on experience in farming, and a romanticized vision of

agriculture so that students returned to the family farm. In many states, the tactic worked, and in some states to an extreme. Throughout the late 1800s, grange pressure groups wrested the original land-grant funding away from Yale's Sheffield School of Science, Dartmouth, and Brown University, and the states chose to establish new schools instead. Many schools retained their funding, but all adapted in some way to granger demands.

The vocational revolt met stiff resistance from college leaders. Ezra Cornell wanted a shoe factory at his new land-grant institution; his students were to be the laborers, and by graduation, they would be prepared to make shoes in factories. Cornell's president, Andrew White, fought the idea. White wanted a scientific education for managers, not laborers, and he won against his college's millionaire philanthropist, although he considered it one of the most difficult negotiations of his career (Sorber, 2018, p. 70). George Atherton at Rutgers also vehemently fought the stigma that land-grants should be vocational institutions, arguing for industrial applications for sciences or pure research instead. In his famous 1873 National Education Association speech, "The Relation of the General Government to Education," Atherton argued that Morrill never intended to create "so-called agricultural colleges" to make laborers; instead, land-grant graduates "become leaders and organizers of labor" (Atherton, 1873, p. 67). For land-grant colleges to produce farmers was absurd: "It might with the same propriety be urged that the national academies at West Point and Annapolis are failures because they do not turn out privates for the army and navy, but only leaders of privates" (Atherton, 1873, p. 67). Apparently ignorant of Michigan Agricultural College's experiences, University of Vermont president Matthew Buckingham believed that experimental farms were "unnecessary and wasteful" because agricultural science faculty could simply explain their results to farmers (Sorber, 2018, p. 80). By 1874, the University of Vermont did not graduate a single student with an agriculture degree. Justin Morrill himself had to defend against the grange in Vermont, which was politically humiliating for the land-grant movement because

Vermont was his home state. The grange, led by veteran politician and former U.S. senator Luke “Brass Buttons” Poland, nearly defeated Morrill, but Morrill appeased many in the legislature by pressuring President Buckingham to hire a professor of agriculture in 1886, 17 years after the land-grant opened its doors (Sorber, 2018, pp. 112–114). The institution was far from safe, however; the University of Vermont remained under consistent attack from grangers throughout the 1890s, defended time and again by the aging and ailing Justin Morrill.

The appeals to vocationalism put the land-grant colleges in crisis, and the curriculum changed to meet their demands. To grangers, agricultural science in the late 1800s meant learning how to farm, but to presidents and professors at the land-grants, agricultural science meant developing new solutions to agricultural problems, such as pest-resistant crops or pasteurization techniques. The land-grants survived by choosing to do both. They created parallel curriculum where non-degree-seeking students could gain practical education, for example, in dairying or home economics, while college-track students took a significantly more difficult and abstract scientific curricula. The truth for most institutions is that the land-grant presidents and professors’ conception of science defeated the grangers’ vocational “science” not through conceding a more vocational bent to their curriculum but by expanding the definition of a college or university. The land-grant colleges transformed from an institution devoted to teaching and research to one committed to service as well. Land-grant service came to be known as extension and outreach. In the early 1900s, almost all land-grant colleges were following Cornell’s or Wisconsin’s extension and outreach models, investing heavily in preparatory course programs, noncollegiate certificate courses, townhall lectures in rural areas on new crop or livestock methods, and 4-H programs for children. The grangers were appeased, even though few of their sons returned to the farm once they gained a collegiate degree.

3. 3. 3. Division within: Pure or applied research

The final and, in many senses, ongoing debate about science related to the question of whether a college should pursue pure or applied research, and the division shaped some land-grants into German-styled research universities and others into industrial and agricultural technical institutions. Applied sciences meant something closer to the ancient rhetorical concept of a *techne*, or a vocational art, a practice that might rejected high theory and abstractions to solve a practical problem. By contrast, scientists returning from Germany were hungry for *episteme*, or abstract truths, regardless of any practical application or consumer production. Universities came to define themselves by their *episteme*, offering concessions in practical subjects or the liberal arts to fund their graduate programs. Land-grants, however, wrestled for decades on whether any respectable, creditable college could offer *techne* in the granger sense alone, and their innovations and compromises regarding *techne* and *episteme* explain their significant extension and outreach programs, their noncollegiate programs, and their graduate research initiatives.

For those who know of Iowa State and its myriad research endeavors now, it is difficult to imagine that the early agricultural college took a deliberate stance *against* scientific research, but at several junctures throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, this division nearly tore the school asunder. For instance, when President Beardshear suffered a heart attack and died in 1902, the college divided into two factions. United States Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson and professor of animal husbandry Charles Curtiss led the agricultural faction, and longtime secretary and acting president, Edgar Stanton, led the industrial engineering and general sciences faction. Stanton and Curtiss both threatened to leave if the other took power, which would have destroyed the college (Ross, 1942a, Chapter 11). The compromise was that Stanton, a beloved stalwart of the school, swore to never run for president again, choosing instead to shepherd in middle-path presidential candidates, and

he served as acting president four times before his death. These divisions been applied sciences and theoretical sciences were not laid to rest until the World Wars in which scientific advancement was inextricably linked to industrial and military strength.

3. 3. 4. Composition in the land-grant institutions

My review of the relevant literature has revealed that no systematic investigation of land-grant composition instruction has been conducted. As discussed in Chapter 1, Composition Studies preferred to unify composition across institution types throughout the 1970s through the 1990s, and the revisionist historians of the early 2000s focused more on recovering minoritized perspectives in composition studies rather than theorizing the importance of the types of institutions that composition instructors practiced within. Two recent histories have posited that the land-grant mission impacted rhetoric and composition practices at the schools which differed from other institutions.

Mendenhall (2011) examined the rhetoric program at Ohio State University, which is Ohio's land-grant institution. It was founded in 1870 as the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, but by 1878 it changed its name to Ohio State University, signifying its commitment to the new research university ideal. Mendenhall (2011) recovered Joseph Denney, a rhetorician and co-author with Scott's influential *Paragraph-Writing* textbook, who began teaching at OSU in 1891. Denney carried forth a previous Ohio State English instructor's scientific approach to rhetoric, and throughout his career, he created a complete course of study in rhetoric similar to Scott's at the University of Michigan. Mendenhall (2011) captured the complicated yet constructive relationship of Denney's program to the Ohio State land-grant mission, noting that in 1890 OSU's "Practical Rhetoric" course was divided between medicine, agriculture, domestic science, pharmacy, and engineering (p. 141). Mendenhall (2011) quoted Denney in a speech justifying the differentiated rhetoric course, writing that "[a] subject like advanced Rhetoric, in these days of specialization, will hardly be entered

upon with zest by a student of engineering unless it can be plainly and vitally connected with his special work” (p. 141). Denney leveraged the utilitarian and vocational bent of the land-grant commitment to expand composition and rhetoric course offerings. He also defined rhetoric as a science, capitalizing on the specialization and research emphasis of OSU to expand upward into specialized classes and graduate instruction in rhetoric by 1901.

Similar to Scott’s program at Michigan, Denney’s separate Department of Rhetoric and English Language was combined with the Department of English Literature in 1904.

Unlike Michigan, however, Denney oversaw this transition and advocated for it because he saw the maneuver as a healthy direction for Ohio State (Mendenhall, 2011, p. 147).

Mendenhall (2011) argued that two reasons shaped Denney’s attitudes: First, he had always been more interested in administrative concerns for the University, and since 1901 he was Dean of the College of Arts, Philosophy, and Science. He believed this improved the educational quality of Ohio State *overall*, regardless of the individual status of rhetoric.

Second, he believed that literature’s recent adoption of analysis as a methodology meant that rhetoric and literature courses overlapped each other unproductively in the course catalogs.

Combining the departments meant that a single instructor could teach both rhetoric and literature courses, preventing departmental rivalries and competition for students electing into the curriculum. The unified English department offered four focuses, three of which loosely correlated to literature and philology subjects, and the fourth was composition, which included both introductory and upper-level courses in rhetoric (p. 148). Rhetoric courses, at least courses bearing rhetoric in the name, gradually faded from the course catalogs, yet composition did not: “the courses Denney established in first-year composition, advanced composition, upper-level writing electives, and technical writing remained in the course bulletins at least through the 1960s” (p. 149). These rhetoric-infused composition courses were practical, utilitarian, and specialized according to the needs of Ohio State’s land-grant

students. When Denney retired in 1933, Mendenhall (2011) admitted that it is unclear why the courses remained for so long, but she does note that two of Denney's students became English department heads after Denney's retirement. Denney, who remained head of the department while taking on upper administration positions, acted as a program administrator with a mind toward the institution and its mission, not as a specialized rhetorician seeking status and security within a discipline.

The second work that centers the land-grant mission's influence on composition and rhetoric was Stock's (2012) dissertation, *The Distribution of Rhetorical Education at a Public Midwest University, 1874–1927*. Stock (2012) noticed that the land-grant mission guided the University of Wisconsin-Madison's commitment to extension and outreach, a model which I noted above as one of the salvations of land-grants across the country. Stock argued that UW-Madison's motto, "the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state," or the "Wisconsin Idea," impacted the scope of democratic and practical composition topics in the FYC curriculum (p. 22). The main thrust of Stock's (2012) argument regarded the extension and outreach offerings at UW-Wisconsin rather than the influences of the land-grant mission on the FYC program for undergraduate and graduate students.

When Stock (2012) turned to the collegiate education of students, we learn that UW-Madison and Iowa State are very different schools. For instance, UW-Wisconsin had an established, robust literature department. In the first two decades of the 1900s, the majority of English courses featured literature, and the number of literary course offerings "dwarfed" those for rhetoric and composition and public speaking (p. 102). Iowa State had no literature program, and at this same period, literary courses were being critiqued and removed by Iowa's Board of Education (discussed in Chapter 5). The faculty members at UW-Wisconsin began publishing textbooks on composition, moving from their previous current-traditional textbooks on correctness to books that taught composition through literature. At the same

time, however, one department member, Edwin Woolley, published his *Handbook of Composition*, one of the prototypical current-traditional handbooks that Kitzhaber (1990), Brereton (1995), and Crowley (1998) each critiqued for its dogmatic devotion to error correction. On the whole, Stock (2012) argued that the UW-Wisconsin English department moved toward a literary humanism that instructed students in liberal and civic culture. However, Stock (2012) also noticed that the English department was paired to the public speaking department, and the two balanced each other out: public speaking handled civic engagement and civil discourse while English built up a literary curriculum. Stock (2012) placed UW-Madison within a civically oriented rhetoric education, and he — like many other contemporary histories — tried to distance UW-Madison’s program from being described and summarily dismissed as current-traditional.

Both Mendenhall (2011) and Stock (2012) situated their arguments against Kitzhaber’s (1990) thesis of rhetoric’s decline in the early 1900s and Berlin’s (1987) dismissal of most rhetoric instruction in the early 1900s as current-traditional, which Crowley (1998) clarified to mean rhetoric instruction prescriptive correctness and the “modes of discourse.” Both Mendenhall (2011) and Stock (2012) sought to reclaim the rhetoric at their land-grant institutions for the approval of rhetoric scholars, but neither situated their histories within WPA scholarship, nor did they engage with land-grant politics and their direct impact on the composition curriculum.

In sum, this chapter has reviewed how liberal arts colleges constrained themselves for centuries under a principles-first education. The liberal arts institutions included four years of rhetorical, oratorical, and literary education, oftentimes via dead languages and classical Latin and Greek texts, because their leaders believed such education disciplined the mind and inculcated sound moral character, liberal culture, and a lifelong ability to learn. Reacting against this education, the new German research universities flung forth in all directions to

follow their research imperative. The universities rapidly reduced the old college's prescribed communication curriculum down to first-year vernacular composition, usually via an increasingly remedial rhetoric, but English and philology offered students a specialized curriculum unknown in history of English. These departments treated their humanities subjects like scientific disciplines, mirroring the specialization and fragmentation of all other disciplines. The land-grant colleges, however, struggled for decades to interpret a federal law that its founder left intentionally vague, and each one balanced vocational education, agricultural and mechanical arts, research, and liberal education differently. The land-grant colleges exhibit all the hallmarks of "communication breakdown" between presidents, faculty, students, and public stakeholders. Composition also varied in each of land-grant colleges according to their institutions' purposes, which were continuously debated in local and national arenas. Confusion abounded regarding the role of composition within the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, and the next chapter reveals how IAC navigated the early years of chaotic curricular definition, administrative experimentation, and program design.

CHAPTER 4. BEFORE THE WPA: 1869 – 1898

Focused solely on IAC, this chapter covers the years 1869, the year students began taking classes at IAC, to 1898, the year Alvin Noble, IAC's first WPA, arrived. These years constituted the era before the WPA. More than any other time in IAC/ISU's history, where the institution and its politics went, so too did the composition program and its instructors. In 1898, internal and external factors, namely the rapid growth of students, established the first composition instruction hierarchy, and the WPA occupies center stage for the remainder of the dissertation. This chapter pays special attention to Adonijah Welch, William Hillis Wynn, and Margaret Doolittle, each of whom either taught in or shaped composition instruction at IAC, and each left archival evidence of their perspectives on composition instruction. However, this chapter also folds in the populist debates from grangers that influenced IAC's humanities and composition curriculum, including public interventions into the English curriculum in 1874, 1884, and 1891.

4. 1. The Birth of the State of Iowa Agricultural College

Iowa at IAC's founding was an infant: In 1833, the Black Hawk Purchase allowed settlers to enter the eastern edges of Iowa. Between 1836 and 1851, a series of treaties and purchases rapidly removed remaining Native American territory from the state (D. D. Smith, 1998). In 1847, only 59 days after Iowa was incorporated as a state, the First General Assembly of Iowa founded the State University of Iowa in the capital of the state, but it would not open its doors to students until 1855 (Aurner, 1916, p. 5). Iowa City was the industrial and legislative hub of Iowa. By contrast, in 1856, Ames, which would become the municipal home of the Agricultural College, did not exist. No railroad breached the swampy grasslands; no farms lay in a grid across the landscape (N. Parker, 1856). At the State College's inauguration, B. F. Gue, one of the College's founders, recalled the austere and isolated location of the college:

Striking out north from Des Moines, on to the great sea of prairie that then stretched, in almost unbroken wildness, to the Minnesota line, the great monotonous plain of waving grass only broken here and there by scattered groves, and meandering through it the sluggish river of fragrant name [The Skunk River], that, skirted with timber, seemed like a long line of stragglng sentinels, guarding the great plain from the approaching civilization that had just begun to encroach upon its boundless domain. A few log cabins of the early pioneers contained the entire population that then inhabited the country between the capital and the College Farm. (in Ross, 1942, p. 28)

Many mistakenly place the origin of the State Agricultural College at the passing of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862, but this state's pioneers planned for a college well ahead of federal funding. Emerging from economic collapse and a recession from 1858 to 1859, Iowa farmers and industrial leaders believed that Iowans deserved "an opportunity for agricultural education equal to the training for the other professions" (Ross, 1942a, p. 19). The new state wanted the security of educated industry.

Almost 10 years before the College opened its doors to students in 1869, in 1858, Governor Lowe signed the State of Iowa Legislative Act 91, colloquially known as the Agricultural College Bill, which established the State College. The initial framers of the Ag College Bill were "abolitionists, prohibitionists, religious liberals, as well as champions of industrial education," similar to the spectrum of interests at other land-grants, but unlike those who *reacted* to the Morrill Act by grafting agriculture onto the liberal arts, the Iowans intended to create a new institution from the very start (Ross, 1942a, p. 17). Instead of starting a small liberal arts college like most other communities in the pioneering West or duplicating the university in the eastern part of the state, the framers shared a unified view that Iowa needed something new, something innovative, something practical.

Three of the leading agitators for the Ag College Bill — Gue, Richardson, and Wright — were all pioneer farmers in the new state, and the bill reveals their interests clearly: “there is hereby established a State Agricultural College and Model Farm, to be connected with the entire agricultural interests [*sic*] of the State of Iowa” (State of Iowa Legislative Act, 91: Agricultural College, 1858). True to these purposes and influences, before a single student began their education at IAC, the Agricultural College first opened an experimental or “model” farm. In anticipation for faculty research as well as manual labor and practical education for the students, the earliest staff of IAC tended, tilled, and cultivated the model farm. It was a serious undertaking; the first annual reports of IAC began in 1859, and their contents focused almost exclusively on surveying farmers across the state to ensure that the experiments conducted on the model farm would benefit Iowan farmers. The founders reported extensively on crop yields, sustainability, and prospects regarding dairying, bee keeping, corn, grapes, and dozens of other possible livestock or crops for IAC to husband. However, sprinkled throughout the subheadings of “Potatoes” and tables titled “Sheep,” the founders at times returned to the “curriculum,” that is subject matter teachers would teach in classrooms. But it might be more accurate to say that the founders believed that their impassioned, hands-on, experiential experiments on the model farm *was* a discussion of the curriculum. To these educational reformers, agriculture was a worthy subject in and of itself.

IAC’s curricular purpose was clear from the Ag College Bill of 1858:

The course of instruction in said college shall include the following branches, to wit: Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Botany, Horticulture, Fruit Growing, Forestry, Animal and Vegetable Anatomy, Geology, Mineralogy, Meteorology, Entymology [*sic*], Zoology, the Veterinary Art, plant Mensuration, Levelling, Surveying, Book Keeping, and such mechanic arts as are directly connected with Agriculture. Also, such other studies as the trustees may from time to time prescribe, not inconsistent with the

purpose of this act. (State of Iowa Legislative Act, 91: Agricultural College, 1858, Sec. 15)

These classroom subjects were a curious and experimental mixture, more scientific than vocational, and absent from the Ag College Bill were the mechanical arts to come, as well as the traditional liberal arts and classical languages. Ross (1942) wrote that “evidently instruction in mathematics and English was assumed” (p. 22), but IAC’s annual reports before the 1869 opening (and interactions with Morrill and other model institutions, discussed below) reveal that Ross’s own assumption was speculative. In IAC’s 1860 *Annual Report*, Secretary Wilson wrote directly to farmers that the curriculum was:

intended to develop and adopt a system of instruction which shall embrace, to the fullest extent possible, those departments of all sciences which have a practical or theoretical bearing upon agriculture and agricultural interests; which while it shall be sufficiently thorough to afford a good mental discipline, shall also afford a larger share of practical knowledge, peculiarly adapted to the necessities and calling of the Farmer, and which none of the other classes of colleges are competent to perform. (Iowa State College, 1861, p. 6)

Unsurprisingly, Wilson alluded to the value of agricultural education in terms of mental discipline and faculty psychology, those staples of the liberal arts curriculum. Dismissing the conservative colleges’ stance that classical texts and dead languages would discipline the mind, the IAC founders believed that a practical, agricultural education was a sufficient, disciplining substitute for literary studies. The founders went so far in this direction that, instead of describing a “practical” education in terms of remedial classroom subjects such as mathematics and English composition, in the 1863 *Annual Report*, the founders defended manual labor as a highly effective mental discipline (1864, p. 6).

4. 2. Shaping of the 1869 Composition Curriculum

From 1858 to 1868, the years before the first students arrived, IAC was heading toward an agricultural oblivion that land-grant historians have long-since cataloged. Those A&M land-grant colleges with the narrowest views of agricultural education (i.e., who thought no further than preparing students to return to the farm), those who rejected the liberal arts, and those who fought research for the sake of applied sciences lagged behind their peers in gaining high quality faculty, graduate students, and prepared undergraduate students (Sorber & Geiger, 2014). IAC did not follow this path; Sorber and Geiger (2014) wrote that IAC “placed more emphasis on agricultural research than any other A&M, venturing into doctor education well before its peers” (p. 398). IAC’s curricular path may have been very different except for three powerful influences: (1) the 1862 Morrill Act’s inclusion of liberal arts, (2) a trustee-led expedition around the country to assimilate lessons from other land-grant colleges in 1867, and (3) the nuanced predilections and influential leadership of IAC’s first president, Adonijah Welch.

The Morrill Act was not perfectly fitted to IAC. The differences in IAC’s founding from other land grants were already distinct from many other land-grant colleges, the foremost difference being that IAC was an agricultural college in want of funding while most others were liberal arts colleges reacting to a funding opportunity — so long as they embraced agriculture (see Table 3.1). Iowa’s Ag College Bill placed agricultural education first and “other studies as the trustees may from time to time prescribe,” while the Morrill Land Grant Act balanced “liberal and practical education” “without excluding other scientific and classical studies.” (State of Iowa Legislative Act, 91: Agricultural College, 1858, sec. 15; Morrill Land Grant Act, 1862, sec. 4). The Morrill Act’s clauses compelled curricular choices that IAC initially had not considered or, as Ross (1942) argued, the founders “assumed.” When the founders selected the first faculty of the college, no instructor of English literature,

grammar, rhetoric, or Latin was hired (Ross, 1942, p. 61). As discussed in Chapter 3, Morrill did not agree with an agricultural interpretation of the Bill, but Morrill's personal feelings on the Bill's intent were not law. The Morrill Act's vague inclusion of "other scientific and classical studies," however, *was* law, and this phrasing allowed other leaders at IAC to include more liberal studies than the Iowa Ag College Bill initially promised to Iowans. As has been shown by land grants' diffusion and disarray on curricular issues, when confronted by the initial ambiguities of the Morrill Act, local actors, be they trustees or presidents or journalists, debated and decided the balance between vocational studies, scientific research, and the liberal arts.

IAC's founders had the wherewithal to seek out guidance on their curriculum, albeit at a rather late date compared to their immense investigations done on or about the model farm. In 1867, the board of trustees assigned Benjamin Gue, who was an architect of the 1858 Ag College Bill and acting president of IAC, and Peter Melendy, secretary of IAC and president of the Iowa Agricultural Society, to survey other land-grant college curricula, to choose the best administrative organization, and to locate faculty and a president for the College (Goedeken, 2017; Gue & Melendy, 1868, p. 26). In the 1867 *Annual Report*, Gue and Melendy delivered their survey results to the board of trustees. Gue and Melendy were enamored of Michigan's Agricultural College (MAC), enough to reprint its course of study in full, including summaries of each of the departments of study. MAC had a preparatory school to shore up its incoming freshman, and — following the disastrous attempts to remove all liberal studies from the curriculum, as mentioned in Chapter 3 — the 1867 curriculum included a sophomore literature course, a junior rhetoric built around Richard Whatley's *Elements of Rhetoric*, and other liberal arts. In Gue and Melendy's summary, they stressed the technical and drilled elements of rhetoric, applied to the analysis of literature:

Rhetoric—arguments, conviction, persuasion, fallacies in reasoning. Select portions of English classics receive critical examination in a course of reading prescribed for each class. The classes have regular and systematic instruction in the art of the selection, arrangement and expression of the matter related to the assigned or chosen topics for composition. (Gue & Melendy, 1868, p. 35)

Gue and Melendy's course summary revealed MAC's adherence to the old guard of Scottish Commonsense rhetoric, which was the aging rhetoric that Kitzhaber (1990) and Johnson (1991) investigated through their textbook surveys before the revolutions at Harvard and Michigan. For instance, it was fashionable at this time to separate 'conviction' from 'persuasion,' a distinction established in Blair's 1783 *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Kitzhaber, 1990, p. 51). These rhetoric courses were not elocution courses, though, but they were heavily infused with literary analysis, which at the time was the domain of rhetoric.

Gue and Melendy were not, however, interested in MAC's rhetoric or liberal studies integration. They quickly moved past English (which was blurred together with grammar and rhetoric) to focus on how MAC required manual labor from its students for the next six pages, and they followed that discussion with MAC's rules regarding its model farm for another six pages, thus concluding their report on MAC. Gue and Melendy summarized other land-grant colleges but with much less fervor: Pennsylvania Agricultural College, though inaugurated well, had recently dropped its manual labor to be run by a "literary" president. For these two agriculturalists, nothing could be integrated from a college so obviously in decline. Sheffield Scientific School made no pretenses about including agriculture, and "[n]o attempt [was] made to give the student any of the practical applications of the theories taught by a system of labor, as the entire Faculty [were] unbelievers in the idea of manual labor in connection with acquiring a College education" (Gue & Melendy, 1868, p. 53). Gue and Melendy dropped Yale's Sheffield in less than a page, absorbing into IAC nothing from Yale's curriculum.

Massachusetts Agricultural College was only inaugurated the preceding year on the Michigan Plan, so Gue and Melendy applauded but dismissed it in a page. The last college summarized, Cornell, received longer treatment because of Ezra Cornell's emphasis on manual labor (much tempered by Andrew White), but a caveat seemed to hang over the section: all the exciting developments were out of reach for any endeavor *not* attached to a multimillionaire investor. MAC was, clearly, the model for IAC. In Gue and Melendy's recommended subjects for the curriculum at the end of the report, the only two subjects that differed from the 1858 Iowa Ag Bill curriculum were the additions of Practical Agriculture and Landscape Gardening, both of which came from the MAC curriculum. They included none of MAC's eleven liberal arts subjects (p. 60).

Two final, notable aspects of this report influenced IAC's initial curriculum. The first is a sin of omission. On this venture to some of the most notable colleges and universities in America at their origins or land-grant transformations, Gue and Melendy talked with the most prominent figures of educational reform of the age. They had the spectacular luck to have arrived at Yale's Sheffield Scientific School at the same time Justin Morrill was visiting to discuss the 1862 Land-Grant Act with the Yale faculty. Goedken (2017) investigated this little-known expedition and cross-referenced Yale's faculty's letters, diaries, and correspondence, and Goedken (2017) discovered that Gue and Melendy omitted key arguments by the land-grant originator in their report to the IAC board. On November 11, 1867, Gue and Melendy arrived at Daniel Coit Gilman's house (Gilman would later preside over Johns Hopkins, the premier German-styled university), and questioned Morrill about his intentions for land grants. According to Gilman, Morrill scolded the IAC men, disagreeing sharply with their agricultural interpretation of the land-grant purpose, especially disagreeing with their inclusion of manual labor in the curriculum or the educational relevance having a farm on the college grounds. Perhaps fearing the weight of his influence, Morrill's views were

both known to Gue and Melendy and strategically omitted from the report to IAC's board of trustees.

Finally, Gue and Melendy's report offered a short list of presidents for the board of trustees to consider. They stressed the importance of this list: "We are firmly of the belief, judging from facts which have come to our knowledge, that the partial failure of many similar Institutions within the last few years, has been owing more to the employment of incompetent men as members of the Faculty, than from all other causes combined" (1868, p. 59). Adonijah Welch was at the top of this list. In this too, we see MAC's influence. In Gue's (1889) memorial address after Welch's death, Gue wrote that on the 1867 journey, MAC's president, T. C. Abbot, said that "If you could get A. S. Welch, he is the best man in America to organize your college" (p. 6). The irony is that Gue and Melendy praised MAC mostly for its model farm and manual labor, admiring its perseverance on these two topics where other colleges failed, but Gue and Melendy took for granted the savvy with which MAC navigated their practical-plus-liberal education at an agricultural college. They seemed to further disregard that MAC as an agricultural college promoted its English instructor to be its president, not appreciating Abbot's influence on MAC's curriculum. These oversights and underappreciations culminated in Gue and Melendy disregarding that President Abbot's recommendation for IAC's presidency was another English instructor-cum-superintendent who, like Abbot, was neither a scientist nor a farmer. These agricultural adherents chose a qualified yet odd choice to lead their farming college.

Land-grant college historians have overlooked Adonijah Welch, IAC's first president. A complex figure in land-grant history, Welch generates particular interest from a Composition perspective because he trained as a rhetorician. He entered the first collegiate class at the University of Michigan in 1843 as a sophomore (University of Michigan, 1843, p. 7), possibly earned an honorary M.A. in Rhetoric from the University of Michigan in 1852 for

his work in philological teacher training,⁶ presided over the Michigan State Normal School (now Eastern Michigan University) from 1851 to 1865, and served as a trustee for MAC from 1857 through 1865, helping guide its curriculum as it expanded with the Morrill Act funding (Beal, 1915, pp. 346–347; Hamilton, 2000; Ross, 1942a). As discussed in Chapter 3, MAC encountered most of the debates over liberal arts, scientific, and agricultural curricula before any other land-grant college while being more financially tenuous as a state-funded institution. Welch had a front-row seat to these curricular politics before coming to Iowa. After superintending the Michigan Normal School, he pursued personal ambitions for a few years; he followed the gold rush to California for a short time, and then recovered his ailing health one year in Florida, also becoming one of the state’s senators before accepting the presidency of IAC in 1868. Neither farmer (he may be considered a “gentleman farmer,” for he tended a garden) nor scientist, he was an educator first and foremost, trained in pedagogy and the classics, and, at some point, he came to believe in the ideal of scientific investigations in agriculture.

⁶ The minutes from the University of Michigan’s board of regents meetings records that, in 1852, the board conferred three honorary degrees (“admitted *ex gratia* to the degree of Master of Arts”) in 1852, including one to Adonijah Welch (University of Michigan Board of Regents, 2000, p. 524). The 1852 catalogue for the University of Michigan states that the master’s of “Science, Literature, and the Arts” would be granted to someone who completed three years of professional studies, passed an exam before the faculties, and read their thesis before the whole university (University of Michigan, 1852, p. 28). However, Michigan’s *Catalogue of Graduates* lists only the two other recipients of the 1852 honorary master’s degree (University of Michigan, 1923, p. 704). These were the University of Michigan’s first honorary degrees and the last until 1866, which puts Welch’s absence in relief. The possibility of Welch’s 1852 honorary master’s in rhetoric is little known, even in official Iowa State records. Both Iowa State’s Digital Scholarship & Initiatives page (*Adonijah S. Welch*, n.d.) and ISU’s Biographical Dictionary (Landolt, 2021) for Welch list that he held a master’s from the University of Michigan, but neither specifies rhetoric. Strangely, his master’s is not mentioned in records and references to Welch from his contemporaries, such as student biographies of Welch in the *Aurora* and *The Bomb*, eulogies after his death by those who worked alongside him for decades, newspaper clippings about Welch in the local presses, or even Welch’s biography in Michigan State’s official biography of its board of trustees. Curiously, this latter source lists Welch’s high school and intermediate appointments at normal schools not mentioned in other biographies, but not his master’s (Beal, 1915, p. 347). The only published source that contains specific reference to his master’s in rhetoric is Hamilton’s (2000) biography in the *American National Biography*, a reputable source, but no specific citation was given. I cannot resolve this issue, but based on my reading of Welch’s lectures and curricular philosophies, it is possible that Welch turned down the degree conferred upon him. Whatever caused the conferral and possible reversal of the degree, the degree remained listed in quasiofficial documents from the University of Michigan, confusing biographical efforts ever since. I express immense gratitude to Bentley Historical Library Reference Team at the University of Michigan, especially Caitlin Moriarty, for locating many of the catalogs and meeting minutes regarding this issue.

A classicist-turned-president, trained in the liberal arts, did not always embrace the agricultural mission of land-grants, and Welch's devotion to agricultural education should not be taken for granted. While most land-grant presidents, at their most generous, interpreted "agricultural education" as the liberal arts plus some science courses (many viewed an experimental farm as non-essential), some were actively resistant to agriculture. Dartmouth's president, Samuel Colcord Bartlett, sought separation from the land-grant college, and he instigated conflict between Dartmouth's historical liberal arts vision and the new, bolted-on land-grant values. Sorber (2018) recounts how Bartlett vocally incited grange anger with his demeaning speeches on agricultural education, and he refused to call agricultural students "real" Dart students. He even devoted portions of his 1881 commencement speech to demeaning agricultural graduates, stating that they were only capable of becoming "highway surveyors, selectmen, and perhaps, members of the legislature" (p. 110). The New Hampshire legislature eventually acceded to dissolving the acrimonious relationship. Through the course of my dissertation's investigations, I could find no clear reason why Welch *cared* so much about science and agriculture. Welch, however, seems to have been a true believer in the land-grant mission, but he was not a vocational purist like the grangers; in fact, his pedagogical writing represents a complex transition from the liberal arts to the new sciences, all bolstered by a democratic idealism.

Several archived documents reveal Welch's thinking, at least regarding curricular matters. In 1868, while finishing his senatorial term in Florida, President Welch was tasked by the IAC board to outline his organizational and curricular plan for the College (Gue, 1889, p. 7). In his report to the trustees, entitled, *Plan of Organization of the Iowa State Agricultural College, Ames, Story County*, "he elaborated the plan, in all of its important features," a plan which Gue later sentimentally added, has "never [been] amended but to mar his marvelous work of that pioneer period of industrial education" (Gue, 1889, p. 7). The opening pages of

the *Plan* reveal Welch's dedication to remaining true to the letter and the spirit of the Morrill Act, not necessarily the 1858 Iowa Ag College Bill or the Gue and Melendy curriculum of 1867. Welch meant to teach the agricultural *and mechanical arts* in order "to educate the industrial classes for their pursuits in life" (p. 1); Gue and the IAC founders meant for IAC to focus on agriculture, not the mechanical arts. Welch included these and went further. Just as the Morrill Act states that such an education shall not "[exclude] other scientific and classical studies," including literature and English, Welch strained to create permanent places for science and classical studies without allowing them to "overshadow the departments essential to the enterprise," that is, an industrial education (p. 2). Informed by Welch's administrative and trustee experiences in Michigan, IAC seemed to be much more firmly placed in the agricultural camp than many of the other land-grants, but Welch appeared determined to serve the competing and confusing stakeholders of the Morrill Act, not just Iowa's farmers.

Welch broke the 1869 curriculum into two main departments — Agriculture and Mechanic Arts — and these courses of study had a prescribed sequence (Iowa State College, 1870; Welch, 1868). IAC also had a Department of Ladies and three subordinate departments, Civil Engineering, Business, and the Normal Department for training teachers, but unlike the main departments, these "departments" had courses but no sequencing (these would come in the following years). The freshman year courses were the same for all students, regardless of department:

First Year.

First Term.

Algebra.

Physical Geography.

Rhetoric.

Book-keeping.

Second Term.

Geometry.

Physiology and Hygiene.

English Language and Literature (Iowa State College, 1870, p. 10;

Welch, 1868, p. 5).

Welch (1868) wrote that all courses after these were optional rather than prescribed, but this elective curriculum had several constraints that other elective experiments, such as Eliot's Harvard plan, did not offer. First, a prerequisite system kept students from enrolling in a course of study beyond their capacity; second, students enrolled in the same first-year courses (e.g., algebra, rhetoric, bookkeeping, English language and literature) regardless of their course of study; third, the institutional purpose of the school greatly limited the available options (Welch, 1868, pp. 12–13). The relationship among the departments outside of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, the classes students could choose outside the main courses of study, and the actual degrees conferred based on the students' choices were unclear. A student in 1869 could be sure of a degree and the path to achieve it in Agriculture or Mechanic Arts, but time and experimentation would refine the expectations for the other courses of study.

The Rhetoric and English Language and Literature courses were the only English-adjacent courses students could take, and both were taught in the first year. Welch's (1868) *Plan* engaged the larger culture of higher education at that time to justify his subordination — but not outright exclusion — of classical studies. To do so, he situated Iowa State in direct opposition to the liberal arts institutions. Arguing that “the old college course [of study] does not answer the wants of modern life” (p. 3), he outlined several maxims of the liberal arts that he contrasted with his interpretation of the Morrill Act (1868, pp. 4–5). Refer to Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Summary of Welch's comparisons between liberal arts colleges' beliefs and IAC's beliefs.

Liberal arts maxims	Land-grant maxims
Ancient classics are prominent while modern sciences are tolerated in limited amounts.	Modern sciences are prominent while ancient classics are tolerated in limited amounts.
Physical labor is divorced from mental labor.	Physical labor and mental labor are united.
Knowledge gained in course of study is beneficial for its disciplining effect; discipline helps in the long run.	Knowledge gained in course of study is "valuable chiefly for its uses" in the "pursuits of life" (p. 5); discipline is a convenient side-effect.

In his justification for the course of study, Welch (1868) foremost argued for the coursework's industrial applications, but later in the document he borrowed from the liberal arts' adherence to faculty psychology (reviewed in Chapter 3). For example, in his rationale for the scientific curriculum, he wrote, "the natural sciences which classify the objects of the external world, train powerfully the faculties of perception, inductive reasoning, and classification" (p. 7). Additionally, math and psychology trained the reflective faculties, and language and literature developed the imaginative and expressive faculties.

Separately, in Welch's (1869) inaugural address, writing to the general audience of incoming students, parents, journalists, and local politics spectators, Welch explained in more depth his critique of the liberal arts on faculty psychology grounds. Like so many other commentators, he critiqued the dead languages of Latin and Greek as being ill-fitted to an industrial economy. As discussed in Chapter 3, this technique was ineffective against the liberal arts colleges. Liberal arts pedagogues across the country argued that Latin and Greek disciplined the mind, regardless of their current practical applications. Many chose not to offer English language instruction, but Noah Porter's (1878) *American Colleges and the American Public* redoubled the earlier Yale Report argument, stating that "certain studies may be of the greatest value for discipline which possess no other obvious and direct utility" (p. 69).

Knowing the lines of argument in faculty psychology well, Welch (1869) went further than attacking dead languages or replacing Latin and Greek with vernacular instruction. Welch

addressed the pedagogical foundations upon which the Yale Report sustained Latin and Greek for so long, and he outright argued that Latin and Greek were not effective at disciplining the mind. Instead, he argued that the sciences better disciplined students, for:

in the whole catalogue of studies none meet these conditions [of systematic and generalizable effort] so completely as the Natural Sciences. The vast variety of beautiful objects they offer to the eye, at once attracts and rivets the attention. The immense vocabulary which their nomenclature has made, can never be compassed without a powerful exertion that renders the memory ready and retentive. (1869, p. 25)

As was common in faculty psychology discourse, Welch added other faculties to the list beyond memory, such as “they reflective faculties,” similar to his 1868 *Plan* to the trustees, but the point was clear: a scientific education was superior to a liberal arts education.

What Welch accomplished by being a classics scholar and a land-grant convert was a rare melding of two seemingly incommensurate pedagogical systems. His resituating of the agricultural and natural sciences within a mental discipline framework allowed him all the advantages of the liberal arts’ psychological basis for IAC’s curriculum while also including the benefits of the progressive arguments to fit an education for modernity, be that through vocationalism or research. Welch concluded his inauguration discourse on the land-grant curriculum with a turn that a liberal arts president never could have made:

But if the various branches which compose our curricula can claim so high a merit simply as intellectual gymnastics, how much higher rank they hold when measured by the standard of their comparative usefulness; in other words, by the degree in which compared with many other branches of knowledge, they contributed to the welfare and prosperity of the human race. (Welch, 1869, p. 28)

The first curriculum at IAC constituted a broad, scientific education because the agricultural sciences supported the modern industrial economy; simultaneously, this broad scientific education disciplined the mind *better* than competing educational alternatives.

The pedagogical savvy of Welch's maneuver is highlighted by contrasting it with Benjamin Gue's (1869) own address at the opening convocation. Gue's vision of the college was explicitly and unapologetically — perhaps polemically — progressive. He wanted a college for the industrial classes, “for the rich and poor, white or black, man or woman” (p. 11). He openly and bitterly attacked liberal arts colleges as elitist and aristocratic institutions, lauding the land-grant college as an alternative “within reach of the hundreds of young men whom poverty alone keeps out of our ordinary Colleges” (p. 6). Regarding the curriculum, Gue parroted attacks that the liberal arts were adroit at deflecting. To Gue, students squandered years “acquiring a knowledge of the ancient and dead languages of past ages, to the exclusion of the more valuable knowledge of those branches which relate to the present” (p. 10). He did not fluently speak the discourse of the psychological zeitgeist of mental discipline, and his dogmatic interpretation of practical education repelled fellow progressives who wanted a research-infused curriculum, not a curriculum whose educational outcomes amounted to enlightened manual labor. Welch's own speeches include the socially progressive politics of women's and multiracial education, but he infused pedagogical nuance into the debate.

Welch's argument was potent because he did *not* disagree with the core tenets of faculty psychology and mental discipline to please supporters of practical education. Mental discipline was not a passing or superficial fad for Welch; he reaffirmed his pedagogical beliefs on faculty psychology at the end of his career and life in his 1890 book (printed posthumously), *The Teachers' Psychology: A Treatise on the Intellectual Faculties, the Order of Their Growth, and the Corresponding Series of Studies by which They are Educated*. By all

estimations, Welch refused to yield against the attacks on faculty psychology through the 1870s and 1880s, but he, unlike most educators⁷ in the United States, threaded the paradigmatic needle of upholding faculty psychology, attacking the liberal arts, and justifying a scientific education. IAC, thus, had a strange land-grant curriculum, vociferously in favor of agricultural sciences, led by a mental disciplinarian who was also a philologist and rhetorician. For the first several decades, rather than falling into extremes of vocationalism, pure scientific research, or the liberal arts, IAC pursued agricultural research more than any other land-grant, all while insulating a small but staunch liberal arts presence, and Welch's influence, until his death in 1889, was indispensable.

Welch's early beliefs about IAC were aspirational, and we need to view them more as a glimpse into Welch's ideals rather than IAC's realities. For instance, Welch's (1868) *Plan* was as much a plea to the trustees of the college to fund Welch's desired professorships and institutional government as it was an outline for the curriculum. Only three professors of the 18 whom Welch requested could be hired by the time the first students arrived. Those students arrived at a campus that was not fully formed. In Welch's first report to the trustees, he wrote that the architect "completed the structure without making any provision for lighting, heating, supplying with water, or for adequate drainage" (as cited in Ross, 1942, p. 50). And, the students weren't fully formed, either. IAC conducted a preparatory term in the fall of 1868 to train the conditionally admitted students before the official start of the school year in spring of 1869.⁸ In an addendum to his *Plan*, Welch (1868) updated the trustees on the College's first incoming class, which comprised 54 men and seven women:

Many are pursuing one or more of the college studies, but none have, as yet, gained complete admission to the college courses. So far all have been found deficient in one

⁷ Kitzhaber (1990) briefly discussed one other educator, Herbert Spencer, who argued for scientific education in terms of superior mental discipline (p. 11).

⁸ According to the course catalogs, IAC's school year began in spring, usually mid-February, from 1869 until 1899 when the academic year switched to begin in fall.

or more of the branches required as preparatory to the college and are now engaged in studying. (p. 23)

In this milieu of tempered excitement and obstinate optimism, the first class entered the College, and IAC's decades of preparation, risk, and fortune were tested on real students for the first time.

4. 3. Composition Instruction at IAC before the WPA

A momentary pause: As I begin describing the course of instruction at IAC, including course names, department designations, and instructor titles, I must warn the reader that this was the period before disciplines, and at IAC in particular, a period of experimentation. As the College grew — as colleges across the country expanded and specialized — departments began to materialize. However, these departments tried out odd combinations until settling into forms that, by the early 1900s, we would recognize today. Course titles like “Analysis,” “Logic,” “English Grammar,” “Applied Rhetoric,” “English Language and Literature,” “Composition,” “Elocution,” “History of the English Language,” and “The Science of Language” blended together what have long-since become distinct disciplines. Novels might be taught in history classes and grammar might be taught in a psychology course because the IAC instructors were trained before professional disciplines existed. Not only do the course names often not explain the content of the courses, finding evidence of what *exactly* was taught can be challenging. As IAC professionalized, its annual and biennial reports, its course catalogs, and other archival artifacts began to list textbooks, course descriptions, and pedagogical practices, offering reliable and distinguishable details about what happened in the English program. The earliest years, however, remain muddy to the prying historical eye. Early catalogs did not list textbooks, instructors did not archive syllabi, and, when perhaps an instructor codified their practices in a student newspaper, the instructors spoke in pedagogical terms that appear similar (e.g., paper, essay, criticism, discipline) but have evolved over the

century. Deducing distinctions from instructor titles is also unreliable: IAC's president was as likely to teach landscape gardening as rhetoric, and Edgar Stanton, an instructor of mathematics, as likely to teach algebra as composition. It is anachronistic to expect a late 1800s course to have delivered content approximating the same boundaries as those of today, and I have tried to scrutinize several artifacts and secondary sources before speaking for the past. With these caveats in place, let us examine the earliest composition courses at IAC.

4. 3. 1. 1869 through 1889: Welch, Wynn, and the embattled classical curriculum

In a section of *Plan of Organization of the Iowa State Agricultural College*, titled "Study of Language," Welch (1868) viewed composition courses as "collateral attainments" for students destined to public and industrial leadership, meaning these humanities courses were important detours but not curricular focuses for any student (p. 8). While well-schooled in their scientific studies, Welch believed students needed language training to communicate with "habitual force and correctness," ready to speak or write "pure English with readiness" (p. 9). Instruction in vernacular English was institutionally protected, which was a clear curricular stance in the war against Latin and Greek. Welch (1868) claimed that students could become stuck in "intellectual dawdling" if they took too many courses in Latin and Greek, and he instead urged students to take French or German — both languages of business and industry — instead. Welch kept a small portion of the classical language curriculum, though. IAC did not offer Greek, but it did offer an optional course in Latin to help students learn scientific nomenclature.

As the research ideal grew and as the elective curriculum spread, most colleges, whether they began as liberal arts institutions or not, slowly compressed rhetoric and composition from a four-year, prescribed plan into a single first-year composition (FYC) course. Composition was a first-year writing course from the very beginning at IAC. The entire 1869 freshman class attended Rhetoric in the first semester and English Language and

Literature in the second semester (Iowa State College, 1870, p. 10). IAC offered no other writing or speaking course, and no disciplinary writing courses were mentioned as either elective or required courses.

According to the annual and biennial reports, from 1869 to 1871, Welch and an assortment of instructors and professors taught English literature, rhetoric, and composition courses. What is somewhat interesting and different from many upstart colleges, these FYC courses were not preparatory or remedial courses for underprepared students. IAC instituted a preparatory department from its inception (based on MAC's model) which ran separately from the college course. In the early years, while IAC could still count its total enrollment under a hundred students, reports listed, quite tediously, the number of class *sessions* per term that instructors taught. In other words, the reports listed each time an instructor walked into a classroom as a "session." For example, in 1869's first term, Welch taught 96 class sessions (likely two separate classes, three days per week, for 16 weeks) of Rhetoric. As for the course English Grammar, the chemistry professor, Dr. Foote, taught 48 sessions, and a temporary instructor, Mr. T. L. Thompson, taught 23 sessions. After IAC's first year of instruction, English occupied more of the curriculum, both in freshman year and in the junior year. The following is a selection of the 1871 English-adjacent humanities (literature, linguistics, rhetoric, etc.) conducted in the Agricultural Course:

Freshman Year.

First Term.

Analysis of English Language: Rhetoric.

Elocution.

Second Term.

English Literature: Elements of Criticism.

Elocution.

Junior Year.

First Term.

Study of words.

Second Term.

Study of Shakespeare. (Iowa State College, 1872, pp. 31–32)

After these first three years of cobbled-together humanities instruction headed by President Welch, William Hillis Wynn joined the faculty to teach the 1872 cohort and lead the Department of English Language and Literature. After 1872, Welch relinquished the English courses⁹, and Wynn took over the direction of the department, which at this time amalgamated literature, Latin, history. Wynn studied at Wittenberg College (now University), a small, Lutheran liberal arts college in Springfield, Ohio¹⁰, and he was president of a college¹¹ for five years before coming to IAC (Iowa State College, 1874, pp. 492, 500).

In the 1872 and 1873 *Biennial Report*, Wynn described the curriculum for the first time in detail. The Freshman course, “Analysis of the English Sentence,” required students to use President Welch’s (1855) *Analysis of the English Sentence, Designed for Advanced Classes*, a text devoted to the philological dissection of the language (Iowa State College, 1874, p. 63). Wynn (or an unnamed preceptress) taught the rhetoric course by imitating literary authors that Wynn selected (he had not yet found a suitable textbook). The second-semester course introduced literary criticism through a reprinting of Kames’s eighteenth-century textbook, *The Elements of Criticism*, and students wrote analyses of Shakespeare’s plays, to which students received “a brief memorandum” in response to their compositions

⁹ Until Welch lost the presidency in 1883, which is discussed below.

¹⁰ Wynn was something of a prodigy; he began his college education at 15, entering the first class when Wittenberg opened. Also, here I’ll note a personal detail, exhibiting nothing more than the joy of happenstance: Wittenberg is my alma mater.

¹¹ It is unclear what college this was. Wynn testifies that he was president of Mendota College for five years in his testimony to the Iowa Legislature (Iowa State College, 1874, p. 500). The only records I could find of a Mendota College is that Aurora University in Mendota, Illinois was initially named Mendota College. However, it was founded in 1893, too late to have been the same institution.

that detailed “the errors in orthography [spelling], grammar, the construction of sentences, rhetorical blemishes, or any violation of the rules of taste” (Iowa State College, 1874, p. 63). The first semester “embrace[d] the course of English Literature proper” (p. 64), covering English literary classics and histories of the English language. The second semester surveyed American literature since the Colonial period. In the sophomore year, only women in the Ladies’ Course took English courses, a trend that would continue in the varied iterations of the home economics courses for years to come. Because women were assumed to lead the education of the household, they were required to take an extra literature course or two, on average, than their counterparts in other degrees.

All students reconvened in the junior year for two more English classes. In the first semester, students engaged philology again in a course titled “Science of Language,” this time with Whitney’s *Language and the Study of Language*. Wynn spent most of his report describing and defending this course; he called it a new science, which was true for American institutions, at least. Kitzhaber’s (1990) history of philology in America credited scientific institutions to insulating and incubating the work that German philologists began in the first decades of the 1800s (pp. 36–41). Wynn’s justification seems to support Kitzhaber’s (1990) history: to Wynn, philology was “wholly in keeping with the special scheme of education pursued at this Institution” (Iowa State College, 1874, p. 65). The “scientific” analysis of English belonged at IAC, so Wynn argued. The second semester of the junior year served as a philological capstone course. In that semester, students returned to Shakespeare, but this time focused on “Shakespearean phraseology,” and they delivered their analyses as oratorical exercises (p. 65).

However, after only four years of instructing students, IAC had, in the eyes of some, strayed perhaps one English course too far from its original purpose as a land-grant institution. Up until this point, Welch and Wynn had steered the course of composition instruction

(Welch even wrote one of the textbooks that Wynn used), but the turmoil between 1873 and 1874 reveal that there is much more to the composition instruction than what is captured in the course catalogs.

IAC faced the same rhetorical invective that other land-grants encountered. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Panic of 1873 motivated grangers across the United States to critique the land-grants about whether they benefited farmers or not. In four years, the College had only created one farmer out of its graduates. Throughout 1873, IAC came under increasing attack from granger interests and from internal dissent as multiple newspaper articles and farming journal diatribes accused the College of no longer serving Iowa farmers (Ross, 1942a, pp. 93–95). These granger attacks were given legitimacy in the legislature when, in 1873, the State of Iowa officially accepted the land-grant funds from the 1862 Morrill Act. In section 1621, the fourteenth assembly of Iowa codified IAC's course of study. The course of study listed in section 1621 did not reflect the language of the Morrill Act ("Chapter 3. Of the State Agricultural College and Farm," 1873, sec. 21). Instead, code 1621 is a near verbatim copy of the 1858 Agricultural College Bill (State of Iowa Legislative Act, 91: Agricultural College, 1858), which Gue and Melendy (1868) also used in their "Report of the committee on organization, and selection of faculty." All these differed from Welch's interpretations of the IAC's purpose, which closely aligned to the Morrill Act, namely the lines including "other scientific and classical studies." Both interpretations of the purpose of IAC, one from state agricultural activists and the other from the perspective of the federal land grant, had legal legitimacy. Many of those attacking IAC viewed the English coursework as symbolic of IAC's failures to serve farmers.

Particularly venomous were the granger attacks from within IAC by three professors, each of which gossiped internally and took to local newspapers to express their frustration with the president. In 1873, President Welch submitted his resignation to the board, citing the

political pressure and hopes for a smoother presidency at the agricultural college in Arkansas, which had recently offered him the position (Iowa State College, 1874, p. 145; Ross, 1942a, p. 95). The board officially accepted the resignation, but, astoundingly, one of its members then motioned to fire (“declared vacant,” p. 146) all faculty and staff at IAC, a power also granted by the 1873 Iowa code (“Chapter 3. Of the State Agricultural College and Farm,” 1873, sec. 1606). The motion passed. The next motion in the board minutes invited the entire College back to their positions (including Welch) *except* the three professors most vocal against Welch. Welch and the rest of the faculty accepted the board’s offer. The maneuver ousted the three professors. Tensions ran high on campus; the curriculum was under strict public scrutiny, and the board’s actions did not quell public frustrations.

When a secretary mishandled college funds in late 1873 (a controversy sometimes called the “Rankin Affair” or “Rankin Defalcation”), the State of Iowa intervened and commissioned a congressional investigation of IAC (hereafter titled the Agricultural College Investigation of 1874, or ACI). The ACI did not only resolve to investigate the defalcation; the ACI also took the opportunity to ascertain whether “*the college [was] drifting away from its original intent as a school of agriculture and the mechanic arts, [...] that its course of instruction and practice [did] not tend to make farmers and mechanics, but rather to turn them toward other professions*” (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 4; emphasis in original). Essentially, the state put Welch’s interpretation of the Morrill Act’s curriculum on trial. Iowa State historian Earle Ross called the ACI “crudely informal” because it “took a latitude that was inclusive of all that proponents cared to present, either in the way of evidence or innuendo” (1942a, p. 96), but the ACI produced an 800-page report of transcribed interviews of board members, faculty, former students, and staff which reveal a rare glimpse into the perspectives of the new college. The English curriculum and its role in an agricultural college featured prominently throughout the report.

The report reveals that two of the three professors¹² who were vacated for attacking Welch focused most of their ire on the English department and its incongruity with the Morrill Act. Professors Jones of mathematics and Foote of chemistry believed that the English department was too prominent, and they referenced the English courses as evidence of IAC's irreconcilable departure from supporting farmers in Iowa. In Jones's opinion, when a veterinary professor could not be hired in 1873, "the senior class in agriculture was filled up with English literature, as I was informed, and the practical instruction in agriculture was thereby very much curtailed" (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 24). Professor Foote took a longer view of the problem, stating that in the first year of instruction, literary studies were "confined entirely to the freshman class," but by 1873, students took literary courses in all four years of study (p. 403). He also tracked the staffing preferences toward literary studies over agriculture:

The first year there was only one person who taught literature in the College. The President filled the chair of English literature. Last year there was a professor who gave his whole time to it, and a Latin instructor who taught German, and a lady who taught French, grammar and rhetoric, and another instructor who had as one of his classes a class in Shakespeare. (p. 403)

Conversely, he noted that Welch and the board did not pay attention to the agricultural positions, and he felt that Welch's choices "[did] not tend [students] toward agriculture" (p. 404). Foote's preferred curriculum was a two-year practical course of study without any liberal arts (p. 464). Neither Jones nor Foote attributed direct blame to Wynn for the

¹² The third professor who was ousted was Professor Matthews, the pomology, or fruit growing, instructor. He was not included in the ACI, and no reason is given as to his absence. Most of those interviewed, however, showed no affection for Matthews, and all agreed that he needed to be dismissed from the College. There was significant disagreement, however, about Jones and Foote being dismissed. The board member interviews reveal that a few members alleged that they had no clue the three professors were not going to be reinstated like the rest of the faculty.

curriculum; consistent with annual reports and comments throughout the ACI, they blamed Welch for the curricular and staffing decisions.

Professor Wynn balked at the idea that IAC had too many literary courses. In his testimony, he contested the very idea that the English courses could be called literary at all. What counted for English courses at IAC comprised rhetoric, grammar, and the philological course, the “Science of Language.” To Wynn, these classes did not count as “literary studies.” Wynn argued that literature, or the study and use of literature proper, was relegated to a one-hour class in the sophomore year. Curiously, though, the committee spent very little time questioning Wynn on the relationship between the liberal arts and IAC’s curriculum or what the committee should instead call the other courses if not “literary studies.” Quite tamely, at least compared to other interviewees, the committee asked Wynn if he knew the law related to the course of study and if Wynn felt the College was “drifting away.” Wynn responded that “[t]here is no tendency toward drifting away, by any means whatever” (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 515). Wynn’s was one of the longest testimonies in the ACI, but most of Wynn’s testimony dredged up gossip about Professors Jones and Foote, from instances of Jones cursing, Foote being disagreeable and unmanageable, or Jones being a misogynist, all of which the ACI found amusing. If there were any rhetorical intent to Wynn’s responses in defending the embattled literary studies in IAC’s curriculum, he kept the committee from addressing in earnest anything related to the curriculum by recounting the failures of his colleagues.

The only witness outside of Professor Wynn to defend English was the botany professor, Charles Bessey, a close friend of Welch’s. Bessey did not directly rebut Jones’s and Foote’s accusations about literary studies in the curriculum. Unlike Wynn, Bessey explained his interpretation of the curriculum and defended it in its entirety, and he stated that IAC was not drifting from its agricultural intent. Bessey had attended MAC as an undergraduate, and

he had spent considerable time directing the farm labor at MAC and at IAC in addition to his teaching duties. He stated, unequivocally, that IAC was superior to MAC in its general education of students for practical professions, and a contingent part of that education was its English program. He viewed the entire IAC curriculum as cumulative, or building upon itself in difficulty such that none of the earlier courses could be substituted or skipped without the students being unprepared for upper-level courses. English was a part of the whole: “as we take our students simply on passing certain examinations in the English language, it is quite necessary that in order that they may become scholars, they take up such studies as analysis, rhetoric, criticism” (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, pp. 657–658). He also spoke of botany in a similar manner. Its study required trigonometry, surveying, algebra, and geometry as prerequisites. Bessey also understood that botany itself was not the culmination of the curriculum; it prepared students for even higher pursuits. Bessey did not see English as remedial in the current sense of the term, which is often viewed as a stigma in Composition scholarship, because he considered all courses preparatory to the graduating student. He even carried this holistic perspective to the manual labor at the college. Unlike Jones and Foote, Bessey was not concerned about the model farm and students becoming adept farmers. Like English, the model farm was a necessary part of their whole industrial education, and his response to the committee is worth noting:

Q. Do you consider the object of that school [unclear whether referring to IAC or MAC] particularly to be for teaching farming, or the education of young men and young women?

A. I think the farm is intended as a piece of apparatus for the benefit of the students that are there. Yes, I consider the farm as an educator.

Q. You consider that of more importance than the number of bushels of grain raised per acre?

A. Certainly I do. (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 660)

Bessey did not state exactly his interpretation of the Morrill Act as Jones and Foote did, but Bessey joined most of the other interviewed stakeholders in disagreeing with Jones's and Foote's interpretations of the curriculum.

These other witnesses' rebuttals formed two rhetorical fronts, each of which indirectly insulated English from attack: (1) despite plenty of agricultural education, IAC graduates chose to leave the farm to pursue better opportunities with their degrees, and (2) the purpose of the agricultural emphasis was to provide opportunities to poor farming children, not necessarily make all graduates into farmers. Edgar Stanton, who was at this time a recent IAC graduate, cashier for IAC, and instructor of mathematics, offered an interesting rebuttal to the agriculture perspective. He was asked several times by the investigative committee about why students did not become farmers. Stanton observed that the students in the agricultural courses learned *too much* about agriculture, to the point where they could become inventors and innovators of agricultural industry, and they could make more money by trading their opportunities on family farm for more industrial opportunities (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, pp. 308–309). The committee then asked, “do you mean to say that it [IAC's course in practical agriculture] defeats the very object for which it was established?” Stanton responded, “I think just this: That when they go to College they receive an education by which they can earn more money in some other occupation than farming, and I think they will choose that occupation before they go to farming” (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, pp. 309–310). Several trustees, students, and instructors shared this line of argumentation regarding graduates becoming farmers.

Trustee John Bacon took the second line of argument, insisting that IAC was meant to serve farming communities by giving them an affordable education. He argued that IAC

offered an opportunity to farmers' children that did not necessarily result in IAC creating more farmers:

I don't understand that they have got to follow farming after they get educated, but it is to educate farmers' children, that the poor farmers of Iowa can send them there who are not able to send them to a University; but I do not understand that after they graduate there that they have got to follow the plow. (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 364)

This perspective was influential to the committee and the IAC community because Trustee Bacon was a farmer. Another trustee, I. A. Mitchell, stated that only three of the board members were not farmers, and he argued that "I don't know of a single professional man's son who was there; there may be some there, but I don't remember it now, but I do remember that there is a large number of poor persons there, and farmers' sons" (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 386).¹³ In both argumentative strategies, agriculture remained central, but the specific outcome differed from the more literal interpretations that agricultural education activists and grangers applied to the Morrill Act.

Although Welch was present at the ACI¹⁴, the committee did not put him on the stand to ask his opinions on the purpose of the College or the course of study in English. When the ACI completed its report, it exonerated President Welch and IAC of any and all wrongdoing (except for Rankin's defalcation), including the accusation of "drifting away." In the 1874 and

¹³ Historiographically speaking, Bacon's argument embodied the democratic land-grant ideal that land-grant historians have regarded as specious (discussed in greater depth in Chapter 1). These scholars have attacked the democratic thesis proffered by Ross (Ross, 1942b), stating that land-grant colleges did not serve working class students (Behle, 2013; Sorber, 2018; Sorber & Geiger, 2014). It would be worth an Iowa State historian recreating Behle's (2013) survey of students to see whether IAC served the industrial, working classes or whether they were dominated by middle class students as other land-grant colleges were.

¹⁴ During the first day of testimony, Welch requested to cross-examine witnesses (p. 20). A few more times throughout the ACI, the transcript read "Cross-examination of..." but gave no referent to who did the cross-examining, possibly meaning that Welch asked the questions. In support of this interpretation that Welch was the cross-examiner, all other times that an ACI committee member asked a question, the questioner was listed in the transcripts, such as "*By Senator Merrell:*" Welch, regardless of his cross-examiner status, was not put on the stand.

1875 *Biennial Report*, Welch reiterated his interpretation of the Morrill Act, as if responding in print where he was disallowed by the ACI's investigation: "Declining to follow the lead of extremists, who demand the study of classics on the one hand, or mere manual practice on the other, it [IAC] has aimed to realize the real object for which the national industrial schools are founded, namely: to furnish to the industrial classes the means of an education in the several pursuits and professions of life, which should be at once liberal and practical" (p. 13). This annual report also reprinted a speech that Welch delivered to the Iowa State Agricultural Society, titled "Scope and Spirit of the Agricultural College." In it, Welch affirmed his commitment to the Morrill Act, and he articulated what the College would look like if it were in violation of the law. For instance, if IAC created departments for sciences or language that did not correlate with the agricultural or mechanical mission, then IAC would have abandoned the spirit and letter of the law (Iowa State College, 1876, p. 49). He reassured the audience "that we have no classics, that the permissible studies which are at all professional are mainly the English language, which every American ought to know, and that seven-eighths of all the branches taught at the College are 'related to agriculture and the mechanic arts'" (p. 50). Whatever was taught in the language arts, from literature to rhetoric, Welch intended for them to conform to the land-grant mission.

The ACI's exoneration of "drifting away" and Welch's final words on the affair did not mean there were no consequences of the investigation. The ACI experience made an impression and influenced the curriculum, and in 1875, the Ladies Course in literature was reduced by one class in the sophomore year, and the whole student body only took a compressed version of the "Science of Language" as one course in one semester instead of the previous year-long sequence. Additionally, the previously separated Shakespearean analyses and oratorical exercises were combined into one class. In the 1897 issue of *The Bomb*, Wynn recalled the constraints of the Morrill Act — especially at a time when the Iowa law codified a

narrower interpretation of the College from the federal law — upon in the early years of his career: “in a curriculum required by law to be predominately scientific, the literary department could not open out the extended courses offered in the universities” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1897, p. 304). With the public pressuring the College to conform to the *agricultural* elements of the Morrill Act, the post-ACI period until 1882 marked years of uneasiness between Wynn’s classical, conservative notions of English instruction; Welch’s more impressionistic interpretation of “liberal studies”; and IAC’s constituents that demanded practical, agricultural instruction.

To this point, we have seen how Welch’s perspectives as an administrator and the public’s perceptions of the Morrill Act have impacted the English department. Wynn, as the head of the variously named English department, undoubtedly shaped the English department in his own image. Wynn spread English into more and more of the curriculum, as well as the extracurriculum. One of the first student periodicals, *The Aurora*, began the same year Wynn arrived, and it offered students an outlet for both scientific reports and literary essays. The issues often began with a poem, a long section on literary analysis of popular English fiction, several sections of scientific discoveries, and a litany of personal and local interest news. Students wrote most of the content, but *The Aurora* was not exclusive to students; Wynn wrote often to this publication, including poems, discourses on educational theory, and orations. The classical liberal arts spirit seemed to travel with Wynn to IAC.

What few glimpses we have inside Wynn’s mind come mostly from his frequent articles in *The Aurora*, and almost all point to English, composition, rhetoric, and the “science of language” courses as educating IAC students *through* faculty psychology and literature. In 1876, for instance, Wynn published a series titled “Educational Driftings” attacking Alexander Bain (the rhetorician) and the new cognitive psychologists for being ‘mental materialists.’ Mental materialists believed that consciousness existed in the brain. Wynn, like

Welch, was wedded to faculty psychology, and it is at times painful to read the confident assertions of IAC's English professor about neuroscience. Regarding a scientist's recent theories about the brain processing information through synapses, Wynn wrote, "Well, now, how does he know? Has he ever seen the currents converging, and consciousness and thought flashing out as a consequence? [...] no such experiments on the living brain can be made. You open its coatings, and it flashes a living mass of collapsing tissue in your hands" (Wynn, 1876, p. 1). Such scientific theories were "an effort to enthrone materialism in our schools," Wynn argued, and he saw such materialist applications of scientific findings as ludicrous compared to the faculties that derived from the separate, unknowable soul (p. 1).

Wynn's preferred pedagogical dogma, faculty psychology, probably influenced how he taught courses in the classroom: recitation, drill, and discipline. The subject matter? Like those in the old liberal arts college, the classics, but with a twist: the classics had to be in English, not Latin or Greek. Wynn confirmed as much when about himself in 1897:

the problem immediately facing the literary man was two-fold: First, how to make his brief course in English literature concentrate the vital essence of the more extended courses, and second, how the culture missed through the practical omission of the Latin and Greek classics from the course, might be, at least, proximately supplied by a drill in the great masterpieces of the mother tongue. The suggestion was promptly on hand. Why not adopt in English literature the method of the old classic didactics? (Iowa Agricultural College, 1897, pp. 304–305)

From 1875 until 1882, the English curriculum remained stable but stubbornly similar to the old ways of teaching English in the liberal arts. All freshmen took a first-term rhetoric course, which could be exchanged for German or Latin, and they took a mandatory composition which ran the whole year; sophomores in the Ladies Course took one literature course; all

juniors took a literature course in English classics; and all seniors took the “Science of Language” course.

What is not clear, however, was Wynn’s relationship to the major emphasis of this history, which is the first-year composition program. The freshman composition course, which only met one day per week, appears to have focused on grammar, word choice, and punctuation, but it was also aligned to oral performance. An 1883 note in *The Aurora* recalled that “The composition class had an oratorical contest for its final meeting. Ten of the members delivered orations all of which were very good, and showed that the Freshman class contains many good literary workers” (“Locals,” 1883, p. 163). As students matriculated, they produced either three or four “compositions” on their coursework throughout their junior and senior years, but the catalogs throughout the 1870s and 1880s described these as oratorical exercises. Although Wynn was cataloged in 1874 and 1882 as having taught the intro composition sequence, the annual reports and course catalogs did not explicitly list what courses each instructor taught nor their number of sections per instructor. In 1897, Wynn recalled that “the work in rhetoric, together with the modern languages, was at that time and for years following, in the efficient hands of the preceptress, Miss Margaret McDonald, the late lamented Mrs. Professor Stanton, and in all matters supererogatory the two departments [literature and rhetoric] worked hand in hand” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1897, p. 304). At an undetermined point, Wynn aligned himself more with literature and history courses while allowing women instructors and preceptresses, such as President Welch’s wife, Mary Welch, to take on the introductory work.

The English department faced its next test in 1883. In that year, the board ousted President Welch with another political scheme. The faculty voted to send him overseas in 1882 to study agricultural colleges in Europe, and while he was away, the board voted to remove him because he was derelict in his duties to IAC (Ross, 1942a, Chapter 6). Welch had

never escaped the factionalism of the earlier vocationalist movements, and a campaign in the granger newspaper, *Homestead*, accused him of not being “a true champion of industrial education” while he was in Europe (Ross, 1942a, p. 101). But at this delicate moment, instead of the English curriculum collapsing, Ross’s (1942a) argued that the granger ire was directed against the pure scientists rather than the humanities. The humanities were on more stable footing than ever. Wynn wrote in a crossed-out section of his 1889 eulogy draft for Welch that:

... in ‘83, upon some such trumpery charge of ‘drifting away,’ the grand old man was removed from his place, and the sad thing about is, we have to put the bitter emphasis on that word removed [underline sic]. [...] Now, after that, if his critics should get into power, what in all consistency should we expect of them? We should expect that they would make a very deep incision into the curriculum, to get at, and cut out, the literary disease that was festering there. But it is a fact that we have to note, that nothing of this kind has been done. Things with that side of the curriculum — the literary side — remain as they were in the days of his masterly supervision, except, alas! that his voice is not heard in the class-room, [...] The literary disease is still there. There has been no diminution in bulk, and no readjustment in rank, of the class of studies on which the long war has been waged — no material change whatever, excepting, perhaps, that poetry has crept up into a position somewhat over-conspicuous, and been made to do duty in functions in which it is not wholly at home. (Wynn, 1889, pp. 18–19)

Why did the “literary disease” not collapse after the board ousted Welch, who was the staunchest and most powerful defender of the liberal studies? It was likely not due to the next two presidents: Professor of Agriculture, Seamon Knapp, rose to the presidency in 1884, but was quickly overwhelmed by the politics and left within the year (Ross, 1942a). I found no records of Knapp concerning himself at all with English or freshmen composition. Leigh

Hunt, a dandy businessman in his early thirties, took the presidency in 1885 and also stayed a year. He was so unlikeable to the students and faculty that Wynn resigned in protest against Hunt, which the board accepted on the condition that Wynn stay until 1887. At this tenuous moment, with granger discontent and a board of trustees ready to redefine the College, the IAC English department could have crumpled. However, three factors, one external and two internal, helped the literary disease remain at IAC.

First, the external influence. In 1884, Senator Preston Sutton repealed the 1873 Iowa code 1621 which had codified the narrow, exclusively agricultural vision of the IAC curriculum (Goedeken, 1979). In its place, Iowa code 2671 codified language that paralleled the Morrill Act of 1862:

There shall be adopted and taught at the Iowa State Agricultural College a broad, liberal and practical course of study, in which the leading branches of learning shall relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, but which shall also include such other branches of learning as will most liberally and practically educate the agricultural and industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life, including military tactics. (An Act to Repeal Section 1621 of the Code of 1873, Relating to the Course of Study for the State Agricultural College, 1884; Sutton, 1884, p. 382)

The Aurora published the entirety of Sutton's speech defending his bill at the Iowa legislature. In it, Sutton dissected the politicking of the College, especially the agricultural purists on the board of trustees. Sutton overlaid the language of the 1858 Agricultural College Bill with the 1873 code, noting the board's rhetorical subterfuge to erase the liberal arts, and he rebuked the IAC trustees for wanting the federal funds without accepting the federal vision of a broader education. "The college was their pride, and justly so. They had made it, and they had built their hopes upon it, and they wanted to see it stand just as they had planned it," Sutton wrote (1884, p. 393). "But they wanted these lands. Now there came a struggle, and I have no doubt

it was an honest one, but I must contend it was not a successful one” (p. 393). He pointed out that IAC had received one of the wealthiest land-grant endowments from its land scripts, but it had “[overlooked] the purpose of the Act of Congress, entirely ignored it and substituted in place of it the purpose of the old state college created by the legislature of 1858, and thus misappropriated the funds which the state received” (p. 394). To add legitimacy to his interpretation of the federal law, he wrote to Justin Morrill and received a letter confirming Morrill’s critiques of the narrow interpretation of his law.¹⁵

Sutton did not seek to tear down the agricultural education. Instead, according to his speech¹⁶, he wanted to create space for the mechanical and liberal studies, per the 1862 Morrill Act, for the industrial classes to receive a practical education befitting the needs of an industrial democracy. Throughout his 1884 speech, Sutton defended history and literature as necessary to IAC’s land-grant mission. He cited history instruction at other land-grants, including Illinois Industrial University (now University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) and Cornell University. He wrote of Cornell that “they began history in the spring term of the Freshman year, and continue a most complete course in Ancient, Modern, European and American History until the close of the Junior year, there being three Professors in history including President White” (p. 397). He also recalled that he spoke with faculty from IAC about the lack of history education, and “they did not pretend to defend the fact. They all expressed themselves as regretting it, and excused it only by saying that the statute imposed upon them the course of study—so much of Mineralogy, and Geology, and Entomology and

¹⁵ It is difficult not to interpret Morrill’s letter, presented for all to see before the legislature, as just desserts for Gue and Melendy’s sins of omission. They had met Morrill at Yale so many years earlier and not reported his views to the IAC board (Goedeken, 2017; Gue & Melendy, 1868).

¹⁶ I could not find any records regarding Sutton’s motives or influences beyond this speech. It is unclear whether he had family attached to IAC or some connection to the faculty and staff. According to biographical records, Sutton, born in 1845, was a lawyer for the majority of his life, but he did teach in a high school and college (Iowa Lutheran College, long since closed by the time he died in 1901) and served as principal over the schools in Marshalltown, Iowa, sometime before 1870 (*Senator Preston M. Sutton*, n.d.). From 1873 onward, he became a lawyer, and he was only a senator for two years, from 1884 to 1886. He was interested mainly in prohibition legislation.

Zoology, and Meteorology, and the like—that there was no room for History and but little for Literature in the four allotted years” (p. 400). I could not confirm Sutton’s probably overblown claims that IAC’s faculty was uniform in its opinions on literary studies, but Sutton’s rhetorical and legal strategies worked. On July 4, 1884, Sutton’s bill was signed into Iowa law, protecting at both the state and federal level the right of mechanical and liberal studies to be taught at IAC (An Act to Repeal Section 1621 of the Code of 1873, Relating to the Course of Study for the State Agricultural College, 1884).

Second, one of the two internal factors was, yet again, Adonijah Welch. After the board ousted him, in late 1883 he returned to quell unrest and build unity in the college, taking a professorship in psychology, sociology, and *applied rhetoric*. From 1883 until 1889, Welch taught the FYC sequence and let Wynn have literature and history. He changed the freshman course in rhetoric to “Applied Rhetoric” in 1883, and the course seemed to adapt to the demand for practical education by removing the theoretical components of the earlier rhetorics. The description in the 1883 catalog read, “the design is to familiarize the mind with those details of composition and expression, which are most in requisition in practical life, and are usually most neglected; going no further into the theory or philosophy of this branch than these practical ends will indicate” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1883, p. 63). Welch minimized the rhetorical theories in pursuit of what he believed were the career aspirations for his students. He went his own way with the course; in 1884, he wrote, “the text-book was discarded and the subjects were presented in familiar lectures” (Iowa State College, 1885, p. 51). Students wrote compositions on “suitable topics,” though it is unclear what that meant. In Welch’s other psychology and sociology courses, he preferred to lecture for part of the class session and spend the rest having students present their original compositions or research to their fellow students, and it is possible he used this same format for his applied rhetoric course (Iowa State College, 1885, pp. 50–51, 1887, pp. 86–88). Regardless of its exact methods, this

practical, industry-focused composition course perfectly aligned with IAC's mission. As a required course, it did not draw negative attention from granger interests.

The third factor was a moderately elective curriculum. By 1886, the effects of the Sutton legislation began to influence the College, opening the curriculum up to more student election and choice. Instead of the core agricultural, veterinary, and mechanical engineering tracks, seven courses of study could lead to degrees: General course in the sciences related to the industries, general course for ladies, agriculture, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, veterinary science, and domestic economy (Iowa Agricultural College, 1886). The breadth of these courses began to look more and more like the universities developing around the country, and the junior and senior years for most courses of study offered students about half of their time to choose their own courses. The moves toward university status continued when, in 1886, IAC discontinued its preparatory or "sub-Freshman" courses, which had been in place since the founding. Sub-freshman English and math were the main preparatory courses, and the preparatory department had never been popular amongst the faculty. The 1880 catalog's section on accepting students who did not pass their entrance examinations began with the conditional, "Should there be room," which insinuated that preparatory training was not guaranteed; should there be room, IAC would take them. IAC's stance on underprepared students was clear: "It is, however, the wish of the Faculty and Trustees that the number taking the sub-Freshman Course, be as small as possible" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1880, p. 40). This wish turned to policy in 1886 as it officially dropped preparatory courses: "The requirements for admission to the Freshman class in the several courses of study are placed so low that the graded schools of the state can fit pupils for admission" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1886, p. 81). It is true that high schools in Iowa were finally catching up to the educational demands of high education, and every college or university in this time published lists of accredited high schools that it would accept

transcripts from. However, the instabilities between the Knap, Hunt, and Chamberlain presidencies, as well as the opening of the curriculum via the Sutton legislation, allowed IAC to perhaps *drift* from some of its earlier commitments to the industrial classes of students it was founded to serve. As if to symbolize these moves toward a more collegiate, university system of instruction, IAC dropped its manual labor requirement — one of its hallmarks — in 1884 (Ross, 1942a, p. 157).

The literary side of the English department also evolved during this period of rapid change and external influence. With Welch focused on social sciences and rhetoric, Sutton's legislation in place, and Wynn left in charge of the English curriculum, the curriculum, unsurprisingly, took on a decidedly classicist bent that reflected Wynn's literary predilections. In 1883, the senior course in the Science of Language was replaced with a course in literary criticism and ethics, which was the last remnant of a non-literary English course. Wynn likely instigated these changes but denied his agency; he wrote in the 1897 *Bomb* that, "In '83, for some reason, this [Science of Language] study was dismissed, and the senior last term divided up between literary criticism and ethics" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1897, p. 308). In 1886, the Literature and Language department changed to Literature, Language, and History, perhaps reflecting Sutton's defense of history in the curriculum, although none of these subjects could lead to a degree. These three courses began to constitute a core liberal studies sequence in the first year, and history was at last included as a required course for all students, not just women in the sophomore year of the ladies course.

However, in 1887, Wynn fulfilled his promise to resign in protest of Hunt. Arthur Barrows, a historian, took over literature, Latin, and history, albeit temporarily. Welch continued teaching the composition sequence, but in 1889, ex-President Adonijah Welch died, and in just two short years between 1887 and 1889, nearly twenty years of shared literary, composition, and pedagogical perspectives between Welch and Wynn left IAC. While

President Chamberlain remained generally supportive of the liberal arts at IAC, largely because he believed in the Morrill perspective on general studies for the A&M college, he had no close connection to the subjects like Welch had (Goedeken, 1979). It is this moment of transition that many microhistories of composition and rhetoric do not follow beyond, but it is instructive to how writing programs change when lynchpin personalities leave an institution. If Wynn had remained, IAC would have moved more and more into what Crowley (1998) called “liberal culture,” or a type of FYC that sought to discipline and inculcate aristocratic beliefs into the minds of Iowa’s industrial classes. Instead, Margaret Doolittle did something very different.

4. 3. 2. 1890 through 1898: Margaret Doolittle, required composition, and elective literature

The first woman to achieve a full professorship *related to* the English department was Margaret Doolittle, who arrived in 1890 to chair a brand new department, called “Rhetoric and Latin,” a gussied-up version of Welch’s Applied Rhetoric (Iowa Agricultural College, 1897, p. 308). A graduate from Iowa’s Central University (now College), Doolittle became a high school principal and then professor of Latin, Greek, rhetoric, and ancient history at Washington Academy. She described herself in the 1894 issue of *The Bomb*, writing that “I have studied along the line of literary subjects all the time and get everything I can find on Rhetoric. I always expected to teach, think I was born to teach” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1894, “Professors of Art and Literature,” p. 3).¹⁷

¹⁷ *The Bomb* is a strange, jostling, and unreliable source. This official yearbook seems to have encouraged student journalists to be funny, but as a reader at such a great historical distance, I felt often like I was an outsider to a grand inside joke. At times I could not tell the difference between solecism and sarcasm. In 1914, students wrote a mocking description of the English department, including Noble’s photo, but they put “history” in the title (p. 369). Why? It does not appear to be an accident (the correct history department, including the correct title, was on the facing page). Many of the editorials rocked between mocking the IAC English staff and faculty before switching to hyperbolic praise. The jokes relating to IAC women were usually sexist. For example, after the quotation before this note, the student writer continued:

When Miss Doolittle was born in not known, but that is not strange, for, being a woman, after arriving at the age of sixteen her age decreases so rapidly that by this time it is probably impossible to tell just when that event happened. But that she was born at all and likewise ‘grewed’ is an event for the annals of the I. A. C. She is an independent and capable woman such as the world would be better if there were

As with the prior decades, external politics loomed over the English department before Doolittle could truly begin leading the curriculum in the new department. English was, once again, cited as evidence of IAC's failure to educate students in agriculture. According to Goedken (1979), the predictable but unintended consequence of Sutton's 1884 amendment to IAC's curricular purpose was a steady dwindling of agricultural students enrolled in the agricultural course of study. When given a wider course of study and electives, students did not choose the agricultural courses. By 1888, fewer than 60 of the 265 enrolled students were interested in agricultural education (Goedeken, 1979, p. 113), and IAC's faculty voted to drop the Bachelor of Scientific Agriculture Degree in 1888. Agriculture students instead enrolled in the "general sciences related to industries" courses in 1889. If this were not enough to rekindle dissent from the grangers, the 1889 course catalog portrayed a new, controversial version of the agriculture curriculum:

thousands like her in it. [...] She has enjoyed (?) single blessedness thus far and for the benefit of the students at the I. A. C. it is to be hoped that she will not care to *do less* by changing her name from Doolittle to something else. To know her is but to love her.

And so on. This was a women-deny-their-age joke. Women-leave-education-when-they-get-married joke. I only rely on *The Bomb* for photographs or when it is clear faculty or staff wrote their own materials.

AGRICULTURE.

In offering a course in Agriculture to those who are to become our farmers in the future, we recognize :

- (1) That it is native ability that makes the successful man in any line of work, regardless of education.
- (2) That any education is a *help* to a farmer.
- (3) That a man may be perfectly successful on the farm after a thorough training in any line, classical, scientific, or technical.
- (4) That, from a lack of business ability, a man may fail as a farmer after the best college training in Agriculture ; education only makes more effective, but cannot *change* the powers of mind which nature has given.
- (5) That the best years of life for College work are also the best years for acquiring a business knowledge and training ; and, on that account, the College graduate is at a disadvantage, when first entering active life, unless he has associated his College work with his later occupation.

With these facts in view, the purpose of the Course in Agriculture is to furnish, to those who wish to be farmers in the best sense, an opportunity to acquaint themselves with some of the many scientific questions which their daily work brings forcibly before them ; to enlist their efforts in working out problems yet unsolved ; and, by a study of the applications of scientific truth in daily practice, to deepen and make enduring that intelligent interest in their work which makes the difference between delight and drudgery in the performance of any labor.

Figure 4.1. A 1889 course catalog description of the agricultural courses. The course of study that led to a degree in agriculture was cut this year. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1889, p. 45)

This description argued that any course of study could lead to farming, negating one of the shibboleths of the agricultural purists. IAC was telling farmers that pure sciences, sciences related to industry, and studies in the liberal arts were more beneficial to the farmer instead of courses in practical farming. Grangers writing anonymously to the *Iowa Homestead* attacked these decisions, again accusing IAC of drifting away from its original purposes. Instead of taking up the fight, President Chamberlain resigned in 1890, along with the head of the agriculture department, Professor Smith, who had written the 1889 catalog statement. The institution was vulnerable to dramatic change in this power vacuum, and the grangers saw an opportunity to right what they perceived to be past wrongs.

Invective from anonymous writers in the newspapers transformed into real political action after Chamberlain left. Several farming organizations collaborated to propose curricular changes as well as suggest the next president, but the most effective group was the Iowa Stock Breeders' Association. The Association included prominent members of state and national agriculture institutions, and it nominated James "Tama Jim" Wilson, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, to chair a committee to investigate the curriculum at IAC. After Wilson visited the campus and spoke with IAC members throughout 1889, Wilson presented his recommendations to the Stock Breeders' Association in 1890, which included a request for a two-year short course in agriculture and a course in dairying. However, he also recommended

That the board of trustees of the Agricultural College be requested to revise completely and thoroughly the course of study, eliminating from the course of "Science and Agriculture" all studies that do not have direct reference to agriculture, thus establishing a distinctively agricultural course, in which no place will be found for purely academic and scientific studies. (*Stock Breeders' December, 1890 Meeting*, 1891, p. 51)

At that time, the science and agriculture course offered the FYC sequence as well as a full year of literature in the junior year. Freshmen also had to take history and algebra courses. A member of the board of trustees was present at the meeting, and he agreed that the College would consider these changes in good faith. Writers in *The Homestead* published Wilson's demands, and several editorials speculated about whether the English literature courses and other liberal studies would be eliminated from the curriculum (Goedeken, 1979, p. 120).

The interim president, Edgar Stanton, met with a board hesitant to compromise with Wilson and the Stock Breeders' demands, but Stanton succeeded in negotiating an amicable compromise for most parties involved. He created the two-year short course in agriculture and

an even shorter winter term course for working farmers, and he also resuscitated the preparatory program (Goedeken, 1979; Iowa Agricultural College, 1892). Following this resolution, the Stock Breeders' Association lobbied for and secured two more assurances: its own Tama Jim Wilson was elected to the vacant chair of the Professor of Agriculture, and the Association's selection for president, reverend and Des Moines school superintendent William Beardshear, was elected to lead IAC in 1891 (Goedeken, 1979; Ross, 1942a, pp. 199–200). As for the English department and the humanities curriculum, the board reduced history courses after 1892 across the courses of study; sometimes they were required for one semester in the freshman year, sometimes offered as an alternate for bookkeeping, and occasionally required in the final term of the senior year. The board also reduced literature to an elective; it was no longer required in the junior or senior years. As the course catalogs after 1892 described these changes in the agricultural course, "sufficient English literature, mathematics, history, and other supplementary studies [are included] to sustain both scientific and practical agriculture and develop the agricultural student to the intellectual level of the educated in any profession" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1892, p. 34). The FYC sequence, however, remained stable, and IAC even included it in the hyper-practical two-year short courses.

It was upon these political waters that Doolittle took charge of the composition and rhetoric sequence. Unlike her predecessors, she did not teach literature courses for the College. Instead, she focused her efforts on rhetoric, Latin, and elocution, bringing with her the "new" methods of rhetoric instruction sweeping the nation, that is, Harvard's theme writing and a much closer focus on differentiating her feedback to each student through written correction and feedback (Connors, 1981b, 1990). As soon as she arrived, she changed core elements of the FYC sequence because she believed the program not up to "the college grade" (Doolittle, 1893a, p. Rhetoric 1). In *The Aurora*, she referenced the Harvard Report of 1892, which was fomenting a literacy crisis across the nation about poor student writing

(Doolittle, 1893b). Doolittle leveraged this fear to advocate for higher entrance requirements for students and for more practice in the mother tongue in college. She urged Beardshear to match the national push for more rigid English training: “if Iowa Agricultural College would keep up to this standard, there must be no relaxation on the part of any concerned, but rather a constant advance” (Doolittle, 1893a, p. Rhetoric 1). And advance she did.

Doolittle revamped the entire program. Doolittle first instituted a name change to the program: instead of the cumbersome “English Composition and Applied Rhetoric” designation for FYC, she called the FYC sequence “English Language” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1890, p. 52). As for the course content, she kept Adam Hill’s *Elements* her first year, but by 1892, she had adopted William’s *Composition and Rhetoric*, and by 1897, she added Genung’s *Outline of Rhetoric* and his *Practical Rhetoric*. She rewrote the course descriptions for the course catalogs as well, and some phrasings allude to her rhetorical perspectives. In the 1892 and 1893 course catalog, she wrote,

The fall term continues the study of style, giving special attention to those qualities which render discourse effective. Description, narration, exposition and argument are studied, rhetorically analyzed and produced. These productions are criticized and may be subject to class criticism or discussion. The text-book is a guide in this work, the greater part of the work being by lecture and library reference. Reading and verbal discussion of all principles is encouraged. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1892, pp. 61–62)

The reference to description, narration, exposition, and argument meant that the modes of discourse (Connors, 1981b; Kitzhaber, 1990) arrived at IAC in full with Doolittle.

Doolittle grew her program through the 1890s, establishing a rhetoric sequence that she tried to make theoretical and rigorous. Doolittle’s rhetoric sequence involved two “courses” (note, not “classes”):

Course 1, required for all freshmen for the full year:

First term: Correct usage, diction, and style. Genung's *Outline of Rhetoric* used. "Themes are deduced from general subjects" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1896, p. 69).

Second term: Style and invention. Genung's *Practical Rhetoric* used. Modes of discourse produced, but "principles of prose discourse are philosophically considered" (p. 69). Further, compositions are not only written: "Verbal discussion of all principles is encouraged not only with a view to bringing out the principles of the science, but also as drill in oral expression" (p. 69).

Course 2: Special written work (i.e., work related to their course of study) required for sophomores, plus one oration required for juniors and seniors.

Course 1 was a FYC sequence. The first term was a traditional and remedial "skill and drill" course. She wrote in a report to the board of trustees that "A knowledge of English grammar is required for entrance, but there is a practical review of the more important principles, including punctuation and capitals" (Iowa State College, 1895, p. 73). For these freshmen, the "more important principles" of composition were formulaic attention to capitalization, which speaks to both the preparation of the students and Doolittle's pedagogical focuses. However, the second term taught students through several different pedagogical approaches that mirrored rhetoric innovations around the country. She used the new Harvard and Amherst textbooks for some "laws and forms of thought and practice in debate," asked students to imitate a selection of literary texts, and had students conduct independent research in the library to build argumentative themes (Iowa State College, 1895, p. 73).

Doolittle began to build courses and rhetorical requirements into the rest of the curriculum beyond the first year as well. She meant for her second course to reform a low estimation of rhetoric on campus, and students — at least the literary-minded of them —

applauded her efforts. When the board backed Doolittle's oratorical requirements for upperclassmen, a student wrote that "under this ruling we may look to junior exhibitions and contest orations to take on the more artistic tone and perhaps it shall not ever be that the I. A. C. contestant stands at the foot of the list in state contests" ("Rhetoric for Juniors and Sophomores," 1890, p. 116). Doolittle read, critiqued, and mentored these orations throughout her career.

Doolittle implemented the current pedagogical innovations of her time, and she brought new methods of teaching rhetoric to IAC, especially the new laboratory method. Instead of learning grammatical rules in isolation, such as taught in Welch's (1855) *Analysis of the English Sentence*, the laboratory method asked students to observe and experience grammatical rules in situ. In other words, students would read several examples (in Doolittle's class, literary examples) and try to replicate the performance through imitation and guided deduction. As Doolittle explained, "this 'laboratory' practice not only gives to the mind the thought—the basis of expression—but encourages observation and research" (Doolittle, 1893b, p. 2). In her quotation we can see embedded one of the core tenets of current-traditional rhetoric: thought is the basis of expression, or "think hard before you write" (Crowley, 1985, p. 154). Current-traditional rhetoric at this time emphasized the rhetorical invention process (Crowley, 1985, 2010), and by 1894, Doolittle had transitioned the main purpose of her rhetoric courses to focus on rhetorical invention by using several of Genung's famously current-traditional texts.

While current-traditional rhetoric has been picked apart by many theorists, Doolittle's rhetoric courses attempted to elevate rhetorical theory at IAC. To contrast Doolittle's efforts with her predecessors, Welch minimized theory in "Applied Rhetoric" with the phrase "going no further into the theory or philosophy of this branch than these practical ends will indicate" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1883, p. 63). This language evaporated from the course catalogs

during Doolittle's tenure. Also notable in her course descriptions is her distancing language from heavy reliance on the textbook; much of the work in the classroom involved producing essays and orations and having those essays criticized, both privately and publicly. Students performed their compositions aloud quite often, a callback to the earlier liberal arts oral tradition.

The private work in theme correction, however, was a new trend in rhetoric instruction, and Doolittle's work in critiquing students' papers took on the zeal of a true believer. She viewed student errors as *moral* errors: "When one considers the difficulty with which correct speech is secured, he is led to believe that there is linguistic depravity as well as moral depravity" (Doolittle, 1893b, p. 2). She concluded this thought by quoting the 1892 Harvard report:

Few persons not intimately connected with the system of instruction, or with the department of Rhetoric, have any conception of either the amount or nature of the work done by instructors in that department. In quantity this work is calculated to excite dismay, while the performance of it involves not only unremitting industry but mental drudgery of the most exhausting nature. (Doolittle, 1893b, p. 2)

With religious zeal also came the martyr's sense of sacrifice.

Work of the Year.				
Spring Term.				
Subject,	Class,	No. of Secs.	No. in each Sec.	Hrs. per week.
Latin,	Sophomore,	1,	19,	4.
Latin,	Freshmen,	2,	Sec. II) 12,	5,
English,	Sophomore,	1,	22,	4,
English,*	Freshmen,	I, II, III,	37, 49, 57,	5, 5, 5,
Essays or Orations,	Sophomore,		40,	
Orations,	Senior,	6,	10,	
Total number of hours,				28,

This total does not include the critical work, as that is hard to estimate.

Figure 4.2. Doolittle's first term workload, 1893. (Doolittle, 1893a, p. Rhetoric 2)

As she grew her program, the amount of work also grew on Doolittle, and each year, her annual reports to Beardshear and the trustees strongly argued for teaching assistance and appropriate compensation. In the first term, she taught three sections of freshman English, totaling 143 students. By 1893, she requested to be relieved of her Latin duties, which Beardshear denied. However, she wrote, "I most certainly feel that the salary received by me is not commensurate with the work done," and Beardshear increased her yearly salary by \$100 (Doolittle, 1893a, p. Rhetoric 4). As shown in Figure 4.2, in 1893 she taught 246 students in the first term and 232 in the second term. In 1894, she wrote that the work in rhetoric was "pleasant," but she also requested another raise as well as free room and board because "the great number of papers criticized and gone over with students make my room a public office" (Doolittle, 1894, p. 2). Beardshear granted the complementary room, and he requested that the board increase her salary by "two hundred dollars and if possible three hundred dollars. She is very worthy of it" (Doolittle, 1894, p. "Recommendations for Latin & Rhetoric").

She seemed to have fallen somewhat from Beardshear's attention after 1894. In 1895, she received a grader to help correct class exercises and orations. In 1896, she referenced the latest Harvard Report, which recommended that no instructor could adequately correct composition work for more than two hours at a time; Doolittle reported that the amount she read and critiqued papers far exceeded that number. She added in her May report that "it seems best to keep all this work under one department, but it is more than one can do, and do well," and she appealed directly to the board to grant a full time assistant teacher (Doolittle, 1896, p. 14). Beardshear did not reply to these requests. In 1897, she paid from her department's appropriation to bring in a recent IAC graduate to critique papers for two weeks and cover some administrative and mimeographing duties, and she again appealed for a salaried assistant. She was not granted one. She taught 293 students in the first term and 290 in the second, 60 more than she had only five years earlier. In 1898, Doolittle's last year, she admitted to not being able to change the design of the program per a new course of study that the board and Beardshear had requested. "Since no efficient help has been available I could not pursue the plan of the course, yet I gave it sufficient test to warrant its adoption and the providing of help to carry it forward" (Doolittle, 1898, p. 57). Doolittle's biographical blurb in the 1898 *Bomb* mirrored her exasperation: "She does the work of a man and draws the pay of one-half a man [...] Her work is thorough and painstaking in every particular, but she could make her department even more efficient if she but had the assistants she so much needs" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1898a, p. "Miss Margaret Doolittle, A.B."). Halfway through 1898, Doolittle resigned.

4. 4. Composition at Iowa State: Literature, Latin, Grammar, or Rhetoric?

With this history, I argue that (1) centering an institution's influence on a composition program's history is imperative to understanding its pedagogies and curriculum, (2) observing a single program's changes over time reveals significant gaps in the current, broad historical

scholarship that discusses rhetoric across all colleges and universities, and (3) focusing on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations is a powerful explanatory framework, further revealing gaps in current historical scholarship. The first thirty years of composition instruction at IAC, examined through these methodological perspectives, reveal a writing program shaped by the predilections of individuals and the pressures of the institution's land-grant mission. Welch, a president shaped by the liberal arts of his upbringing but active in bringing about agricultural education, established and defended the literary imperative at IAC. When agricultural purists wanted to remove English altogether, Welch protected it, and he even stayed at an institution that underhandedly ousted him to preserve harmony among the faculty. In his twilight years, he taught first year students. Wynn was not, however, a revolutionary. Let us recall what he wrote in the 1897 issue of *The Bomb*: "It was apparent from the beginning, that in a curriculum required by law to be predominately scientific, the literary department could not open out the extended course offered in the universities" (p. 304). If he were allowed to do as he willed, IAC would have resembled so many other land-grants across the nation that begrudgingly added agricultural and mechanical courses on top of a liberal arts curriculum. He was wedded to the past. IAC's land-grant mission compelled him into the future.

The clearest and most rapid changes in IAC's composition curriculum, however, occurred because of Margaret Doolittle and her progressive attitudes toward rhetoric instruction. She arrived at a fortuitous moment for programmatic change. Welch and Wynn had just departed, Sutton had legislated a place for the humanities, and three unpopular presidents had come and gone in rapid succession. When Beardshear arrived with the granger compromises toward more agriculture and less literature in 1891, Doolittle had no institutional structures to abide by, and the separation from literature spared her the rest of the literary subjects' relegation to electives. Her rhetoric aligned with the land-grant mission in that

“correcting” student writing did not force engineers, farmers, and scientists to read Shakespeare. She created a FYC sequence based on her conception of rhetoric, and she cited the Harvard developments to justify her new composition instruction pedagogies (e.g., modes of discourse, theme writing, rhetorical invention theory). But Doolittle also marks the end of an era: never again in the history of Iowa State could a single instructor teach all the FYC courses. Another institutional pressure was rising at IAC; less overtly political and more reminiscent of sheer inertia, student enrollment at IAC was growing — fast.

CHAPTER 5. ORIGINS OF IOWA STATE’S WPA: 1898 – 1939:

This chapter turns to the WPA. It begins by taking stock of the immense growth occurring around the country in higher education institutions. The context shows how composition instructors and Iowa State reacted to the Americanized German research institutions, as well as the influx of students. Then, I introduce Alvin Noble, head of the English department from 1898 to 1929. His tenure breaks almost cleanly into two 15-year periods, and I show the contextual, pedagogical, and administrative decisions that Noble both made and responded to as department head. Examining Noble’s tenure also gives us rare insights into the labor conditions at Iowa State College (ISC) and Noble’s advocacy on behalf of his instructors. The end of this chapter gives a brief glimpse into the transition to the next department head, J. Raymond Darby. Darby headed the department for the next 10 years until 1939, but very little survives in the archives to inform a full chapter on his department. However, enough exists to demonstrate the importance of examining transitions between administrators.

5. 1. From IAC to ISC: Higher education, land-grants, composition, and Iowa State at the turn of the century

By 1900, America had imported, appropriated, and standardized its version of the German research university (see Chapter 2). These universities featured graduate colleges, and their siloed departments valued research over undergraduate teaching. Students elected into their own courses of study. The elective courses sprouted with the spontaneity and variety of a springtime bloom. For every new specialization, students aplenty populated the new majors, and it is difficult to capture how fast university enrollments grew in America. One approach is to show the raw numbers. In 1870, 62,000 students enrolled in college. In 1890, the number was 157,000. By 1920, colleges across the country overflowed with more than 355,000 (Lucas, 2006, p. 146). European immigrants followed the industrial jobs westward, populating the Midwest and West, and their children grew up on dreams of middleclass security if only

they could nab a college degree (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). State boards of education standardized high schools, and more students qualified for college admission than ever. At this time, colleges did not cap enrollments; public institutions were obligated to let students who passed entrance examinations attend. Staffs, instructors, and departments swelled to frantically keep pace with the demand.

Another way to capture the growth is to examine teaching loads across institutions. Russell (2002) argued that despite the massive influx, teaching loads were like those in the old college: “the student to faculty ratio in American postsecondary education remained essentially the same from 1880 to 1910 (ten to one)” (p. 62). This ratio did not hold, however, for composition instructors. Teaching loads for composition instructors grew much higher than for disciplines around the rest of the college. At the beginning of this rapid enrollment growth in the 1890s, colleges did not split courses into sections across multiple instructors. We saw this overwhelm Doolittle, but she wasn’t alone. Even at elite institutions, the phenomenal growth surprised administrators and overwhelmed the existing structures. In 1892, Harvard’s Barrett Wendell strained to keep up with 170 students one semester. Eventually, departments hired graders or assistants. At Yale, one professor and one assistant taught 250 students; at Wellesley, a professor and three assistants taught 600 (Connors, 1990, p. 113). Temporary graders and student assistants could not substitute for a real need of more composition sections staffed by full-time teachers, and graduates with the new literature degrees entered the profession and began teaching composition full time.

Graduates from university literature departments wanted to teach elective literature courses; for most, this hope never materialized. They remained trapped teaching FYC, echoing their complaints about FYC in our histories (Brereton, 1995; Connors, 1990; W. R. Parker, 1967). Training and support for these instructors was almost non-existent, and they

were assigned up to five sections of composition, sometimes while ABD and trying to finish their dissertations (McLeod, 2007, p. 32).

Between 1913 and 1915, Hopkins and his MLA committee on composition instruction surveyed 51 colleges of various sizes and found that, on average, 105 students were assigned to each composition teacher, and these students required, in addition to instructional time and course prep, nearly 30 hours per week of theme correcting (Hopkins, 1923, p. 20). These instructors did not acquiesce; they were aware of and spoke about their bleak social and material conditions. Early 1900s contributors to *PMLA* and the *English Journal* called attention to the number of students instructors had to teach (Hopkins, 1912a, 1923; Popken, 2004a). The first issue of the *English Journal* ran Hopkins's (1912a) article, "Can good composition teaching be done under present conditions?" After reflecting on his own experiences and sounding out those of his colleagues at nearby institutions, he concluded that composition teaching was "impossible under present conditions," and he begged administrators to increase the number of instructors and lower the number of students per section (p. 4). That plea has been echoed by composition instructors ever since.

Administrations of increasing size and complexity held the purse strings, and increasingly, administrators made decisions to benefit the new research model while either not understanding or not acknowledging the needs of the composition instructors. Several biases crept into the new systems that established hierarchies for generations to come. As Russell (2002) argued, "what had changed was the institution's values. The new mission of research, graduate teaching, and scientific and professional instruction drew resources away from the central task of the old college: undergraduate teaching of the liberal arts, including rhetoric" (p. 62). As discussed in Chapter 3, English departments fragmented, and some English faculty embraced the values of the university. The philologists and literature faculty adapted to the German research model, and they specialized, published, and professionalized early in the

1900s. Crowley (1998) wrote that literature, now its own discipline, embraced the scientific ideals of disinterestedness, or a rejection of mass and popular culture (p. 83). As nearly all composition histories attest, hierarchies emerged across the United States: those who produced research in literature gained higher status, better pay, and classrooms full of interested students to teach, while those who devoted themselves to teaching composition lost status. Many of those who held low-status teaching positions instead of research positions were women. As Connors (1990) attested, more and more women attended graduate school after 1900, but a much smaller percentage of them attained PhDs. The German research model promoted those who held PhDs, which were research degrees; women came to represent the majority of permanent composition instructors while their men colleagues worked their way into literature. The new model of higher education benefited some and marginalized many, especially those teaching FYC.

Composition's pedagogical innovations at this time did not help the working conditions of low-status composition instructors. Most professors in Americanized German research institutions embraced lectures and examination pedagogies, pedagogies that could handle large numbers of students. For presidents listening to these professors' needs, handling more students simply became a building project: build larger lecture halls. Harvard's influential English A program compelled instructors in the opposite direction of the lecture. As discussed in Chapter 2, the old, oral training in rhetoric allowed students to present their compositions orally in class. Instructors could publicly critique these performances, a sort of master class pedagogy that we might see in music courses today.¹⁸ The Harvard innovation emphasized three elements: (1) writing, (2), writing as a skill, and (3) the private composition and reception of the written product. Writing assignments became daily, short-distance themes of two or three paragraphs on a variety of personal topics (Brereton, 1995, p. 11).

¹⁸ I discuss "Oral composition" later in this chapter. Refer to Shamoan and Burns (1995) for a contemporary recovery of the masterclass composition pedagogy, which is similar to oral composition.

Composition teachers began reading, critiquing, correcting, and sometimes rewriting every student's theme. Instead of an impersonal lecture to a swath of students, the Harvard paradigm of theme writing led to an unprecedented differentiation and attention to individual students — and a massive workload. This pedagogy transformed Doolittle's quarters on campus into a revolving door of students seeking corrections and comments on their themes. In a journal entry from the 1890s, Hopkins wrote, "Went to bed at 12:00; did not sleep at 4:00; rose then read some themes; then went back to sleep and still did not sleep" (Popken, 2004a, p. 629). When reading about this early labor, composition teachers often post-hoc justified their suffering with a devotion to the pedagogy. Fred Newton Scott (1895) recounted that:

I have read and re-read this year something over 3,000 essays, most of them written by a class of 216 students. [...] that the instructor should somehow lay hold of the student as an individual is, for successful composition work, simply indispensable. (p. 121)

To these instructors, the pedagogy of individually attending to each theme was a sacred duty.

Composition histories often look at this period as the worst the field has known. Historians have uncovered bleak findings under each historical stone: the early 1900's current-traditional pedagogies, the gendered labor disparities, a hostile environment for minoritized people and languages, and the demise of rhetoric into current-traditional rhetoric. However, the early 1900s imposed a series of social and material conditions on FYC courses that required a new administrative response. At most universities, the only department that needed to expand to meet *every single new student* was English. (However, a strong argument could be made that mathematics had to do the same.) To cope with increasing enrollments and the myriad sections of freshman rhetoric, the WPA emerged across the United States to meet the administrative and logistical needs for FYC. Unlike today, the early WPAs had no organizational or administrative precedents to handle the influx of new students; they faced a similar set of problems but had no uniform solutions. Like bees and bats and birds converging

upon the idea of wings eons ago, each writing program developed separately but generated a similar set of administrative tasks.

Given the dearth of robust histories of WPAs during this era, generalizations abound in the extant research on the nature of the early WPAs. Purdy (1986) wrote that “time was when directors were rank amateurs. An assistant professor took on the odious job of directing freshman English for tenure's sake. He (always he then) had some interest in teaching composition but none in constructing and managing a durable program, and the only theory he knew was in Aristotle” (p. 793). Elsewhere, Brereton (1995) wrote that “by 1910, composition had become almost totally apprentice work, and responsibility for its oversight became the province not of a scholar or curriculum expert but an administrator” (p. 21). Indeed, McLeod (2007) called the early WPA a “bureaucratic functionary” (p. 31). One theme in these histories is that the WPA was a failed literature scholar somehow, someone trapped and separated from the real work they wanted to do in English. Missing from these generalizations, however, is the perspective of the land-grant college scenario. Iowa State did not have dominant, oppressive, disciplined literature department. Like other land-grants, Iowa State faced different cultural and administrative pressures.

We do not know how the early WPAs at land-grant colleges responded to the enrollment growth, but we do know that land-grants grew apace with the universities, albeit through different avenues.¹⁹ None of the land-grants remained small, like the struggling liberal arts colleges.²⁰ Some interpreted the Morrill Act to allow research, and they

¹⁹ In 1890, Morrill's second land-grant act founded 19 Black land-grant universities, many in the American South. This act expanded the land-grant mission and ideals of access to African Americans who had been prevented from attending college. The 1890 act, however, did not impact existing institutions very much, and these colleges did not begin producing research for several decades due to continued discrimination and underfunding (Humphries, 1991; Sorber & Geiger, 2014). While important to the overall picture of land-grant history, the 1890 act did not impact Iowa State very much.

²⁰ Rudolph (1990) noted that many liberal arts colleges transformed themselves into universities or land-grant colleges. On one hand, they could stick to their ideals; on the other, they could not remain economically solvent while the state schools offered an attractive curriculum and low or no tuition. Many, many small liberal arts colleges closed between the Civil War and World War I.

transformed into universities. They encountered the granger political blowback head-on. Land-grant institutions in the eastern United States, such as Cornell and Yale's Sheffield School, had mostly abandoned the agriculture for the university model of general scientific research, becoming Gilman's ideal of a "National School of Science" (Geiger & Sorber, 2013, p. 11; Gilman, 1867).

In contrast, most of those land-grants in the South and Midwest transitioned to the Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (A&M) designation in the 1880s and 1890s, and they grew because students wanted to join the managerial class of the industrialized nation. The M in A&M, which was everywhere neglected until the 1880s, interested students across the nation, and they flocked to engineering programs as a sure means of financial prosperity (Zieren, 2013). In the mid-1890s at Illinois and Cornell, around half of the students became engineers; the percentage was even higher at Purdue and Pennsylvania State, turning them essentially into engineering schools (Geiger & Sorber, 2013, p. 162). Several land-grant colleges wedded to the agricultural ideal, such as those in Ohio, Kansas, and Iowa, feared that engineering would override agriculture. Granger activists tried to either restrict funds to engineering or increased appropriations to agriculture beyond student demand to prevent a total collapse of agricultural education (Zieren, 2013, p. 204). Engineering grew regardless, and it branched into myriad disciplines by 1900, such as civic, mechanical, agricultural, electrical, and mining engineering, just to name those at Iowa State at the time.

The A in A&M had been the great land-grant failure across the nation, bringing about the many populist revolts discussed in Chapter 3. However, the agricultural arts caught up in the 1890s, not through more farmers' sons returning to the farm, but by land-grant colleges committing to applied research for agricultural industries. After Knapp's failed presidency at IAC, he succeeded elsewhere; alongside other land-grant leaders, he lobbied for years to guarantee funding for — and the dissemination of — agricultural research. His efforts

culminated in the federal Hatch Act of 1887, which established experiment stations and a yearly \$15,000 stipend at land-grant colleges across the United States, as well as funding for agricultural education in high schools and plain-language publications about agricultural research for practicing agriculturalists (Kuhn, 1955, p. 162; G. E. Moore, 1988). The Hatch Act poured fuel on the research fire for the A&M colleges, and they began attracting more students, better professors, and more industry investment. Additionally, early efforts at extension and outreach in the 1890s, such as short courses in summer and winter terms, preparatory colleges, and scientific demonstrations on farms — not at the colleges — won over many agricultural societies and grangers (Morgan, 1934; Rasmussen, 1989; Sorber, 2018). State and federal government policies increased funding for extension and outreach throughout the 1890s and early 1900s. In addition to teaching and research, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 permanently established and funded extension and outreach programs in the land-grant institutions. In sum, the A&M land-grant colleges grew, attracting different students and cultivating a different curriculum than the universities.

And Iowa State grew with them. President Beardshear, who presided from 1891 to 1902, is widely regarded as one of the institution's most popular presidents. He inaugurated an immense building expansion program, expanded many of the majors, served on state and national councils for both agriculture and education, and maintained a regular speaking circuit around Iowa to advertise the College (Ross, 1942a, Chapter 10). Its professors also won awards for engineering innovations, and agricultural societies began hosting events and conferences on the campus as a sign of support. In 1898, IAC officially changed its name to reflect the outgrowth of engineering and other sciences to match the agricultural studies: Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. From this point on, no one used the label "IAC" anymore, and neither will I. In shorthand, the college was "Ames" or the "Industrial

College,” but to most within and without of the community, it was shortened to ISC, and would remain ISC until 1959 (Ross, 1942a, p. 213).

Like their higher education counterparts, ISC found itself in multiple administrative conundrums (perhaps crises): how to house students? How to find and train teaching a teaching force? How to place students? How to handle fees to offset complicated funding politics? How to organize the scientific specialties into sensible departments? Although many composition histories view the *rhetoric* of this period to be lacking in innovation and philosophical rigor, this period of rapid growth is worth observing from the perspective of administrative solutions. WPAs across the nation carved out resources from sprawling budgets, devised new methods for standardizing composition curricula and training instructors, and built professional connections at newly formed conferences and publications for English teachers. Or, they failed at these tasks in some ways. At ISC, and likely at other A&Ms, the WPAs faced the added burden of continuously adapting their programs to the land-grant missions of their colleges. The early 1900s at ISC were a period of administrative experimentation.

5. 2. 1898 – 1913: The Arrival of Alvin Noble and the first WPA’s curriculum

5. 2. 1. Background of Alvin Noble

Alvin Buell Noble graduated with a bachelor’s in 1887 and took some graduate work from the State University of Iowa, earning a Ph. B. (bachelor’s of philosophy), and he taught at Michigan Agricultural College as an assistant professor of English for nine years. Seemingly upon arrival in Ames in 1898, he and his family became well-known figures in both Ames and Iowa State communities. Local newspapers from the period reported that his wife, Cora, led women’s literary societies around Ames and secured scholarships for ISC students, and that the Nobles hosted events for students, high school teachers, and ISC faculty. While Noble’s children were in elementary and secondary schools, he involved himself in the

public school board, and he served as president of the local board of education in the 1910s (Noble, 1911; “Prof. A. B. Noble of Iowa State Dies,” 1936). The Nobles sent all four of their children to ISC in the 1910s and 1920s (Noble, 1929a). As a professor, Noble founded oratorical societies and coached debate teams at both MAC and ISC (Beal, 1915, p. 209), and as part of his service roles, he coordinated a public lecture series for Ames. He was president of the Iowa Association of English teachers (“Attend Teachers’ Gathering,” 1915).

Beyond these scant biographical facts, Noble remains memorialized in another light by students writing in their sarcasm-laced publications, such as Figure 5.1.

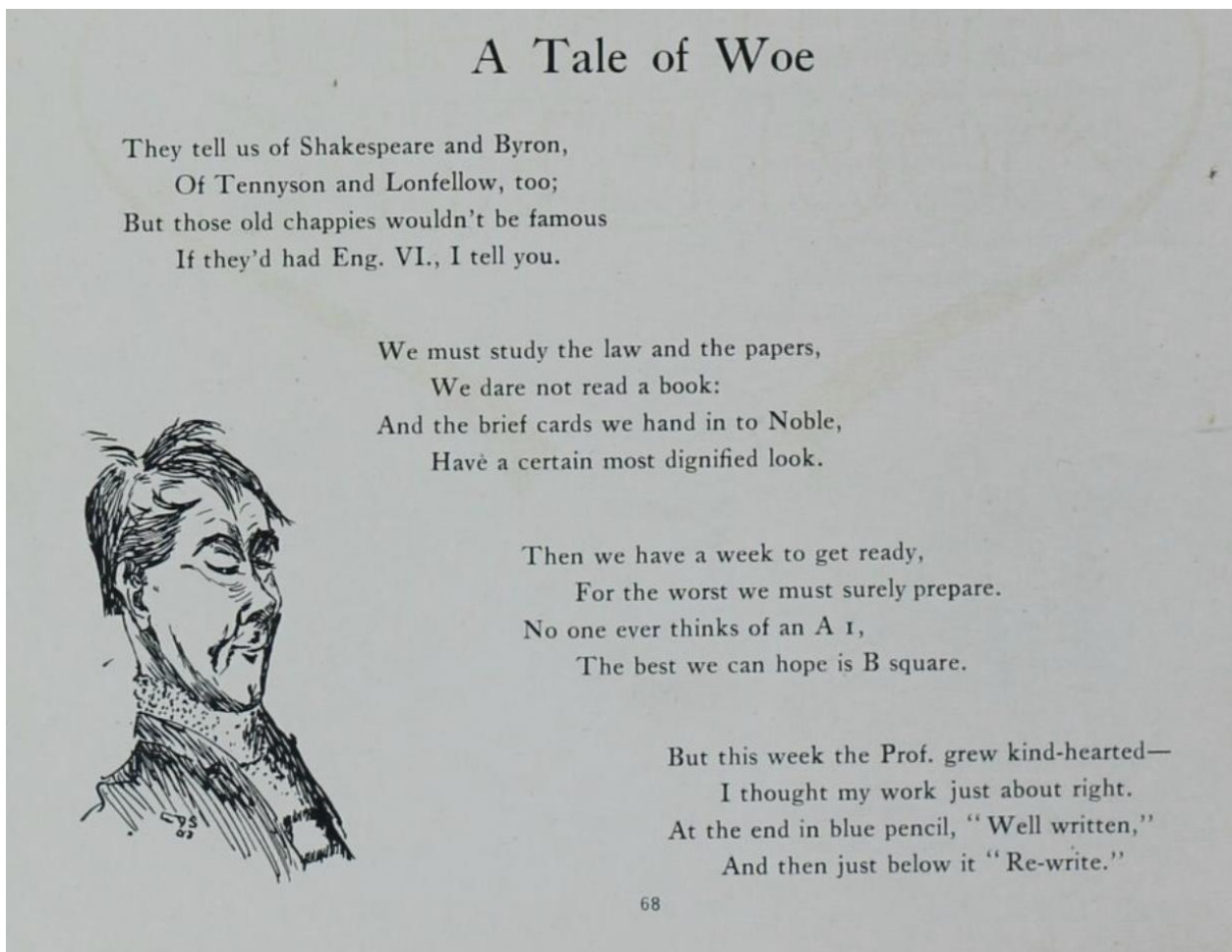


Figure 5.1. Students complaining about Noble grading them harshly in the Bomb. This small excerpt shows that students did not read literature in composition courses. Instead, they wrote short themes. The highest grade was an A1. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1904a, p. 68)

The biographical Alvin Noble and the administrative Alvin Noble are difficult people to reconcile. Administrative Noble, who came to ISC in 1898 to finish out the school year that

Doolittle abandoned, wrote *a lot*. He poured copy into his reports and letters throughout the College that give us some glimpse into the department, its pedagogies, and its many struggles. As an administrator, he wrote with urgency and righteous fury. But when he (frequently) popped up in local newspapers as an involved member of Ames and ISC society, he rarely disclosed his personal views. He published one article and no textbooks, making him professionally invisible to the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Noble did not leave episodic screeds in student newspapers like Wynn did to shape the historian's perceptions. When he did write in public, he was austere and factual—robotic, even. Students did not write loving biographical blurbs in the yearbooks for Noble like they did for Welch, Wynn, and Doolittle, or even some of Noble's faculty and staff. The biographical and administrative Nobles are, of course, the same person, created by the writer of the history, but interpreting *why* Noble did what he did and interpreting *how* his efforts were received are quite challenging without Noble's perspectives.

How is one to interpret Noble's annual reports to the president, which dwarfed those of other department heads and his English department predecessors? Maybe he was thorough. Maybe tedious. Or, perhaps we borrow from the 1905 *Bomb* staff who voted him "most eccentric" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1905, p. 176). His reports differed qualitatively as well. He added extensive tables to the typewritten documents to show the hourly strain of his staff, he interviewed his instructors and quoted their plights in his reports, and he made requests more openly and frequently than Doolittle and Wynn did. Other department heads did not mimic these tactics for many more years. Was he a heroic administrative advocate? Or, was he a nag? Students poked fun at the English department in the *Bomb* every few years, but how can we interpret their sarcastic comments? In a humorous initialism from the *Bomb* titled "Faculty Primer," E stood for English, "our bugbear and sorrow"; N stood for "Noble, a man

of refinement. If we had our way he'd be kept in confinement" (Iowa Agricultural College, 1912, tit. "Faculty Primer").

He had his defenders as well, but these sources are as biased as the humor sections of the *Bomb*; many came out as sentimental reminiscences after his death. In a letter from one of his sons-in-law to the *I. A. C. Student* (precursor to the *Iowa State Daily*), William Savin wrote that, during World War II, he happened upon several fellow officers in Italy who all went to ISC. They reminisced about their degrees and experiences and favorite instructors. Savin found that they had Noble in common:

[O]ne said: "Do you know the man I got the most from at Ames? I'm a Chemist and I'm over here in Chemical Warfare, but the courses that I got most from were taught by Professor Noble. He helped me to express what I wanted to say and to appreciate how great writers had expressed themselves". [sic]

The other forty-five-to-fifty-year-old men all agreed that from Professor Noble they had received much that enriched their lives.

Finally, one of them turned to me and said: "If you were a graduate student I don't suppose that you knew Professor Noble".

I said: "Oh yes, I knew him very well. I married one of his daughters". (Savin, 1967) Suffice to say that, like so many of us in English education, Noble positively impacted many, and many mocked him because he taught a required subject that they did not enjoy.

Whether he was a good man or a bugbear or a man easily forgotten after the semester ended, from the distance of a century, the biographical and administrative Noble unite in the word "service." Anson Marston, dean of the division of engineering at ISC and Noble's lifelong friend, recalled that service permeated Noble's demeanor, whether it was through committee work, local political activism, or teaching. In Marston's eulogy, he wrote that Noble drilled with fellow faculty members in preparation for the draft during World War I,

even though he would have been nearly 55 years old if he were drafted. When he aged out of ISC's eligibility to run the department in 1929, his notion of relaxation was teaching. He wrote of himself at his retirement that "through all the years his chief pleasure has been in teaching, rather than in administrative details. Out of his experience he hopes to develop some text-books" (Marston, 1936, p. 4; Noble, 1929a, p. 4). Though he never finished a textbook, he was listed as an instructor up until the year he died in 1936 (Iowa Agricultural College, 1936). Noble believed in serving where he was most needed, and in 1898, ISC needed a WPA. As contemporary WPAs know, directing programs is an often unsung, unnoticed, but ineliminable labor. Thankfully, the administrative Noble left artifacts of his WPA labor behind. Noble reveals many of the social and material constraints that early WPAs faced, and the administrative Noble also shows how a program can grow and adapt to institutional change.

5. 2. 2. Arrival and early changes in departmental structure

Like Doolittle, when Noble arrived in 1898, President Beardshear reshaped the department around the individual instead of keeping the extant administrative structure. According to Ross (1942a), Beardshear recombined the departments of literature and rhetoric because Wynn, who was acting chair of literature and history, had become a liability to the College. Four years before, in 1894, an alumni association had recommended Wynn be invited out of retirement to return to ISC, and Beardshear invited him back to acknowledge Wynn's principled resignation against Hunt. However, when he returned, Wynn was not the same magnetic professor he had once been. Ross (1942a) wrote that "the vein of sentimentality that [Wynn] had drawn upon effectively in earlier days now flowed unrestrained," meaning that Wynn's romantic attachment to literature for literature's sake ran in opposition to the pragmatic, scientific aims of ISC (p. 207). Due to Beardshear's recent tenure and promotion policies, he couldn't fire Wynn outright; he could, however, separate

literature from history. It was much easier to hire a rhetoric and literature professor than a history and literature professor. Beardshear appointed Noble to the combined rhetoric and literature program, leaving Wynn the chair of history. Beardshear was pressuring Wynn out. To finalize Wynn's ostracization, in 1900, Beardshear appointed Orange Cessna to chair the history department instead of Wynn. Wynn retired, feeling bitter and betrayed by the administration. Beardshear wrote privately that "the episode was one of the most distressing in his career" (Ross, 1942a, p. 208). From 1898 onward, literature and composition were forever entwined under the English department at Iowa State.

In 1898 and 1899, Beardshear began restructuring ISC to be more efficient and aligned with national performance standards (Ross, 1942a, Chapter 10). Progressive presidents and educational organizations obsessed in speeches, publications, and reports over the relationship between high schools and higher education. The often abstract debates boiled down to the practical concerns of high school accreditation and college entrance requirements (Bohan, 2003; Kliebard, 2004, Chapter 1). On the one hand, Beardshear needed to raise the rigor of the College to make ISC stand out; on the other, he needed to systematically solve the problem of poorly prepared students. As part of its land-grant mission, ISC had already established — and reestablished — the precedent of preparatory schooling for students from rural areas that did not have access to good schools. Thus, Beardshear replaced the ad hoc and unsystematic preparatory department with a new "Academic" year designation for students who did not meet collegiate readiness standards. ISC course catalogs at this time listed all Iowa high schools that did not qualify students to enter the freshman class without the student taking entrance exam first. The catalogs also bloated with entrance examination stipulations, sample reading lists, and practice questions. Depending on their scores, students either placed into the academic year or the freshman year. Students with the academic rank had a full course

sequence of general math, science, and English courses designed to prepare them for admission to the freshman year.

Beardshear's first task for Noble was to create an entirely new composition course sequence to align with this restructuring. Noble transposed Doolittle's FYC sequence (grammar in the fall, rhetoric in the spring) into the academic year, largely without change, and he moved the sophomore "advanced courses" to a new FYC sequence in the freshman year. Surprisingly, Noble's composition and rhetoric sequence also added four more required composition courses, and Noble created three additional elective literature courses to the one course Wynn had been teaching. In summary, the new composition sequence looked like

Table 5.1:

Table 5.1. Noble's 1899 composition sequence. (*Iowa State College, 1899, pp. 199–200*)

Courses in English composition and rhetoric		
Academic year (non-collegiate)	Course 1:	Five hours per week. Grammar: Drill in spelling, punctuation, syntax, and mechanics. Textbook used a little as possible, preferring instead to imitate examples of good prose directly.
	Course 2:	Five hours per week. Rhetoric and Composition: Study of the paragraph from Scott and Denney's <i>Composition-Rhetoric</i> . Essays once per week and daily writing exercises.
Freshman year	Course 3:	Five hours per week. Required for all. Advanced Rhetoric and Composition: Essay structure, principles of different forms of discourse. Essay once per week with emphasis on "making plans and outlines" (p. 199).
	Course 4:	Course 4: One hour per week. Required for all but agricultural and veterinary students. Composition: Weekly themes. Imitation of models read and discussed before class.
Sophomore year	Course 5:	Composition: Same hour, requirements, and content as Course 4.
	Course 6:	Composition: Same hour, requirements, and content as Course 4.

Over the next few years, Course 4 became a course devoted to weekly themes in narration and description. Course 5 focused on weekly themes in exposition. And Course 6 offered weekly themes in argumentation. All the literature courses were electives.

Between 1899 and 1909, ISC required the complete composition sequence for all students in the agricultural, engineering, and general science courses (excluding home economics). This ten-year stretch of first- and second-year composition represents the only time during the years of this historical investigation (1869 to 1939) that ISC required freshmen and sophomores throughout the college to take two full years of composition. One could perhaps write off the sophomore requirement as merely a one-hour meeting per week, but in 1906 the sophomore courses were increased to three hours per week. As Noble wrote, the aim of these courses was “to train the student to express his thought on whatever subject, not only with clearness and ease, but with something of grace, attractiveness, and power” (Iowa State College, 1899, p. 200). These were ambitious aims for a composition program, but ISC backed Noble’s ambitions.

The question becomes *why* ISC should buck the trend prevailing across the United States to reduce composition and rhetoric instruction into the freshman year. In 1896, the most renowned and powerful composition program in the country, Harvard’s, required one composition course in the sophomore year (English B for poor students, English 22 for average, and English 31 for strong writers) (Brereton, 1995, p. 12). But, to recall Rudolph (1990), “By 1897 the prescribed course of study at Harvard had been reduced to a year of freshman rhetoric” (p. 294). I could find no direct administrative command from above or appeal from Noble from below (as if the English professor at a land-grant could tell the technical departments what to require) to instigate this sequence. Pressures from both the administration and across the curriculum, however, help explain the longevity of the required

sophomore course, and Noble's particular framing of the course sequence likely made the requirements easier to justify.

Utility and culture. Noble wrote in each course catalog from 1898 to 1913 that "in English two ends are sought, utility and culture," a theme he expanded upon for several pages. Remarkably for the time, the catalogs over this period repeated the *exact*, lengthy description that Noble wrote in 1898²¹, making for a consistent mission statement of the department at this time. By utility, Noble meant that language has practical value when (1) it communicates an idea to another person and (2) it secures the desired outcome of sharing the idea. If the text's audience infers the meaning, that is an unreliable and embarrassing coincidence; if the audience acts on the idea because another person communicated it better, that is a failure as well. Noble, aware of and influenced by the pedagogies of his time, argued that part of communicating is being error free, but only the most basic part. To Noble, effective communication had the negative quality being error free as well as a positive quality of persuasive excellence. The student reached the positive quality of communication "if he has been taught not merely to correct what is faulty" but has also been shown good models, reliable sentencings and paragraphing methods, and various document structures (Iowa Agricultural College, 1898b, p. 197). In sum, "he will not be content to use language that has only the negative merit of being without faults, but will press on to attain a style enriched by the presence of real excellence, a positive quality" (p. 197).

The freshman and sophomore grammar, rhetoric, and composition courses were directed at utility. The student wrote much in these courses, and the instructors offered strong examples to imitate. The imitation pedagogy, one of the oldest stalwarts of the rhetorical

²¹ With two minor exceptions. In the section on the importance of literature, he wrote "Many regard it as the greatest of the arts," which did not make it to the 1899 catalog (Iowa Agricultural College, 1898b, p. 198). The other exception was that Noble added a paragraph on the virtues of debating. Debate was housed in the English department until 1910, when it was moved to public speaking. The latter reflects the growth and professionalization of the public speaking department; the former reflects a modicum of humility about what one can claim regarding the status of literature at a land-grant college.

tradition (Sullivan, 1989), tried to instill a craft mindset in ISC students, similar to contemporary creative writing courses. Students looked at examples, both from industry and literary sources, and recreated their strategies, which Noble hoped would help the students continuously improve no matter what they read in the future.

The literature courses addressed culture. Noble expanded the literature options to include two English poetry courses (one on forms of poetry, the other on dramatic poetry), a fiction course, and an American literature (poems, essays, and novels) course. Noble describe a method of literary analysis that mirrored the scientific methods flourishing elsewhere at ISC, such as “close observation, correct inference, [and] fine discrimination” (p. 198). By arguing for a scientific approach to literature, Noble’s catalog statements came *close* to making a transfer argument that studying literature improved scientific reasoning, but he rhetorically maneuvered to the merits of literary culture instead pressing his claims too far. Noble argued that literature offered access to the whole of human experience. Literature was meant to elevate the awareness of all things, but especially human nature. Noble insisted that neither the composition/rhetoric courses nor the literature courses were purely “utility” or “culture,” and he argued that the utility of literature was that it captivated many people. By studying literature, the student could persuade people more effectively by cultivating their aesthetic sensibilities. Above all, Noble wrote, literature put the student into contact with the greatest minds of all time, which would likewise inspire the student to think great thoughts.

The description of the literature courses mirrored what Wynn and Doolittle had argued, more or less, about the values of literary culture, and the cultural argument for literature was popular across the country (Brereton, 1995; Crowley, 1998; Russell, 2002). Welch’s, Wynn’s, and Doolittle’s rhetoric and composition courses, however, all focused on what Noble called the “negative qualities” of communication, or the virtue of being error free. Noble believed it had a positive quality as well. Utility was not only correctness; utility meant

that one writes to get things done. Under Noble, the positive qualities of utility rang with a how-to-make-friends-and-influence-people pragmatism, which appealed to the culture at ISC. Noble packaged the curriculum neatly, and other departments found it easy to implement, reference, and support. In the early 1900s, the Division of Engineering devoted a catalog page of its course of study to extolling the virtues of the English sequence, and it mirrored Noble's negative and positive qualities of utility. On one hand, no engineer can be successful if they made errors. However,

his success [...] will often depend upon his ability to convince his superior or public officials of the correctness of his views. The really successful engineer also must come in close contact with other members of his profession, and must exchange information of value with them through the medium of papers on technical subjects. For the attainment of these ends, the engineer should give especial attention to the thoroughness of his training in English. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1904b, p. 184)

The engineers also referenced Noble's debate course and the public speaking department as well, though the division did not require these courses. The heads of the agriculture and domestic science divisions spoke similarly of English's utility and culture benefits throughout this period.

From above, the administration also approved of (or requested) this mission for the English department and the foundational studies²² more broadly. The administration wanted students balanced between utility and culture. President Beardshear opposed narrowness in the curriculum, and he delivered several speeches on the importance of a technical education that includes cultural subjects to expand the mind and the soul beyond industrial applications. Two of his speeches to the National Education Association, "Influence of Poetry on Education" in 1900 and "The Three H's of Education" in 1902, argued that literary topics

²² I discuss the relationship between English and the rest of the "foundational studies" in the next section of this chapter.

balanced out the curriculum. In the latter, he defined the three H's as (1) the head (research sciences and philosophy), (2) the hand (applied and industrial arts and athletics), and (3) the heart (literary studies and extracurricular organizations), and he tried to support each H at ISC. In "The Three H's," he disagreed with poet Matthew Arnold who said that miners, engineers, and architects could not lead a culture toward "sweetness and light," or toward the aesthetic joy and wisdom found in the classical arts. Beardshear wrote:

Why cannot reason and the will of God prevail in the hand arts as well as in the classic arts? In fact the new education of the hand is making reputable avenues to the completest development of life. [...] The miner, the engineer, the agriculturalist, or the tradesman can be an embodiment of sweetness and light, and this is the ultimate goal of the widest education of the masses. We have educated some of them... (Beardshear, 1904, pp. 136–137).

Beardshear believed that the three H's were pedagogical ripostes to accusations that technical education fueled rampant selfishness and unmitigated individualism. The English department's mission of utility and culture became part of his apologia for a moral *and* industrial college.

When Beardshear died suddenly in 1902, the focus of ISC could have been thrown into disarray by a longstanding rivalry between agriculture and the general science (discussed in Chapter 3, "The changing value and definition of science"). Agriculture sciences had secured their place at ISC, but, the debate ran, "pure" sciences belonged at the universities. It is difficult to tell how English and composition would have fared in either partisan institutional administration. Would English have devolved into pure skill-and-drill training, or would it become a specialized research program in literature? Instead of electing a partisan, the board found another middle path uniter like Beardshear. The new president, Albert Boynton Storms, assured the campus that the A&M interpretation of the land-grant college

that Beardshear had worked so hard to establish would remain (Ross, 1942a, p. 240). As if picking up where Beardshear had left off (to the point of also contrasting ISC with Matthew Arnold's claims), Storms's (1904) inaugural speech reaffirmed ISC's moral standpoint that industrialism, production, and material prosperity could not be ends in themselves. A student needed balance between materiality and abstractions. Storms believed that focusing on the national interest provided such a balance. ISC — its faculty, staff, and students — needed to identify their American individualism within the equally important American values of justice, fairness, and civic responsibility:

No man can find resting upon his brow the fadeless crown of life unless and until he finds the conviction that his life's work has entered somehow permanently into the world's best work, and counts for the everlasting good of men. This is sane socialism; the conviction that a man's life and life work must count for good, and that a man cannot stand alone nor achieve alone. (Storms, 1904, p. 10)

Neither the aristocratic indulgence of the old college nor the cloistered introspection of the pure sciences had a place at ISC. One must be balanced between utility and culture.

To Storms, the applied sciences struck the best balance between utility and culture. An industrial education meant that students served their fellow Americans and improved the material welfare of the world. Applying science did not degrade science — a position those of the pure German university mold maintained. “A problem is no less valuable as a problem when it pertains to the sanitation of a city or a home, or to the conservation of the fertility of the soil,” Storms wrote (p. 12). Applied science also put students in close connection to literary concerns, such as finding inspiration, imagination, and hope through a shared human experience, but he refused to deny humanities their place at ISC. For Storms, “the danger to be frankly faced and admitted is that in the practical applications of the sciences to the industries of life, the spirit of haste, the merely mercenary estimate of so-called practical

results, shall lead to a superficial treatment” (p. 13). ISC students needed to experience science, history, and literature to find “the fine breath of the spirit of man at his best” (p. 13).

At this point in ISC’s history, literature courses did not seem to threaten the land-grant mission as they once had. They served to balance the ISC student’s industrial education. As higher education historians have long observed, educational leaders across the country delivered speech after speech on the merits of utility, practical training, and mediating capitalism with a civic sensibility (Lucas, 2006; Ross, 1942b; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). The ISC ideals were not special. The ideals of materialistic moderation, however, modified by the land-grant’s particular administrative and curricular mission, prevented the literature branch of the English department from developing as it did elsewhere in the country. An ISC student could not major in English. Crowley (1998) argued that Matthew Arnold’s humanistic notions of a disinterested, separated cultural studies subordinated rhetoric to a utilitarian service while literature served higher aims. At research universities with distinct literature departments, literature was not to be put in service for any utilitarian ends: “the point of humanistic composition [was] not to create better writers but to display the cultivated character that [was] a sign of an educated person” (Crowley, 1998, p. 86). Literature under ISC’s utility and culture designation, however, was put into service. So long as the literature courses related in some way to the land-grant mission, Noble’s utility and culture balance allowed literature to grow alongside a robust composition sequence. Students in *The Bomb* wrote in various personal profiles that they enjoyed the literature courses, and ISC’s literary societies grew to seven by the early 1910s. As ISC rounded out 1914, the English literature courses peaked in their variety and number for many years to come. ISC offered 14 literature courses, from “The Bible as Literature” to “Reading for Children at Home and at School” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1914, p. 212).

5. 3. Service, status, and a disciplinary FYC course: The Iowa Board of Education and the Division of Industrial Science, 1914 – 1929

A popular axiom states that “constraints breed creativity.” For the first 40 years of composition instruction at ISC, the land-grant mission clearly *constrained* the composition program. Wynn and Noble slid literature into the curriculum wherever possible, and Doolittle sidestepped the literary dilemma by importing Harvard’s current-traditional rhetoric. But the land-grant constraints had not *created* anything in the composition curriculum until two important, administrative and governing bodies redefined the English department between 1913 and 1916. The first body, the organizational apparatus of dean-controlled divisions, arose somewhat naturally in the early years of the 1900s as ISC grew beyond the president’s administrative control. The second, occurring almost at the same time, was the Iowa Board of Education (later, the Board of Regents). The Iowa legislature voted to create the Board of Education in 1910 to govern ISC, the State University, and the State Normal School. In 1914 and 1915, the English department began enrolling students into courses based on their specialized divisions, and these discipline-specific courses taught students composition based on their intended disciplinary genres. Both systems of control imposed curricular constraints upon the English department, but the constraints also clarified the department’s purpose in the institution. From these constraints, Alvin Noble and his instructional staff created a FYC course that resembled modern learning communities and writing in the disciplines, and they also began treating composition as a research-worthy subject.

Before discussing the disciplinary FYC course, it is worthwhile to explore the emergence of these two systems of curricular control as well as their debates about the English department. Until this point in ISC’s history, I have been able to discuss the president as a powerful and influential entity on the English curriculum, both as pedagogical guide and as protector from outside attacks. What the president said in a speech or a report could somewhat reliably wind up in the composition curriculum. After the Board of Education and

the deans were put in place, the presidents remained important, but these other layers of control complicated the line of administrative authority. On one hand, the WPA and English instructors exercised more freedom than ever without a strong personality, such as Welch, involving himself in day-to-day teaching. They began publishing in English journals, creating new courses within the ISC mission, and writing textbooks. At the other hand, the extent of what the WPA could within the institution and the curriculum diminished. Noble could not roam into the liberal arts like Wynn did. Curricular changes took several years to implement, and coordination across sections of the same course reduced teaching freedom. From 1869 to 1909, under the simple hierarchy of the president, the English department operated on an exposed prairie; afterward, under the board, the president, and the dean, it was confined to a spacious corral.

5. 3. 1. Service status: The dean and the division

The general science departments wanted ISC to become a university, which the presidents viewed as beyond the purpose of the land-grant mission. As we have seen, public pressure and presidential power kept ISC an A&M, an applied technology and sciences college. The general sciences could not create majors and graduate programs, nor could their professors pursue research to the degree their peers at universities could. For decades, ISC followed President Welch's initial administrative tactic to manage the general sciences sprawl. Administrators allowed only a few courses of study to lead to a degree, thus subordinating the sciences to support and service courses. The relief valve for the general sciences was the numerous named and constantly changing degree, generally called something like "general courses in the sciences related to industries" or "course in industrial science." Students in this course chose a scientific discipline in their junior year to specialize in, which led to a Bachelor of Science degree. But, as the College grew and the courses of study multiplied, the general sciences added more upper-level classes, all of which seemed

intimately connected to the A&M courses. For example, upper-level chemistry courses competed with chemical engineering, physics with mechanical engineering, botany with agronomy, and geology with mining engineering. No one knew where the support courses ended and the cutting-edge A&M courses began.

But for the presidents of ISC, the role of the general sciences was clear: general sciences must serve as foundations for the A&M courses. It goes almost without saying that the presidents viewed composition, along with the other liberal arts, as foundations courses. The concept of “foundational” led to one more oddity in the land-grant’s influence on composition: sharing a division with the sciences. Beardshear and Storms both spent years reorganizing ISC’s administrative structure to wrangle all the general sciences and the liberal arts into one container. In 1899, Beardshear created four divisions of agriculture, engineering, veterinary medicine, and science and philosophy, the last of which was to teach the fundamental science and culture course required for the upper divisions (Iowa State College, 1899, p. 17; Ross, 1942a, p. 211). The Division of Science and Philosophy held *seventeen* departments; the next largest was agriculture, which contained five. This division held all the general sciences as well as the English department, history, psychology, music, and several others classically associated with a liberal arts college. It was an awkward fit. Beardshear quickly renamed the division to just the “Division of Science” to avoid suspicion of literary studies in 1900 (Iowa Agricultural College, 1900), and under Storms it became the “Division of Science as Related to Industries” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1904b). By 1914, the division stabilized as the Division of Industrial Science, which I will use to simplify this narrative (Iowa Agricultural College, 1914, p. 103).

At first, the division system ran akin to a constitutional republic. That is, the president and department heads wrote the description of the division, and then the department heads ran their departments. No one headed the divisions to ensure consistency across departments

within a division. With seventeen departments, some of which offered a B.S. degree while many departments (such as English) did not, one can sense the fragmented sense of purpose within the 1906 Division of Industrial Science's catalog description:

The object of the work in this Division is very comprehensively expressed in the act of Congress establishing this and similar colleges. [...] The courses of study in this Division are less technical than are many of those of the other Divisions. [...] It is the intent therefore to lay a broad foundation in scientific facts and principles in order to fit the graduate to fill his place in the affairs of the world. There can be no better preparation for the duties of life and for citizenship than the knowledge and mental training given by a genuine study of the sciences. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1906, p. 208)

And, slightly later, in a footnote:

Either at the beginning of the Junior year or not later than the end of the first semester of that year candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Science in the Science and General and Domestic Science courses must select a science which shall constitute a major line of study. (Iowa Agricultural College, 1906, p. 211)

This division was simultaneously the home of all general education requirements and the dormant volcano of the elective university system. To hold the division system together, in 1906, Storms instituted the dean system, putting himself over the Division of Science as Related to Industries (Iowa Agricultural College, 1906; Iowa State College, 1907). Storms kept himself over this division until 1910, both as its protector and as its overseer.

5. 3. 2. The Board of Education

The Iowa legislature, though proud of the many successes at its institutions of higher education, did not approve of what was happening in the Division of Industrial Science. ISC appeared to be creating a general science institution to compete with the State University.

From ISC's founding, presidents and legislators had assured (themselves? the students? the public?) that the State University of Iowa and ISC would not duplicate their curricula (see, for instance, Welch's response to the 1874 ACI discussed in Chapter 4). Iowa wanted no competition between its educational institutions. One of the undercurrents of the many "drifting away" arguments between internal and external constituents assumed that agriculture differentiated ISC from the State University. J. A. Hull, an attorney for ISC, said in the 1874 legislative investigation that "the farmers seemed to think that as we had a state university at which they could get a general education in classics and belles-lettres, that professional men and merchants should send their sons and daughters to that institution, and that the agricultural college should be exclusively for farmers" (Iowa General Assembly, 1874, p. 333). Later, Beardshear viewed his mission-driven divisions as one means of staving off the duplication concerns (Ross, 1942a, p. 211). But, as the state institutions grew, the curricula inevitably overlapped between ISC and the State University, and, once again, English — and the division that controlled it — came in the state's crosshairs.

In 1906, the Iowa General Assembly's Committee on State Educational Institutions opened an investigation into the duplication problem in the state, and it found significant duplication across the three largest institutions, the State University, ISC, and the State Normal School (University of Northern Iowa). In addition to several other issues across the flagship institutions, the investigators argued that ISC encroached too far into the liberal arts and sciences that belonged at the State University, and the State University created an engineering program that belonged to ISC (Iowa General Assembly Committee on State Educational Institutions, 1906). The State Educational Committee recommended that a single board should govern the curricula of the institutions and prevent duplication. President Storms did not agree with the premise that the state had a right to limit duplication, and he wrote as much in his annual report to the board of trustees. He even believed that the Morrill Act

granted ISC the possibility of having a liberal arts college that would lead to a Bachelor of Arts (Iowa State College, 1907, p. 7). To him, the federal mandate superseded the state limitations. He further argued that all the institutions were growing rapidly — so what was the harm of duplication? He thought that, if ISC taught an English class, it still counted as Iowans being taught an English class. More desperately, in his last report to the ISC board of trustees, Storms argued that the impending state-run board was not legal based on the precedent of the federal and state laws establishing and defining the institutions (Iowa State College, 1908, pp. 5–7). The arguments failed.

The state felt that “[it] evidently was not the purpose of the acts creating these institutions that they should occupy a common field to any considerable extent. [...] There should be no jealousy, rivalry or undue competition among these schools” (Stuckslager, 1909, p. 748). This sentiment, held by those with legislative power, won. In 1909, Senator Whipple passed bill SF198, “The State Board of Education,” which “provided for the management and control” of the three flagship institutions, repealing all earlier legislative acts related to the government of the institutions (State of Iowa Legislative Act, 198: State Board of Education, 1909). The boards of each institution were dissolved, and the Board of Education retained authority to elect presidents and decide budgets. The main function of the Board of Education was to ensure that each institution stayed within its purview, and it did so by controlling each institution’s budgets. President Storms resigned in protest. Edgar Stanton was once again appointed as acting president of ISC in the interim.

The Board of Education got off to a rocky start with ISC. The board president wrote²³ inflammatory letters to each of the institutions, establishing the boundaries for the new relationship. For instance, in the first report, President James Trewin wrote that the board was a “governing body rather than an administrative body,” and that it held the governing

²³ As of 1910, the board combined all three of its institutions’ reports into one biennial report, and the president of the board wrote an introductory letter. Iowa State ceased writing its reports in 1908.

expertise that the three institutions lacked for themselves (Iowa State Board of Education, 1910, p. 8). Addressing ISC directly, Trewin's opening words were that ISC "presents many problems at once interesting and perplexing," and that its "industrial education along all lines has been so rapid, and the demand for its development so insistent that it would be passing strange if there were not need to examine carefully into some of these demands before yielding to them" (pp. 14–15). The board did not trust ISC to grow on its own. Trewin suggested that it may have been better had ISC become a trade school, but, benevolently, he let ISC know that "the board is firmly of the opinion that the institution should be continued" (p. 15). That its continuance was ever in question must have come as a surprise to the ISC faculty and staff.

The relationship worsened in 1912 when the Board of Education attempted its first major act of political authority. Seeking to put an end to the curricular rivalries between the institutions, the board listed a number of sweeping cuts each institution needed to make: the State University needed to cut its entire engineering division (ISC should be the engineering school), the State Normal School needed to cease all instruction in the liberal arts after the sophomore year (the State University should have the liberal arts), and ISC needed to cease all collegiate work in home economics and turn all home economic coursework into a non-collegiate certificate program (the State University should have collegiate instruction for home economics) (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, pp. 7–12). The board consoled the institutions by telling them that "the action of the Board does not constitute any just grounds for complaint; on the contrary, when this action has been carefully studied and rightly understood [...] it will be apparent to thoughtful people that [its action] is of enormous advantage to the people of Iowa" (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, p. 13). It further signaled that the era of instructional freedom needed to be reined in. "It is well known that educators are prone to wander far afield," the board wrote, and instructors needed the

“watchful eye” and “business-like methods” that the Board provided to ensure that each institution grew within the bounds it set for them (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, pp. 13–14). They also announced that they would not be increasing instructor salaries.

Political groups from all corners of the state protested these mandates. Senators representing industrial agricultural committees, citizen groups, and students and alumni petitioned that the Board of Education rescind its cuts (*Journal of the Senate of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly of the State of Iowa*, 1913, pp. 220–221). The opposition won; the Board of Education rescinded its mandates to the flagship institutions (Iowa State Board of Education, 1914). The Iowa senate told the Board of Education to limit its powers to asking the institutions to define themselves in such a way that duplications in the curriculum would be reduced over time rather than compelling the institutions to act, but the board still retained power over the budgets of each institution. As a result, ISC began defining components of the curriculum with a level of precision and argumentative rigor previously not seen. The deans of the divisions worked with department heads to define their programs within the Board of Education’s mandates to not duplicate services, and they wrote lengthy defenses of their curricular choices within the definitions of ISC’s land-grant mission. Some definitional changes were easy: Noble renamed his department “English” in 1913, removing “literature” from the title. But these were not just word games. The divisions began revising themselves in both words and curriculum. In the Division of Industrial Sciences, all attention focused on preventing the Board from accusing it of being a liberal arts college — and, unsurprisingly, a good deal of that attention fell on the English department. Much of the shape of the English department for the next 15 years can be traced to definitional debates between the Board of Education and ISC regarding the purpose and scope of the Division of Industrial Sciences between 1913 and 1916.

5. 3. 3. Administrative constraints and WPA invention: The origins of disciplinary writing at ISC

In 1914, President Pearson defined the Division of Industrial Science as supportive and practical (note, not cultural). He reported that this division taught three-fifths of all the classes and held one-third of the laboratory sections (Iowa State Board of Education, 1914, p. 284). Additionally, “ninety (90) percent of the funds expended through the Division of Industrial Science is directly for the benefit of students in other divisions” (p. 284). The division began sending emissaries to other departments, ensuring that their work was supportive in nature rather than vying for a separate degree. The president then reported that all work in traditional liberal arts courses were practical; that is, they complemented the A&M coursework by adding color, perspectives, and principles beyond the technical coursework. For example, the history department offered elective courses on the history of American industrial development and the development of Iowa agriculture. “They are not arranged to meet the needs of those who wish to specialize in these subjects, nor are they treated simply as cultural studies, but as studies having a practical bearing on present day affairs” (p. 285).

English went beyond its peers:

The staff of the Department of English has been divided into three committees consisting respectively of the teachers who have to do with English primarily for students in agriculture, engineering and home economics. Each committee is headed by a chairman and it is planned that the chairmen will get in touch with the technical division faculties so that the work in the English Department may be coordinated with the work in the technical department. (p. 287)

These committee meetings signaled that the English department had begun joining other pedagogical progressives in the Midwest in what Russell (1989, 2002) identified as the “cooperation movement,” a precursor to writing across the curriculum.

A brief explanation: Cooperation movements, inspired by Deweyan educational reforms and organic social theories, sought to bring together members within an institution who would fight against the artificial segmentation of knowledge. Cooperation could take place between high schools and colleges or between colleges and universities, but it was most often discussed as cooperation among departments at a single institution. English cooperation meant collaborating across disciplines to differentiate language instruction based on the realistic uses of the language. In contrast to current-traditional rhetoric, which taught a single English based on prescriptive rules and independent of disciplinary differences, cooperation progressives believed that each discipline had its own discourse rules (Russell, 1989, p. 404). The NCTE, which hosted a fervent cohort of Dewey supporters, published multiple articles on cooperation through the early 1900s, such as NCTE president James Hosis's (1913) influential address, "Effective ways of securing cooperation of all departments in the teaching of English composition." In this speech, Hosis (1913) argued that the entire institution is responsible for securing oral and written communication skills, not just the English teachers. For myriad reasons, cooperation "schemes" failed to take off or maintain momentum, largely because they required massive institutional buy-in at the levels of the curriculum design, faculty communication, and administrative organization. In some schemes, English instructors graded essays assigned by science faculty. Sometimes, English and science faculty co-taught sections of a course. At a few institutions, the English faculty developed discipline-specific writing courses, such as Denney's program at Ohio State (Russell, 1989, p. 413). Occasionally, science and engineering departments created their own in-house composition departments separate from the English department (Connors, 1982). The effort to sustain these cooperative relationships was too much for the ever-fragmenting research universities; cooperation was a nightmare for administrations within an elective curriculum. Most

cooperative movements died out immediately after World War I (Russell, 1989, 2002). At ISC, it lasted formally from 1915 to 1929 and informally at least until 1939.

Unlike many institutions, ISC encountered almost every pressure toward cooperation rather than against it. The greatest pressure came from the Board of Education, which in 1914 had accused ISC of veering into the liberal arts, and it had withheld appropriations to its budget until ISC reduced duplications. ISC needed to prove that all departments coordinated with the land-grant mission. President Pearson (1915) defended his institution against the board's criticisms. In his speech, "An answer to criticisms," he said that "naturally, Iowa State College gives some instruction in English, mathematics, chemistry, and such subjects because a farmer or an engineer would not be suitably educated if he did not have some instruction in these important fundamental subjects" (p. 3). However, the courses were not what they appeared. "[The courses were] adapted especially to their requirements and most of [them] would be disdained by a liberal arts student" (p. 3). He insisted that these courses did not cost the state one extra penny in duplications, going so far to argue that "a department of English suitable for university requirements is not maintained, hence it is not necessary to make comparison with this work and the English work given elsewhere" (p. 4).

The Board of Education preferred not to take Pearson's word for it. In 1915, the Iowa Board of Education requested *another* investigation into duplications at the flagship institutions, this time from the federal Bureau of Education. Philander Claxton, Commissioner of Education, collected thousands of documents and sent curricular briefs to university presidents and educational leaders around the country for additional commentary. Claxton's report had two main conclusions regarding the English department at ISC. First, Claxton (1916) recommended that Iowa institutions use the "major line" versus "service line" distinctions to reduce duplications; for instance, ISC should have major coursework in engineering but only service coursework in English. "Service lines are such subordinate

subjects as are essential to the proper cultivation of a major line. The amount required is generally not very large. English is such a service line for engineering and agriculture at the State college” (United States Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 50). Duplicating service work across the institutions is no problem; “but there should be no material overlapping of major lines” (p. 50).

Claxton’s second main finding was that the English curriculum had appropriately embraced the service designation whereas other departments in the Division of Industrial Science had overstepped their bounds. Claxton sanctioned economic science and geology. These had offered too much coursework in the major line and too little in service, and they had duplicated graduate work with the State University (United States Bureau of Education, 1916, pp. 72–74). Claxton praised the composition course for its balance of teaching labor to student enrollment.²⁴ He also praised the English department’s literature courses for several reasons: First, students could take any literature course as variable credit, that is, from one credit to four credits for the same course, with a maximum of 14 hours credits in one’s degree. Second, none of the courses was required for all students. All literature courses were electives. Finally, he thought the courses well-fitted to the purpose of the institution. “An unusual group is described ‘Literature as related to technical subjects and courses.’ One of these courses is ‘The scientific age in literature.’ Others are ‘Literature of farm and community life,’ ‘Reading for children at home and at school,’ and ‘The farm library’” (p. 72). The commissioner thought that these courses demonstrated the “principle of subordination [...] to the major purpose of the college” (p. 72).

Under these external pressures, the Division of Industrial Science, at last, established a divisional definition and curricular design that satisfied the Board of Education. At the divisional level, its god-term was service: it was to serve the other departments. Robert

²⁴ Composition labor is discussed in more depth below.

Buchanan, the Dean of the Division of Industrial Science at time, reported that the English department's forms of service needed to take on a disciplinary nature:

The work of the Department of English is mainly in composition. This predominance of composition work is in harmony with the spirit of the college. It includes the training of students not only to know things along technical lines, but also to express that technical knowledge. [...] In order to give as much emphasis as possible to practice writing on technical topics, one group of teachers meets the agricultural students; a second group meets the engineering students; and a third group, the students in home economics. This division enables the teachers to make a special study of technical topics in these respective fields and to direct and assist students to write on such topics. (Iowa State Board of Education, 1916, p. 249)

Noble remade the English department into a composition department, divided into four separate committees devoted to the major divisions at ISC: agricultural writing, engineering writing, home economics writing, and veterinary writing (added after the biennial report quoted above). Similar to Denney's program at Ohio State (Mendenhall, 2011; Russell, 1989, p. 413), Noble asked his composition committees to develop disciplinary writing for other departments, which ISC's cooperation committees and inter-departmental emissaries helped keep at a high standard.

Thus, the English department began its nearly 15-year work in cooperative, disciplinary writing instruction. Service and instruction, not literary electives or research — at least on the surface. Buchanan's 1916 report went on to describe the vast potential of the English department under the new division's definition. Instead of drudgery, he argued that composition in the disciplines was as interesting a subject for the department to investigate as literature was at the universities, and he cited several investigations and publications by English department members that excited him. He believed that teachers would not leave ISC

to pursue literature elsewhere; he encouraged the department to research as a means of improving the morale of a department that had been stripped of literature. Though a service department, Buchanan wanted ISC's service to be conducted with the same spirit of scientific investigation that universities offered literature researchers. He believed their innovations would inspire programs around the country.

The full curricular shape of Noble's cooperative writing program took between 1914 and 1919 to realize, which one can forgive — there was a war on in Europe. Slowly, old course designations and descriptions fell away as the new course numbers aligned with the disciplinary divisions (compare Figure 5.2 and Table 5.1). The FYC courses mirrored each other in a new “a, b, and c” three-course FYC sequence: the “a” courses covered general composition fundamentals and principles, “b” courses covered exposition based on disciplinary themes, and “c” courses covered narration and description within the disciplines. In 1919, ISC changed from two semesters per year to three quarters per year (with an optional summer quarter), which moved the a-b-c composition courses into the first year instead of the previous sequence where a third course lingered in the sophomore year.²⁵

²⁵ Agricultural students took their FYC sequence in the sophomore year because of practical labor requirements in the first year.

Description of Studies			
Groups	Undergraduate	Undergraduate and Graduate	Graduate
Agricultural	18 ^a , 19, 29		
Engineering	115, 116, 117, 124		
Home Economics	220, 221, 222, 230, 231, 232, 233		
Veterinary	325		
Open to all	401, 412, 413, 414, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421		

The following studies in this department have been omitted from the Catalogue for the period of the war: 23, 24, 34, 126.

Figure 5.2. 1918 catalog description of disciplinary studies in English. Note that Agriculture lagged behind the other divisions in changing their course numbers. Also notable: ISC dropped many courses during World War I for a variety of reasons; several English department faculty had enlisted at this time.

Table 5.2. Replication of 1919 catalog description of the English curriculum. The subscript letters refer to different iterations of the same course sequence, not repeats of the same course (excepting the fiction course, which was repeated).

Description of studies			
Groups	Undergraduate	Undergraduate and graduate	Graduate
Agricultural	40a, 40b, 40c, 41 (Literature of Farm Life), 42 (The Farm Library)		
Engineering	140a, 140b, 140c, 143 (Argumentation), 160 (The Scientific Age in Literature)		
Home Economics	240a, 240b, 240c, 251 (Masterpieces, English), 252 (Masterpieces, American), 253 (Contemporary Literature), 254 (The Teaching of English)		
Veterinary	301a, 301b		
Open to all	430a, b, c (repeated fiction course for different terms), 431a, b, c (different drama courses), 441 (Argumentation), 442a, b (Advanced Composition)		

As the 1920s wore on, the curriculum in the English department changed very little. Literature courses remained scant excepting a few subsections popping up periodically, and in 1924, the department added business correspondence and thesis writing to the “open to all” category. Slowly, fewer and fewer of the English department’s courses offered disciplinary literature courses. For instance, Engineering showed no interest in the “Scientific Age in Literature” course, keeping instead the composition and argumentation courses. However, as each A&M division became increasingly specialized, they began offering upper-level disciplinary writing courses outside of the English department. For instance, Civil Engineering added “ENGR 449. Engineering Reports. Practice in outlining and writing engineering papers, reports, and correspondence. Prerequisite English 143 [Argumentation]” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1923, p. 126). In Mechanical Engineering, students took ENGR 320, “Reports and Papers,” to study description, conclusions, and essential elements in engineering writing, followed by ENGR 250, “Specification Writing,” to prepare students for engineering catalog writing and machine specification writing (p. 188). Agricultural students began taking courses from the Agricultural Journalism department. Dairy Industry students took a three-course sequence in their senior year in technical journalism, agricultural feature writing, and agricultural advertising (Iowa Agricultural College, 1928, p. 159). The purpose of the English department during this period reached stasis; ISC grew around a reliable FYC sequence in disciplinary writing. Departments across ISC either taught upper-level disciplinary writing or it wasn’t taught at all.

5. 3. 4. Labor advocacy: “For this additional burden we have no additional help”

Behind the curricular scenes, Noble fought a quiet, consistent battle for better labor conditions. Noble’s success in securing ISC’s support and, later, the Board of Education’s approval of the FYC disciplinary writing courses, came with an obvious drawback: overwork. Students flooded into the institution, and ISC faced a labor shortage crisis. From Noble’s first

days as head of the department, he strained to make his administrative leaders aware of the untenable working conditions. The semester after Doolittle left ISC, Noble wrote in a short report to Beardshear that he and the public speaking instructor could not handle all the essay reading, and he requested \$50 for a student grader to help. “Such a condition puts too severe a strain upon us as teachers,” Noble wrote (Noble, 1898, p. 29). Beardshear gave him two assistant instructors. Each year after, he had to hire more instructors because of high attrition and the demands of the rapidly growing program. When he retired as head of the department in 1929, he coordinated 27 members of the English department, 22 full-time faculty and five part-time instructors. Noble’s correspondence and administrative reporting in the early 1900s consist entirely of him arguing for — and occasionally winning — more instructors, wage increases, course releases, smaller class sizes, and better training for his staff. This section of the chapter unveils the administrative strain Noble experienced while his program evolved around him.

The first thing one notices in Noble’s labor advocacy is his thoroughness compared to the other ISC department heads in the collated annual reports to the president. He wrote as if he took the “any means of persuasion” dictate seriously. Compared to his predecessor, Doolittle’s last report was a page long; Noble’s first report to the president in 1899 was 10 pages. To borrow from FYC parlance, he wrote his reports to persuade, not to inform, and his rhetorical strategies as an administrator improved throughout his career. His earliest reports relied heavily on narration, and he included subtle, biting details to illustrate the difficulties he and his instructors faced. For instance, when reporting his own teaching load, he wrote, “the students in rhetoric ought to have written more essays, but it was impossible for me to correct all of the 5 sets during term time; a considerable number were not corrected until vacation” (Noble, 1899, p. 91). Later, and more bluntly, he wrote, “in general, the simplest and most accurate statement is that the teachers in the English department work all day and all evening

till late bedtime, and in addition, most of us have been compelled to work on Sunday” (Noble, 1902, p. 153). He often included moments in his instructors’ lives missed because they took work home or descriptions of the strain instructors faced, such as one instructor experiencing stress-induced insomnia in 1903 (Noble, 1903, p. 157).

Noble also risked pedantry by explaining back to administrators the relationship between their decisions and the results on his teaching force. In 1899, Noble reminded (or informed) his administrators that, at their behest, he had had to create a full year of remedial instruction in the Academic course, extend the course into the sophomore year, add literature courses for upper-level students, and add intermediary rhetoric courses to bridge from the FYC to advanced composition (Noble, 1899, pp. 95–96). He concluded the litany with a punchy request, dodging and weaving through defensive politeness:

I wish to say that I welcome all these changes, and also that I have no further additions to propose in Rhetoric and composition. What I want to do now is to strengthen each part of the course, to make every part thorough and practical. With this end in view, I ask for additional teachers. Without them, it will be impossible to make the course in English what it ought to be. I feel that I owe it to you to state the case fully and frankly, without any reservations. I hope that in attempting to do so, I have not overtaxed your patience. (Noble, 1899, p. 96)

The report ended with his job description for the teachers he requested. In the recommended actions section of the president report, Beardshear wrote to the board that, “owing to the change in course of study and the enlargement in the work in English, extra needs have arisen in the teaching English. [...] I heartily recommend the employment of two extra instructors” (1899, p. 101). Noble had won an early victory.

However, even in his earliest reports, Noble recognized that the administrators incorrectly understood composition labor. They used the same labor calculus for all

departments and all courses. In other words, they appropriated staff based on credit hours without considering pedagogical methods or course content. For example, Education Commissioner Claxton lumped mathematics and English together in his report:

The commission finds no evidence that the number of instructors in these fundamental subjects [English and mathematics], as taught in the first and second years, is too large or that the services of these instructors are uneconomically utilized. Furthermore, the number of semester hours required in these subjects in the curriculum of the first two years does not appear excessive or ill balanced. [...] Two hundred students will keep fully occupied two instructors in first-year mathematics, two in chemistry, and two in rhetoric. (United States Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 68)

Noble, of course, disagreed when he noticed such misunderstandings. In 1902, after tabulating each instructor's in-class and out-of-class labor, he wrote that "the essay time in nearly every instance equals or exceeds the time spent in the classroom. As the essay problem does not confront teachers in other departments, it is only just to call attention to the additional burden it lays upon teachers of English" (Noble, 1902, p. 153). He described in detail the amount of work outside of class hours that composition instructors required, and he did so repeatedly throughout his annual reports. When Beardshear died, he started over the explanation process with Storms²⁶ and with the deans and Board of Education.

Noble's most important innovation in administrative labor advocacy at ISC was reframing his arguments from narration and description to mirror the language of his administrators. His administrators valued efficiency, scientific management, and quantification (Russell, 2002, Chapter 5). Noble began speaking in numbers. He quantified

²⁶ Noble's report to Storms said, "It should be borne in mind— 1. That few if any departments have daily exercises, as we have in our five hour courses. 2. That in most other departments, the markings of a paper consists mainly in affixing a grade or in drawing a line thru what is wrong, while in correcting an English exercise, it is necessary to indicate minutely just what is wrong, why it is wrong, and how it may be corrected" (Noble, 1906, p. 10).

everything his instructors did, and he created a new calculus for his administrators to use when budgeting for instructional labor in the English department. Tables of increasing specificity and complexity blossomed in his reports, and Figures 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 from Noble's reports illustrate his small improvements in data argumentation. Early on, Noble quantified ineffective data, that is, data that might persuade a composition teacher but not a dean or president. For instance, he counted the sheer number of essays and exercises, which spoke to no quantitative reference point that the president could understand. As the years went on, he began homing in on the core unit of labor: the hour worked. The main line of frustration — his staff's hourly work outside of the classroom hour — became Noble's quantitative obsession. He counted everything that related to the hours spent in and out of class. With hours he could reference labor in other departments and the credit hour system, and he argued in extensive explanatory notes on the tables how much more work his staff did compared to other departments. I encourage the reader to see the Appendix, which is Noble's complete report from 1905. It included mixed quantitative and qualitative arguments to Storms for more support, including quotations from the individual instructors. Noble's (1905) report eloquently balanced several administrative argumentation strategies on behalf of his instructors.

B. B. Larrabee	Rhet.	Fresh.	1	5	23	14 essays each 40 exercises each
"	"	Latin	Soph.	1	4	13
"	"	"	Fresh.	1	5	12
"	"	"	Adad.	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>31</u>
	Total		4	19	79	45 papers each 300 essays 2000 exercises
I. S. Simonson	Rhet.	Fresh.	2	10	41	14 essays each 40 exercises "
"	"	Acad.	Gram.	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>53</u>
			4	20	94	10 papers " 550 essays 2000 exercises
Eliz. Maclean,	Rhet.	Acad.	3	15	126	14 essays each 32 exercises
"	"	Gram.	"	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>26</u>
	Total		4	20	152	10 papers 1600 essays 3000 exercises

(Part of essay work done by Miss Younie)

Figure 5.3. Portion of Noble's 1900 data display in an annual report to President Beardshear. Note that Noble quantified papers and exercises but not hours of labor. (Noble, 1900, p. 101)

Beacher	Subject	Students	Section	Hrs. per week.
Bessie B. Larrabee.	English III	32	1	5 in classroom.
	English IV	87	2	2 in classroom. 8 on essays.
	English VI	32	1	1 in classroom. 8 on essays.
	Latin IV.	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5 in classroom.</u>
	Total-	160	5	34 hrs. per week.
Elizabeth Maclean	English III	68	2	10 in classroom. 8 on essays and exercises.
	English IV	76	2	2 in classroom. 7 on essays.
	English VI			8 on essays.
	Total-	<u>144</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>35 hrs. per week.</u>

Figure 5.4. Portion of Noble's 1902 data display in an annual report to President Beardshear. Note that Noble paid more attention to in-class versus out-of-class labor. (Noble, 1902, p. 152)

	<u>Tabular Summary, Fall Term</u>				
	Students	Hours per week		Hours per day	
		Class Room.	Essays.	Total	Average
A.B. Noble	68	15	30	45	8 $\frac{3}{5}$
Miss Larrabee	140	12	25	37	7 $\frac{2}{5}$
Miss Maclean	146	12	26	38	7 $\frac{3}{5}$
Miss Reed	151	13	25	38	7 $\frac{3}{5}$
Miss Hoyt	152	16	22	38	7 $\frac{2}{5}$
Miss White	102	20	50	50	10
Miss Abel	115	20	27	47	9 $\frac{2}{5}$
Total	874	166	185	291	58 $\frac{1}{5}$
Average	128	15 $\frac{1}{7}$	26 $\frac{3}{7}$	41 $\frac{4}{7}$	8 $\frac{1}{3}$
Mr. Blackwood	64	To make above complete, add			
	938	students in fall term.			

Figure 5.5. Table summarizing the instructional labor in Noble's 1904 annual report to President Storms. Here Noble added average hours per day; totals in students and course load became easier to compare. (Noble, 1904, p. 177)

Argumentative merits aside, perhaps the only question worth asking is, did Noble's strategies make a difference? Before I answer, I need to clarify what Noble was trying to achieve. Noble faced two problems with the administration. First, he needed more teachers, as I have discussed. The second issue, however, was that he needed to retain his teachers. Winning more instructors from the administration meant lowering the individual course load, which would make the work environment bearable. However, bearable did not equal enjoyable. Noble felt that better pay would prevent his teachers from being poached by other institutions. WPA historians, however, have dismissed the notion that teacher retention mattered to administrators at this time. McLeod (2007) described it as "apprentice work," itinerate work on the way to better things (p. 21). And George (2004), investigating a WPA's showdown with their president, argued that, "wanting a cheap writing faculty who would leave after a year or two, Thomas [Bryn Mawr's president] expected writing teachers to handle large workloads that drove more than one instructor to an emotional breakdown" (p. 41). Noble differed markedly from his peers, then, based on current WPA findings. If a portion of Noble's reports were devoted to tables and data displays, another healthy portion of the remaining pages argued for better pay to retain his instructors.

“It is wisdom to retain as long as possible teachers of proved excellence,” Noble wrote in 1904 (1904, p. 180). Noble’s strategies for requesting higher wages varied. Rarely did Noble ask for “raises” based on meritorious effort, although he did try this early on. By 1902, he began arguing for standard of living increases rather than meritorious raises. He outlined three reasons to justify his demands: (1) his instructors, who made \$600 a year, made less per hour than the janitors; (2) assistant instructors in other departments made \$800 for no extra training and less work; (3) “the college itself suffers [by] losing competent and faithful teachers who have grown familiar with the work” (Noble, 1902, p. 154). By 1902, he had already lost one instructor to Illinois for \$900 per year in the same role, and his other instructors, Larrabee and Maclean, threatened to leave. By 1904, he began asking for seniority and time-based raises to reward instructors who had stayed longer than three years. In 1906, Noble resorted, essentially, to shaming. Noble tabulated all the instructor and faculty salaries of the department and showed that they all made less than two area high schools. “To maintain good college standing in the eyes of the public it is necessary for us to bring our salaries to a higher level” (Noble, 1906, p. 1). He also demanded that his faculty receive compensation equitable to their graduate work and additional training, and in his 1906 report, he wrote lengthy descriptions of each of his instructors’ qualifications that warranted status-based raises. In one letter to the president, Noble even offered solutions to the wage frustrations, such as charging \$1 for students to take English department courses, resorting to tutors in the Academic courses, and telling the president flat-out to ask the board for more funding (Noble, 1908).

Beardshear appeared responsive to Noble’s requests for more instructors and higher wages, but the bleakest period for the composition program may have been during Storms’s presidency. The reports from 1903 to 1909 paint a dim picture:

1903: “The enrollment was 89 more in the fall term and 87 more in the spring term than it was last year. For this additional burden we had no additional help. [...] I look forward to the work of the year with fear — fear for my own health and for that of my assistants. We have lived through it, but the strain has been intense. [...] In truth, we can not live under the burden we have been carrying. We must have relief” (Noble, 1903, pp. 157, 159).

1904: “It hardly needs argument to show that our work has been too heavy. Personally, I cannot stand the strain. Relief is imperative. [...] The others stood the strain better, but they also have worked very hard. [...] It is difficult for those who have never read essays by the hour to realise what a drain on vital energy this work is” (Noble, 1904, pp. 179, 181).

1905: “I ask to present as evidence bundles of essays and exercises representing the written work that comes to the respective teachers by the week. I ask you to look into these piles of papers. [...] The papers themselves speak more eloquently than I could as to the work involved. [...] Nothing will go so far toward improving the quality of English work here, as reducing the amount of work now required of the teachers” (Noble, 1905, pp. 1, 5).

1906: “The teachers suffer from the strain they are now under. The work itself suffers” (Noble, 1906, p. 3).

Storms — though publicly more sympathetic to cultural studies than Beardshear — seemed incapable of securing funding for the department. It was not that he was unwilling. Storms added in his annual and biennial reports requests for more support for the English department.

For instance, in 1903, Storms wrote that “all the classes are crowded and the teachers heavily worked. This department must have relief.” (Iowa State College, 1903, p. 9). Instructors resigned every year regardless. In 1908, Noble even leveraged one of his instructors’ resignations to ask for wage increases, warning that more would follow her lead if something didn’t change (Iowa State College, 1908, p. 22). For reasons beyond his good intentions, Storms seemed to be one instructor or one salary increase behind the needs of the department his entire presidency.

Noble’s desperate efforts put him in contact with Ed Hopkins and the *MLA* labor committee, who I referenced at the outset of this chapter. In 1909, Noble joined Hopkins and three others to investigate composition labor issues (Hopkins, 1923, p. 5). They sent out surveys to hundreds of instructors across the country, attempting to count and quantify every relevant labor expenditure related to composition instruction. By 1912, the committee had moved from *MLA* to *NCTE*, and they began publishing short versions of their reports (Hopkins, 1912b, 1912c). Hopkins, and many, many other WPAs across the country, failed to secure smaller classrooms and more manageable labor conditions for their staffs (Connors, 1990; Popken, 2004a). I wish I could report that ISC and Noble bucked this trend; Iowa fell upon hard years debating with the Board of Education about salaries and staffing. However, Noble’s influence did percolate into the upper administration, and Noble found several powerful advocates for the English program.

ISC’s concern for its English department improved when the Iowa legislature created the Board of Education, but this increased awareness — if not some material improvements — had more to do administrative turnover than with the board’s generosity. In 1910, Ed Stanton, graduate of the very first class at IAC and composition teacher in the early years of the college, stepped into the acting presidency while the board took two years to hire Pearson.

The first ISC report to the board discussed the English department and its needs explicitly in terms that Noble had laid out in his reports²⁷:

As before the chief problem of the Department has been, how to do the work as it ought to be done? The great burden of the work is the correcting of essays. During the fall semester 1909, eight of the ten teachers of the Department, as shown in statements filed with the Finance Committee, averaged 26 3-8 hours per week in correcting essays and consulting with students. This, added to the average class hours for the semester, 16 7-10, makes about 43 hours per week, without reckoning any time for preparing for lectures and recitations, which is of itself no small task in College English. (Iowa State Board of Education, 1910, p. 221)

Stanton continued the report, discussing in depth the difficulties of teaching composition and explaining how it differed from other courses. He then cited eight other colleges' composition programs (five of which had their WPAs on Hopkin and Noble's MLA committee) to argue to the Board of Education that ISC teachers taught 50-percent more than the other institutions and that they received on average nearly \$500 less than other state institutions in the Midwest (p. 221). Stanton drove the point home in the next report in 1912. He cited Noble's tabulations for the total number of students in the English composition courses, stating plainly that ISC needed additional teachers and better salaries. The section described the findings of the Hopkins Report of 1912, argued that the maximum number of students any instructor could handle in composition was 60 per semester, and boldly claimed that "under present conditions, it is impossible to give adequate or efficient instruction in composition" (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, p. 315). Then, the report included Figure 5.6, which was

²⁷ It is unclear who wrote these sections, but it is likely that portions of the English reports to the Board of Education were copied from Noble's annual report. I am attributing the wording to Stanton, however, because the president is the official author of these reports when they are sent to the board. Even if Stanton were quoting Noble, this indicates Stanton's approval of Noble's views. Other presidents had reduced or summarized Noble's annual reports when delivering them to the board.

Stanton's recommended salary scale for the year. It is probably not surprising to note that none of the other departments at ISC or departments at the other flagship institutions included their own recommended salary scale.

Name	Position	Length of service	Present salary	Recommended salary
A. B. Noble	Professor	15 years	\$2,700	\$3,000
W. R. Raymond	Associate professor	7 years	1,400	2,000
J. C. Bowman	Associate professor	3 years	1,200	1,600
Elizabeth Moore	Assistant professor	9 years	1,100	1,400
Dora C. Tompkins	Assistant professor	8 years	1,100	1,400
Julia R. Vault	Assistant professor	8 years	1,100	1,400
Jessie M. McLean	Assistant professor	4 years	1,000	1,200
Ruth B. Safford	Assistant professor	4 years	900	1,200
Maud A. Earhart	Instructor	1 year	800	1,000
Total salary for teachers now here				\$14,200
Five new men instructors at \$1,200				6,000
Total				\$20,200

Figure 5.6. Recommended salary scale for the English department at ISC the was published in the 1912 Board of Education biennial report. (Iowa State Board of Education, 1912, p. 315)

One report indicates improved morale in the department after the change to the disciplinary writing program. In 1916, Buchanan reported that department heads had significantly reorganized the curriculum, and he admitted that the labor had been difficult for departments whose traditions tied them to the liberal arts instead of technical instruction. The biggest problem remained faculty retention: "It has been urged that we cannot hope to retain good men when they are held to the teaching largely of elementary courses" (p. 245). Buchanan said that this was, in fact, a false dilemma. Teachers in the English department "have come to realize that they are confronted with problems just as interesting and attractive as those offered by the stereotyped line of advanced subjects often taught in such departments" (p. 245). He pointed to the work in the English department as a possible beacon for other departments. Instead of advanced courses in Old English, period literature, and poetry, the staff researched the composition and literature needs of particular student populations.

Buchanan reported that already three instructors in charge of the home economics students had written a composition textbook just for women, and another group of teachers in the agricultural subjects collected essays and developed themes related to rural and farm-life problems. A third group was writing a textbook for engineering English. He believed that they were happier. It is difficult to tell if research improved morale; two of the authors of the home economics textbook resigned the same year Buchanan praised their work.

The qualitative data that explains the quantitative data became scanty at this time, and we're left with conjecture about the labor conditions after 1916. Unfortunately, the Board of Education cut the department and division descriptions from the flagship institutions, and the biennial reports shrunk down only to financial reports after 1918. The English department no longer submitted annual reports to the presidents, and the deans of the Division of Science did not keep whatever reports may have been delivered. A few crumbs of evidence indicate that labor conditions at ISC for the next few years were brutal; the Board of Education reports after the war show that salaries remained stagnant due to the war and an ensuing agricultural depression. Each of the regent institutions was so overwhelmed with incoming students and emaciated building budgets that, in 1922, State University students built wooden shacks for housing and ISC students were housed in lean-to buildings. On the other hand, I can offer a few crumbs that may lead to a more positive outlook on the labor conditions of the English department during Noble's tenure.

By 1924, finances in the state began evening out, and the lowest paid instructor in the English department made more (\$1,800) than the second highest in 1912 (\$1,400, see Figure 5.6) (Iowa State Board of Education, 1924, p. 216). Noble also kept a few additional records of his staff charting their job retention in hand-drawn graphs (one of which is Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Since 1898, he found that 40 of the 123 teachers he had hired across his tenure stayed for three or more years (Noble, 1929b). I believe he considered that number a success,

considering the struggles the department faced to keep up with enrolment. The biennial reports show that Noble increased his teaching staff from 12 in 1910 to 18 by 1916, and he increased them again to 21 in 1922, all the way to 27 in 1929. A higher percentage of the staff were recognized as faculty instead of instructional staff, and many more entered ISC with graduate degrees. Though some women did achieve associate professor rank, it was not until 1940 when the first woman in the English department held full professor rank.²⁸ Analyzing the wage improvements, however, of all 123 instructors and faculty members over this period goes beyond the scope of the current study.

5. 3. 5. A period of productivity

A change occurred in the department in the 1910s. Most of the faculty began publishing. English at ISC had some precedent in publishing, but not on matters related to FYC: Wynn published some on literature and poetry. Doolittle is not known to have published while at ISC. Adonijah Welch published several works on psychology and general teaching pedagogy, but his grammar textbook was the only pre-1916 treatise on FYC ISC could claim. In 1916, Dean Buchanan encouraged the department to publish, and he had hoped that other technical institutional would benefit from ISC's work on disciplinary English. Although against the literary research grain, Buchanan was right that at least a few composition instructors desired this work. O'Brien (1914) argued that farmers and agricultural industrialists were everywhere writing to each other and to the public, but higher education institutions taught English without regard for the new disciplines. He praised ISC for being one of the few in the country that had made efforts to teach agricultural English, but O'Brien wanted systemic change, including new textbooks and teaching methods for technical writers (p. 472). New textbooks and new teaching methods were exactly what ISC contributed to the burgeoning professional teaching organizations.

²⁸ This hardly counts — Shattuck was a long-time professor in the Speech Department, and when the two departments were combined in 1940, Shattuck kept her rank of full professor.

ISC composition instructors of various academic ranks all began publishing, presenting at conferences, and joining organizations after 1916. The *English Journal* offers a smattering of conference titles from ISC faculty: Noble's (1921) "Stepping stones to correct taste," Raymond's (1924) "What is the aim of the required college course in English composition?" and Starbuck's (1929) "Improving methods in teaching composition." More likely exist in the uncatalogued but recently digitized files of early teaching organizations, and more have likely been lost to small meetings that never published. For instance, we know ISC professor Arward Starbuck served as president of the Iowa Association of Teachers of English for a few years in the 1920s, but available journals did not publish this organization's conference proceedings ("News and Notes," 1926, p. 80). Thankfully, some of the English department's ideas were published. A brief overview of their publications adds some depth and perspective to the ISC English department's pedagogical techniques, the types of assignments students may have encountered, and the type of autonomy instructors may have had in their classrooms.

The major work, referenced earlier in Buchanan's 1916 report, is Elizabeth Moore, Dora Gilbert, and Mildred MacLean's (1916) *English Composition for College Women*. These three composition instructors collaborated with members of the Department of Home Economics to write a college composition textbook tailored to documents women were likely to produce, either in college or after. The book's chapters are illustrative of some concerns in home economics at the time:

The Outline

Note Taking

The Lecture

The Demonstration

The Club Paper

The Persuasive Address

Reports

The Book Review

Studies of Short-Stories

Storytelling for Children

Studies of Poetry

Interpretation of Pictures

The Sentence

The Word

Simple Explanatory Themes

Studies in Human Life

The Diary Theme

Letter Writing

The chapter titles reveal the gendered realities of women's lives in the early 1900s, and some chapter titles not obviously coded in gendered language contain gendered writing advice. For instance, the chapter on the lecture, that masculinized expression of disciplinary knowledge that traveled to the U.S. from Germany, did not teach college-educated women to claim the masculine discourse for themselves. They wrote, "this title [the lecture] refers not to the platform lecture, but to the desk lecture; to the talk of the teacher rather than of the orator" (p. 28). The chapter was aimed at teaching future women teachers of home economics. The same is true for report writing. While their peers in engineering were writing technical reports, the intended audience for this book wrote social reports on current events, biographical sketches of interesting people, and summaries of public addresses. The theme topics throughout would dishearten those looking for progressive views of women's empowerment outside of the home

in the early 1900s. A sample of these topics: storage of clothing, proper hair dressing for different faces, proper footwear for girls, trimmings for undergarments (p. 52).

These realities aside, the book also shows that the English department adapted current and experimental educational methods to the home economics subjects. Theme writing played a part in Moore et al.'s (1916) text, but the text was also cooperative and sensitive to disciplinary norms. Almost every chapter dissected a genre within home economics, presented reasons for the generic moves, offered examples, and provided classroom exercises. Several of the chapters taught women about new genres of writing as well, such as business correspondence, note taking in the modern university, and the "demonstration or illustrated talk." This last topic is most exciting from a composition teaching perspective because it fully described a forgotten yet then-cutting-edge pedagogy called "oral composition." Essentially, the authors argued that students learned to think critically, arrange arguments, develop their voice, and adapt to audiences by performing their essays extemporaneously (E. Moore et al., 1916, p. 49). The authors stressed that students should not memorize and then recite their work; it was better to memorize the outline and speak from familiarity. The added benefit of moderate and encouraging peer pressure, the authors hoped, would make the essays better products as well. Oral composition, they believed, belonged not in public speaking departments but English departments.

Most of the other publications of the period were shorter treatises that slot into the jigsaw puzzle of progressive education initiatives in composition instruction. Some dealt with minute topics, such as theorizing the effectiveness of full-sentence outlines compared to chunked outlines (Starbuck, 1924) or discussing current trends in punctuation errors (Lasley, 1921). Others handled the content of FYC more broadly. For instance, in the late 1890s, the old theme topics based on abstract topics (such as "what is a virtuous life" or "the relationship between liberty and justice") fell away to themes based around personal experience, especially

in what were called “thought courses” or “course of ideas” (Crowley, 1998, pp. 98–99; Kitzhaber, 1990, pp. 103–109). These were popular in composition programs that did not teach composition by reading literary classics. ISC instructor Dolch (1916) chimed into the *English Journal*, agreeing with the general concept of having students write about their experiences, but he preferred that the textbook be kept out of his agriculture composition classroom. The teacher should know the textbook’s theories, and instead use classroom discussions to organically form idea-themes from the students’ interests. Dolch (1916) knew an instructor could synthesize composition principles from textbooks not geared toward agricultural students, but he did not want his students to have to wade through thought topics unrelated to their experiences.

ISC associate professor Bowman (1916) agreed on each point with Dolch (1916), but he added a few twists to his perspectives. Bowman (1916) advocated for magazines and periodicals to be used instead of classical literature and textbooks, arguing that they could capture student interest better than any alternatives. He also argued that “the magazine makes possible more oral composition, and hence lessens the drudgery of theme reading” (p. 335). Typical of the time, he cited unnamed fellow instructors, most of whom obviously taught at ISC. One unnamed teacher discussed the benefits of magazine articles on wheat, and another mystery teacher claimed that engineering students were inspired to compose essays after reading about submarines in popular technical magazines. But Bowman (1916) swiveled back to the importance of the classics, not willing to accept fads without caution. To him, magazine writing was only a bridge to deeper thought. Students had been trained all their lives to despise or idolize literature, but never to intellectually engage with it; they felt no qualms disagreeing with a magazine article. Bowman (1916) used popular articles to encourage his students to think, and when they were sufficiently fearless, he brought in related literature for them to treat in the same critical spirit.

The ISC English department also contributed papers on teacher training and writing program management. Noble's (1916) only extant publication discussed how instructors received graduate training in literature but none in what they would likely be doing with their degrees, which was teaching composition. Literature graduates who focused too much on narrow, specialized work "may develop an interest in research rather than in teaching, in facts rather than in students, in getting, rather than in giving, knowledge" (p. 665). He further disagreed with administrators who said that colleges and universities should hire those with education degrees: "teachers in pedagogy have no special training in English and no experience in teaching English" (p. 665). He urged that composition be taken seriously as its own discipline, worthy of graduate study and research, and he sketched out a possible graduate course in composition to be added around the country. Graduate students should compare many freshman composition textbooks, study systems of grading themes, conduct research on catalogs of freshman writing, and more. To Noble, composition presented worthy research opportunities, and the current system of graduate study in literature prevented new faculty from flourishing in their new positions.

Bowman (1920) considered the issues of systematizing grading in large composition programs. Like his earlier work, he called for nuance and contextual awareness rather than adopting new pedagogical systems too eagerly. Around the country, composition and rhetoric scholars developed grading schemes for FYC themes, implementing bell curves and quantitative rubrics to stave off too much instructional variety. Bowman (1920) sympathized: "In large departments of English, where the temperament and experience of the individual instructors vary even more widely than that of the students, [the effort for fool proof grading] is sure to follow" (p. 245). "It is much better," he argued, "to ask the teachers of the department, through discussion, to agree upon certain standards which will fit local conditions" (p. 249). Bowman (1920) laid out six contextual principles that should help

instructors grade with transferable rubrics while also motivating student writing, coordinating with fellow instructors, and recognizing the limitations of quantitative methods. These are contemporary concerns for any WPA, and Bowman (1920) offered some solutions that are still in use in 2023, such as having instructors evaluate the same essays as a group to standardize grades and train new instructors.

As Noble's tenure as the WPA came to an end in 1929, ISC instructor Dudley (1929) served on an internal ISC committee that asked *the* taboo FYC question: "how well does the average student write two or three years after satisfying the usual requirement in composition?" (p. 823). The question could assess Noble's efforts at administrative and curricular experimentation for the past thirty years, but, unfortunately, like many similar efforts, the answer was inconclusive yet vaguely pessimistic. Dudley (1929) was not impressed with ISC student writing. The ISC committee pulled 149 papers from seniors in all divisions, but the methodologies of the investigations rendered the findings dismissible: a single reader assessed whether they were good, fair, poor, or not passed; the reader was from the English department, evaluating disciplinary writing; the papers varied in length and importance in the classes; the instructor, having no other grounds to compare the papers, resorted to measuring mechanical errors. Home economics writers scored highest on correctness; engineering students scored lowest (p. 825). However limited, Dudley (1929) concluded with two pleas for ISC as an institution: first, "can we not concern other teachers to the policy of rewarding well-written and rejecting crudely written papers?" and second, how can ISC as an institution, from its coursework to its literary societies, take pride in good writing? (p. 832). Tall concerns for the next WPA to address.

Much cannot be known about the activities of the English department from this period of activity under Noble's administration, but the department's publications, conference attendance, and organizational involvement, in addition to the progressive attempt at a

cooperative curriculum, indicate that the department experimented. A cynical view might perceive some of the references to “drudgery” as research attempts to alleviate the strain of teaching composition. Whether we view their work as progressive or typical of the time, this faculty attempted to improve their pedagogies through research. Individual instructors also had a degree of autonomy in their instructional approaches, and Noble seemed to have encouraged it. In Moore et al.’s (1916) preface, the authors wrote that “we wish first of all and in no perfunctory spirit to express our sense of obligation to Professor Alvin B. Noble, of the Department of English of the Iowa State College, whose methods and ideas developed through years of enthusiastic teaching of composition we have freely adopted” (p. vi).

5. 4. A brief look ahead: Derby and the end of disciplinary writing, 1929 to 1939

In undergrad, I commuted for a semester, and I lost touch with my small campus community. One morning, I arrived on campus early and found the school deserted and suffused in garbage. The trappings of carnivalesque were strewn everywhere. With trampled toilet paper covering the quad lawn and trashcans overflowing, every shred of detritus shouted, “you missed something big!” Clothes, hats, bags, phones, half-eaten burger baskets — many students had apparently raptured to dorms or couches or cars to sleep abruptly, and no one left behind could tell me what had happened. I had missed a music festival, I learned later. Usually people fear missing out when they are aware of an event; I felt the pang of loneliness and abandonment after the fact. They were just there, just out of grasp. Investigating the years 1929 to 1939 at ISC feels similar. Important changes happened, but the archival and administrative records from this period are tantalizingly thin; they suggest but do not confirm; they mention valuable documents that no longer exist. Instead, the main sources of composition during this period come from the English departments’ textbooks and articles. However, they often reference primary, internal documents that no longer exist, leaving us vulnerable to their confirmation biases and methodologies.

Under Presidents Hughes (1927 to 1936) and Friley (1936 to 1953)²⁹, the English department and FYC gained considerable influence and autonomy. Part of the English department became an arm of administrative control, and from perspective of contemporary suspicion concerning correctness and remediation efforts, its power was Faustian in nature. The main source of this power came from its association with a committee. The Committee on Students' English, discussed in Chapter 5, published a follow-up report to Dudley's (1929) in 1937 titled, "Maintaining English skills." In ten years, the committee grew significantly in scope and authority. The chair of the committee, Frank Kerekes of Civil Engineering, and the secretary, Paulus Lange of English, wrote the report, and the rest of the committee members came from one of the divisions of ISC. In Kerekes and Lange (1937), we learn that a college-wide mandate called the "Plan of Procedure of the Committee on Student English" required all faculty and students to commit to correctness standards in English. The mandate had three principles:

1. Faculty responsibility: It shall be a definite part of every instructor's duty to maintain in his own work and to require of his students reasonably high standards of clearness, correctness, and effectiveness in written and spoken English.
2. Writing requirements for college courses: Every student shall be assigned frequent papers of extended length, and of such a nature as to test his grasp of those subjects which he is studying.
3. English requirements for senior college classifications: Only those students should enter the Senior College who write English in an acceptable manner. (Kerekes & Lange, 1937, p. 436)

If one is worrying that this might be a tad too much authority to give grammarians, Kerekes and Lange's (1937) tone will not alleviate their fears: "the mere fact that the committee serves

²⁹ Friley knew the department well; he served as Dean of the Industrial Science division in 1932 until his presidency.

the entire college gives it a kind of leverage in many quarters that no departmental or divisional committee could hope to exert” (p. 441). Essentially, the committee tracked down what they considered bad English and punished members of the institution for it.

This committee’s power seemed largely persuasive in nature regarding faculty (“after six years, the plan of procedure is still largely a theoretical program for a few departments,” p. 437), but its disciplinary bite toward students was backed by the administration. In six years, the committee had collected 23,000 papers from 1,000 classes, all spanning 225 faculty members in 53 departments (p. 437). The committee used a rubric devised from a FYC textbook, Jones’s (1931) *Practical English Composition*³⁰, to score the papers, and all scores were kept in a general ledger. Like Dudley’s (1929) investigation, these scores mainly reflected grammatical and mechanical correctness errors. If students failed, they needed to visit Lange for a one-on-one conference to discuss the reasons for their failures, which sometimes led to tutoring or remedial coursework. However, students could not graduate if they did not correct the papers. The committee also monitored graduate students. Graduate students submitted a 1,000–2,000-word paper in their first quarter, and “the Graduate College has put teeth into the English proficiency requirement by refusing to allow any student to take more than fifteen credits (that is, one quarter) of graduate work unless a certification of proficiency has been filed” (p. 439). Unfortunately, I could not find any of the vast reams of bureaucratic ephemera that must have poured from this committee’s work, such as the general ledger or the committee’s meeting minutes. This committee, of course, supports the claims early Composition historians (Berlin, 1984, 1987, 1988; Crowley, 1998; Russell, 2002) made about current-traditional rhetoric and its role as a way to discipline and control students.

³⁰ This represents the dark heart of the current-traditional paradigm. Connors (1997) described Jones’s book preceding this one (and others like it) as “the most banal and predictable applications of the simplified composition-rhetoric of all time” (p. 94).

One possible consolation from this oversight committee is that it was not directly tied to the English department's approach to composition, and ISC seemed to hold competing ideologies about the purpose of composition training. Dudley, who had extricated himself from the Committee on Students' English after his 1929 report, returned to defend the honor of FYC and its improvements over the last decade in a 1939 article titled, "The success of freshman English." The approach of FYC appears to be more balanced than the Committee on Students' English focus on mechanical correctness. For one thing, Dudley (1939) started the article off by informing his readers that ISC offered no English major, which had one benefit: "the ablest and highest-ranking members of the staff teach some Freshman sections" (Dudley, 1939, p. 22). The FYC had the full-time attention of the full-time faculty, and they began experimenting with the curriculum.

Dudley (1939) praised the faculty's experimentation, and he listed out several innovations that he believed differentiated ISC's FYC program from other colleges and universities:

- experience-based and discipline-based composition topics instead of esoteric prompts;
- a grammar pedagogy that used the inductive method rather than the prescriptive skill-and-drill method;
- a total abandonment of any "unity, coherence, and emphasis" instruction (which he described as "herding the sacred cows of rhetoric," p. 24);
- courses that asked students to write about contemporary and controversial topics in argumentation sections;
- and creative writing in the FYC narration course.

Dudley (1939) admitted that the FYC was free of many of its many punitive responsibilities because of the independent Committee on Students' English (pp. 26–27). FYC did not need to punish students; the Committee on Students' English would. He also noted that the ongoing

cooperative and interdepartmental relationships across the college supported the FYC program; members throughout the upper divisions supported the importance of strong communication skills. These disciplinary collaborations generated special courses in technical and genre-based writing hosted by the subject-matter departments, and they were occasionally co-taught between English instructors and subject specialists. Between its FYC innovations and the Committee on Students' English, ISC, apparently, had an institution-wide commitment to both the carrots and sticks of composition instruction in the 1930s.

How did these changes come about? Three concomitant evolutions took place in the ISC FYC program between 1929 and 1939: first, the FYC program shifted away from disciplinary writing *per se* toward a focus on general writing principles for all students. Second, several professors began leading portions of the new FYC curriculum by with their textbooks and pedagogies. Third, the FYC and WPA duties moved from the chair of the English department to committee tasks and then, later, to a titled faculty position. Each of these evolutions were connected and mutually influential, and all began after Noble retired as department chair in 1929.

The shift from disciplinary writing to general composition occurred, as have most shifts throughout this history, because of a change in FYC leadership. Although Noble stayed on as an instructor in the department until his death in 1936, Raymond Derby, the new department chair, oversaw the elimination of the disciplinary writing program practically upon arrival in 1930. Instead of separating students into the divisionary writing groups of agriculture, home economics, veterinary science, and engineering, all students at ISC took a general FYC sequence, called English 40a, 40b, and 40c. However, much stayed the same. The composition topics from Noble's disciplinary courses remained the same: 40a handled the transitional topics between high school and college writing, which usually involved "fundamental principles" of composition, such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall

correctness; 40b focused on expository writing in short and long papers; 40c asked students to practice description and narration, including the “study of artistic expression” (Iowa Agricultural College, 1930, p. 183). In 1934, Derby and the English department reorganized all the course numbers to clean up from the divisionary course number separations (e.g., 40a-c was the agriculture students’ designation before 1929), and the English 101, 102, and 103 FYC sequence was born. English 101, 102, and 103 remained the FYC sequence for all Iowa State students until 1970.

The course changed in other significant ways, though, and with Derby came the general FYC sequence that many can recognize to the present day. Instead of disciplinary learning communities where students took FYC with peers from similar majors, “students are encouraged, as far as it is practicable, to write on technical topics whenever they have special information about such topics or special interest in them” (p. 183). Students had more choice in topics, but to make it worthwhile to their majors, freshmen needed to select technical topics. The instructors, too, ceased coordinating with subject-matter faculty for FYC. These curricular and instructional changes mirror many contemporary models, and the 1930 FYC sequence joins the ongoing stream of debate about the value of a generalist FYC course for disciplinary writing. For instance, students might not receive accurate genre feedback from a generalist instructor, and it is unclear how freshmen — without instructors coordinating with subject-matter specialists — would know how to guide students toward or support the development of technical topics.

Regardless, Dudley (1939) believed that part of the success of the new FYC program was due to faculty status, pedagogical training, and research interest in FYC. Faculty published FYC pedagogical works that appear to have aligned with each of the 101, 102, and 103 course descriptions, though their use and adoption beyond their authors’ sections is unclear. According to Dudley (1939), throughout the 1930s, at least one non-ISC textbook

was used across all of one of the FYC sections — Jones’s (1931) *Practical English Composition* — but the FYC faculty did not seem as devoted to the current-traditional prescriptions as the Committee on Students’ English leads one to suspect.

Regarding the grammatical coursework, two influential and long-standing members of the department experimented with what they called “inductive composition,” and several other members of the department likely used it to teach composition. In 1930, Arward Starbuck, who joined ISC in 1913, published an article titled, “Thus saith the handbook.” In it, Starbuck (1930) argued that students should not be directly taught grammar, punctuation, organization, or style principles from rhetoric and composition handbooks. He argued that students only learned to memorize the rules for a few days, but they never committed the reasons for the rules to heart. Further, they would not know how to learn on their own in future situations. “The handbook is well named. It is a book which we hand to the student and from which he hands back to us what he has received—a body of information about the language more or less imperfectly parroted into his consciousness” (p. 215). Starbuck (1930) reflected wryly that the writer of the handbook seemed to be the only person who, through the process of writing the book and finding examples to demonstrate the principles, understood the rules — a process which inspired Starbuck’s pedagogy. Starbuck and his fellow professor, William Raymond, who came to ISC in 1907, taught students to discover those principles for themselves. Reminiscent of similar efforts by those following John Dewey, Starbuck and Raymond curated writing samples for students to investigate.³¹ Students hypothesized grammatical rules from the samples, and they tested their hypotheses in analytical experiments by finding other examples and writing up their discoveries.

³¹ Connors’s *Composition-Rhetoric* devotes an excellent section to a small group of midwestern NCTE advocates who moved away from handbook grammar prescriptivism to Dewey’s *Experience Curriculum*. See Connors (1981a) chapter 3, especially pages 157–160.

Starbuck and Raymond published a textbook in 1937 on their technique, titled *Inductive English Composition*, which was likely used by those teaching English 101 (fundamentals) and English 102 (expository writing). The authors held a positivistic devotion to empirical inquiry, and they borrowed the allure of the general sciences to suffuse their discussions about writing in scientific terms, such observation, discovery, laboratory testing, definitional exactness, and so on. The book is a gallery of short examples with guiding questions at the end of each example: “With every unit of instruction it attempts merely to ask such questions as will carry the learner through the natural mental steps leading from the initial observation to the conclusion that what he sees to be true in the given case is true generally” (Starbuck & Raymond, 1937, p. xi). Half of the book (about 300 of the 600 pages) discussed word, sentence, and paragraph units, all paired with numerous examples, but the other half offered examples of expository writing, research writing, business writing, and manuscript writing.

Elsewhere in the curriculum, three faculty members devoted themselves to the English 103 class, which taught students narration and description. These members were Instructor Ruth Safford (who stayed from 1908 to 1932), Professor Paul Jones (who arrived in 1931), and Associate Professor Pearl Hogrefe (who also arrived in 1931). All three, while allegedly focusing on the modes of discourse, leaned precipitously into early creative writing pedagogies. Safford’s (1930) *An Introduction to Narrative Writing* fell into typical category of textbooks at this time, namely a single textbook devoted to one of the modes of discourse. Safford’s book is split in two sections: first, she instructed college writers on how to write narratives and then concluded with narrative excerpts. Safford (1930) did not attempt to water her advice down or tailor it for scientific writers; she wrote about dialogue, narrative arcs, dramatic climax, and self-discovery through narration.

After Safford departed, Hogrefe and Jones (1935) created another narrative reader, titled *Interpreting Experience*, which offered students examples of creative nonfiction excerpts that they might imitate in their own composition writing. Hogrefe alone did more to advance these pedagogies, however. She wrote three articles in this period on FYC creative writing. The first discussed the motivational benefits of expressing emotions in FYC writing (Hogrefe, 1933), the second explored creative writing as possible anti-propaganda training in FYC (Hogrefe, 1940a), and the third extolled the virtues of creative non-fiction in the FYC classroom (Hogrefe, 1940b). In her articles, Hogrefe freely discussed the ISC context as a creative opportunity rather than a frustration, and she quoted from scientists and science organizations. She believed that creative writing allowed scientists and engineers to codify their personal values and philosophies in their worlds of cold materialism. Pedagogically, she brought personal conferencing and diary reflection writing to the FYC coursework, and fellow instructors used these methods decades later.³²

However, relative to my investigative focus, perhaps the biggest shift in the English department during this period was the separation (or delegation) of the WPA duties from the head of the English department to a separate position (or task). This transition is frustratingly unclear. Archival artifacts indicate the WPA position probably began as the chair of a departmental committee on Freshman English, which began in the mid-1930s alongside the move to English 101, 102, and 103. Fred Lorch, who came to ISC in 1921, probably held this position first. This is difficult to confirm because Lorch, a Mark Twain scholar and later head of the English department, donated 15 document boxes-worth of his literary lectures and Twain scholarship to the Iowa State archives — and none of his administrative files. In a box of his Twain investigations, I found a 1938 letter that he wrote requesting information from a

³² For instance, Albert Walker still devoted a day a week to conferencing with students into the 1970s. In a lesson plan for English 104 in 1973, he gave students the day off on Tuesdays to meet with him for 15 minutes (Walker, 1973).

fellow Twain scholar, and he used the back of a 1936 departmental memo to write his letter. The memo, which Lorch used as scrap paper, is important to this investigation. Lorch's signature on the memo read, "Fred W. Lorch, Freshman English." In the memo, and he informed English 102 instructors that his committee had written a new teacher's manual (Lorch, 1936). The memo also informed the English 102 faculty that Lorch, Raymond, and Starbuck had piloted the methods in the teacher's manual, and they wanted to share their experiences and answer questions for the upcoming course. Sadly, I found no other traces of the teaching manual or the Committee on Freshman English. By as early as 1938³³ and certainly by 1942³⁴, the FYC committee task became a titled position, "Director of Freshman Instruction in English," which Albert Walker held until 1959, at which time he became chair of the English department. The FYC WPA position, dedicated to those tasks alone, was finally born at ISC.

Rounding out 1939, without any archival artifacts from the WPA from 1929 to 1939, we must return to Dudley (1939) for a brief, final glimpse into the administrative choices that made this period a particularly interesting one for the English department's administrative innovations. Dudley (1939) gave five administrative recommendations for maintaining morale and teaching excellence in the FYC program:

1. Give the composition teacher a break in their labor. He suggested to either use hired readers or, much more cleverly, "plan a system of sampling so that each student's work is read at unpredictable intervals" (p. 29). He believed that students should be writing for their own good, but it was not necessary for every paper to get a close reading with extensive feedback.

³³ The Iowa State Archive's biographical blurb for the Albert Walker paper indicates that Walker began this role in 1938. In Walker's files, the CVs in his collection do not list a director role, however. I could not independently confirm the 1938 date.

³⁴ In a memo announcing Lorch's promotion to the head of the English department, the memo states that "With the appointment of Dr. Lorch, it was also announced that A. L. Walker, professor of English, will take on the added duties of director of freshman instruction in English" (Information Service, 1942).

2. Assign every member of the department a steady rotation as teachers of FYC. He quoted Derby, the department head as having said, “I’ve never known a man who was too good a teacher for Freshmen, though I’ve known some who were not good enough” (p. 29). He believed that the consistency and egalitarianism would be good for morale and pedagogical innovations.
3. Incorporate some literature into the FYC course “informally but vitally” (p. 29). He believed that a little literature for students and faculty in FYC could do nothing but benefit the course and elevate the baselines for quality writing. If students and faculty only ever read freshmen themes, all of their minds would dull.
4. Give younger instructors some opportunities to teach literature courses, ideally one literature course every year. He believed this would balance out research and teaching fervor, keep junior faculty CVs fresh for promotion, and infuse new ideas from new PhDs into the minds of senior faculty. He hoped this would keep ISC instructors from seeking out positions at other institutions.
5. If a junior faculty member is not a good fit for literature, do not stick them with interminable composition. Since department members were supposed to cycle between FYC and literature, the FYC-only imbalance would not be a good fit for ISC. Dudley (1939) recommended that these faculty look for work elsewhere. Conversely, “a senior staff member who cannot, after trial, be permitted to continue with Freshmen should feel that his value as a teacher has at least been seriously questioned” (p. 29). All English faculty were supposed to identify themselves as teachers along with their research interests; research should never overshadow FYC.

I cannot confirm if any of these were departmental policies. Several would probably remain controversial even today, but Dudley (1939) was at least correct that ISC balanced the relationship between literature and composition differently than those teaching in research

universities. In fact, Dudley (1939) wrote his article in response to one of many published diatribes by literature faculty who complained about having to teach FYC. Unlike his colleagues at other institutions advocating to end FYC, Dudley believed that a balanced approach like ISC's rendered FYC an enjoyable and serious endeavor for ISC faculty.

5. 5. Who or what caused the composition curriculum?

With this history, I argue that (1) centering an institution's influence on a composition program's history is imperative to understanding its pedagogies and curriculum, (2) observing a single program's changes over time reveals significant gaps in the current, broad historical scholarship that discusses rhetoric across all colleges and universities, and (3) focusing on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations is a powerful explanatory framework, further revealing gaps in current historical scholarship. Each of these points is borne out through Noble's tenure as the first WPA at ISC and the transition to Derby's leadership.

In the years before the Board of Education, Noble's "utility and culture" framing of the English department's composition curriculum aligned with ISC's efforts to balance out the pragmatism of the curriculum. Worried of being accused of not being collegiate enough or abandoning the ideas of an enlightened utilitarianism, ISC leaders, from department heads to the presidents, sung the importance of communication skills and literary training for technical students. Noble could have taught the utility and culture curriculum for years; it allowed him a much wider offering of literature courses, which most instructors around the country preferred teaching to FYC. However, within three years of the Board of Education arriving, Noble revamped the curriculum to disciplinary writing within the divisions.

Therefore, it is not enough to look to popular textbooks at the time — the instructors, in their own words, spoke often of tossing out textbooks or they wrote their own. It is also true that they borrowed from the zeitgeist ideas of the time: they taught the modes of discourse, joined the cooperative movement, and used oral composition pedagogies like other

instructors. At times, they may have even innovated — were Safford and Hogrefe ahead of their time on self-expressive creative writing instruction in FYC? Even if no one picked up on his ideas, did Starbuck's inductive English do something new? The English department staff and faculty adapted to ISC's constraints and began contributing to teaching organizations about their new disciplinary work. During Noble's tenure, it was unlikely that disciplinary writing would have occurred if the utility and culture curriculum continued. The institutional context forced a change; Noble and his staff rose to the challenge, borrowing what worked from the current conversations and creating materials when needed.

I also argue that individuals mattered, and the transitions between their leadership reliably explains shifts in the composition program. Noble's career is particularly instructive as to the value of individuals. Curricularly, unlike Wynn and Doolittle, he guided the composition program toward the ISC mission, and external agencies praised those adaptations. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Education thought the English department served as an example to the entire Division of Industrial Sciences. The commissioner's praise should not be dismissed; similar systemic pressures pushed on ISC's economic science and geology department and administrators, but they had not adapted to the changing context. Thus, at least in part, we must look to individuals to explain why the English department came up with divisional writing sections.

We must look to individuals to understand the changes in labor conditions. Noble directed the program through a massive, paradigmatic shift in institutional structure at a moment of rapid institutional growth. Derby's program in 1939 had 22 members in the faculty. By contrast, Noble began with two instructors and saw the program end with 27, although the 1939 faculty held higher degrees and higher rank. Regardless, Noble guided his department through tumult. He may not have won every battle he fought with the budget, but without his advocacy, the labor conditions at ISC would have undoubtedly been much worse.

Eventually, the ISC administration began citing *his* reports to appeal to the Board of Education. And while peers at other institutions wrote into journals to complain about FYC, Noble was one of five instructors in the country to investigate labor conditions with Hopkins. The Hopkins reports from 1912 and 1923 gave composition instructors data, anecdotes, and arguments to negotiate with their own administrations. Noble will never be remembered for his advances in rhetorical theory like Scott, Denney, or Buck, but his contributions to his institution and to the labor conditions in composition should not be forgotten.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION: INTRODUCING A PAROCHIAL HISTORY TO THE WIDER CONVERSATION

This history attempted two tasks: first, to scratch out the main curricular details of the composition program from 1869 to 1939, as well as the probable reasons for changes in the curriculum, and second to develop a historical methodology that would benefit Composition history writing. As to the first task, I fully admit to several limitations on my investigation: much more can be done on remedial and non-collegiate writing at Iowa State, graduate school writing, writing done in departments outside of English, women's writing in home economics department, and much more. However, I do believe that this history reliably charts the main curricular movements of the FYC program from Iowa State's origins to 1839. Chapter 3 addressed the higher education context that led to the land-grant college, arguing that the land-grant context needed to be understood as a separate phenomenon from more common higher histories of German-styled research universities. Chapter 4 surveyed 1869 to 1898 and the political, curricular, and pedagogical influences that Welch, Wynn, and Doolittle navigated. During that period, the land-grant college idea was far from settled, and local politics frequently intervened in the scope and methods of the English department. Chapter 5 charted the WPA emergence from Noble to Walker, noting the influences on the FYC curriculum, such as the rapid growth in students, the new division and dean structure, and the Board of Education's efforts to reduce duplications across the regent institutions.

As to the second task, I developed a historical methodology that honored the local context at Iowa State while also framing Iowa State's FYC history in such a way that it could, as Gold (2012) and Ritter (2018) asked, rejoin larger narratives of Composition histories and contribute something of value to the conversation. Over the next few pages, I explore how my history rejoins Composition's histories, and then I discuss what future areas of investigation this history might encourage.

This history likely will not contribute to the histories of great rhetorical innovators, who were the dominant focus of Composition's early histories. No Genungs, Bucks, Scotts, Denneys, or Hills published groundbreaking texts at Iowa State. I expected as much. I chose to write a history through the years that Robert Connors called "The Dark Ages of composition," 1830 to 1930 (Connors, 1981a, p. 216). Using the perspective of textbook histories and rhetoric's intellectual tradition, it is easy to believe him, and my history disconfirms little of Connors's estimations of the period. Berlin (1984, 1987), Connors (1981a, 1981b, 1997), Crowley (1985), Kitzhaber (1990), Wozniak (1978) thoroughly excavated, analyzed, and deconstructed the intellectual faults of this era, dubbing a large swath of its pedagogies "current-traditional rhetoric." Current-traditional rhetoric — the modes of discourse, the five-paragraph theme writing, "unity, mass, and coherence," the excessive attention to correctness — earned its pedagogical death: it was dull, coercive, oppressive, formulaic, insensitive to genre, and so on. Once dead, process theories, cognitive rhetorics, and social-epistemic rhetorics allowed the field of Composition to grow past its error-correction-obsessed roots, although this progress took until the 1960s and 1970s to realize (Berlin, 1988).

As mentioned throughout this history, Iowa State engaged in its fair share of current-traditional practices. But, as C. S. Lewis (2015) wrote in the preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them" (p. ix). While some (Matsuda, 2003; Varnum, 1996) have doubted whether current-traditional rhetoric ever existed, Paine (1999) critiqued the 1980s and 1990s historians for turning current-traditional pedagogies into a bogeyman. He argued that the current-traditional ideas and pedagogical practices grew a mind, body, and soul in the minds of historians, blinding them. Paine (1999) wrote, "many histories, somewhat hermetically, focus

on the intellectual evolution of current-traditional rhetoric; such histories [...] specify quite successfully a chain of causes and effects that occurred within the intellectual traditions and close circles within which composition's forebears thought and taught" (29). Revisionist historians grew skeptical. Disbelieving that, if one lifted up the boulder of the 1830s to 1930s and peered into the darkness, one would only find a squirming current-traditional rhetoric, many historians began revising the histories of Composition in the 2000s along new lines of inquiry (Gold, 2012).

They branched out in several directions. Foremost and ongoing, historians began revising the Composition history canon to include the voices previously left out of the academic conversation, and they sought to give credit to where it was due amidst the grand narratives of the textbook histories. After Royster and Williams (1999), many histories (Donawerth, 2012; Enoch, 2008; LeCourt, 2004; Logan, 2008; You, 2010) productively located minoritized and silenced voices in the histories of Composition. These histories developed theories and heuristics that remain productive and useful options for historians, and future research on minoritized groups could be explored at Iowa State. For instance, for an institution devoted to coeducation from its inception, women in composition and English held low status at Iowa State throughout the entire period I investigated. Iowa State as an institution offered women positions of power, especially in home economics, but the work was clearly gendered. The school never changed its name to reflect home economics; it did change to reflect the rise of engineering. Margaret Doolittle headed the composition curriculum for ten years, but Beardshear began ignoring her pleas for more support after the first few years. Why? And what, then, are we to make of Alvin Noble? As a WPA, he fought to secure better pay and smaller classrooms for his staff. However, he remained a man in a position of authority while most of the instructors that he oversaw were women of low status in the institution. One instructor, Ruth Safford, stayed at the rank of instructor her entire

career at Iowa State — from 1908 to 1932. Raymond and Starbuck, both men who arrived at a similar time, advanced through the ranks to become professors. While it is true that Safford held only a bachelor's degree, Iowa State might have granted her an honorary degree based on her long service to the institution. This was a transitional period of professionalization in higher education, and many instructors around the country earned honorary degrees in this way. Indeed, IAC's own W. H. Wynn earned his PhD in English this way (Ross, 1942a, p. 136). Such an investigation could raise useful questions for what it means for a WPA to argue on behalf of those who have held little power in institutions of higher education, such as graduate students, people of color, women, and non-tenured faculty, especially if the WPA is a white man.

Other historians turned to writing microhistories of single institutions (McComiskey, 2016; Ritter, 2009; Shepley, 2016) and some highlighted the importance of individual compositionists (Campbell, 1996; Lerner, 2016; Maher, 1997; McLeod & Hughes, 2017; Popken, 2004a; Stewart & Stewart, 1997), to name but a few. Archival research in Composition has joined the revisionist effort (Clary-Lemon, 2014; Derroda, 1995; Gaillet & Horner, 2010; B. E. L'Eplattenier, 2009), and these investigations reveal rich alternatives and additions to the general histories of composition (Donahue & Moon, 2007; Lerner, 2001; Varnum, 1992a, 1996). While these histories honor the local, Gold (2012) and Ritter (2018) have raised concerns that the rise of microhistories has suffused the field in idiosyncratic histories that do not rejoin the larger narratives of Composition history. The pendulum had perhaps swung too far in the opposite direction.

As I have considered Iowa State's FYC history and what academic conversations it might join, I've been struck by several parallels between my history and our current political moment. I have read the pleas in our listservs: book bans, state censorship, instructors afraid to teach or prevented from teaching antiracism or LGBTQ+ topics. My wife, a drama and

English teacher at our local high school, comes home unsure about the relationship between our neighbors' voting habits, her administrators' spines, and her freedom in the classroom. Iowa State's FYC program encountered an unusual amount of political exposure. I had never heard of state legislative investigations into an English program before; Iowa State endured several. Where many histories discuss the disciplinary status politics between composition and literature, Iowans, Iowa's Board of Education, and Iowa State clipped the winged aspirations of its literary scholars for decades. I thus return to another question, an older question, that Paine (1999) had posed for revisionists to explore: "How does society-wide culture get into the university—wholesale, without interpretation, without significant alteration" (31)?

Underlying his question is the assumption that historians believed culture did get into institutions unproblematically. Paine (1999) at the time had been critiquing James Berlin, one of Composition's famous historians, who articulated several ideological critiques of composition. Berlin (1987) argued that the rhetoric curriculum would always be "responsive to economic, social, and political conditions in a society," and he critiqued how pervasively positivistic, capitalistic ideologies permeated the composition classroom (p. 5). Berlin (1987, 1988) established three categories of rhetoric found in the "Dark Ages of composition": current-traditional, born from Harvard and practiced at Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, and many more schools, which focused on utilitarian writing; rhetoric of liberal culture, taught in the eastern Ivy leagues, which trained students in belletristic ideals and self-expression; and rhetoric for democratic and public discourse, taught at Ohio State and midwestern institutions (Berlin, 1987, pp. 35–36).

For Berlin, each of these rhetorics directly tied to distinct sociopolitical ideologies. Current-traditionalism aligned with the positivistic sciences, the elective curriculum, the research university, and the industrial-capitalist attitude of hyper rationalism. Order and

correctness could be discovered, both in the universe and in language. In a word, efficiency was next to godliness. Unsurprisingly, liberal culture rhetorics built off the old liberal arts shibboleths, and it was “aristocratic and openly distrustful of democracy” (Berlin, 1987, p. 45). Public discourse rhetoric from the idealistic Midwesterners embraced social constructionism rather than scientific positivism; as an eminently democratic ideology, it believed in the communal capacity to interact with and choose how to respond to external exigencies. Berlin — and many historians after him — felt no doubt, however, that current-traditional rhetoric was the dominant and pervasive rhetoric across the country because of the capitalistic underpinnings of the ideology.

Paine (1999) questioned the teleological line from social theory to classroom pedagogy, and he argued that Berlin turned economic and social movements into agents that had wills of their own. As such, “composition theories and courses are not generated by human beings but operate as elements in a commanding, overarching oppressive structure—a totalizing narrative with no one living within it, or at least no one striving, however slyly or futilely, to resist it” (Paine, 1999, p. 31). Instead of ideologies in general, Paine (1999) wanted to know what exactly it was he was supposed to be resisting. Capitalism? Positivism? Meritocracy? Correctness? How did it get into the college, and why were they all unilaterally bad? Berlin’s three categories seemed too broad and abstract to be understood or altered by any compositionist. Paine (1999) believed that these ideologies led to warped histories about those who lived in the “Dark Ages of composition”:

Similar to the way that society has been portrayed as omnipotently diabolic, much composition historiography has portrayed composition's forebears—especially the most influential of them—as either willing participants in hegemonic maneuvering or unwitting stooges. It has too simply assumed that the architects of composition were in

cahoots with the dominant structures of power and under the unmitigated influence of the dominant ideologies. (p. 33)

Paine (1999) called for historians to attend to the importance of institutional context and individuals as mitigating factors on society-wide influences.

Like Paine (1999), Gold (2012) asked historians to return to Berlin's categories and problematize them with their more nuanced microhistories. Some, he wrote, had begun this work: Paine, of course, but also Roberts-Miller (2004), Sanchez (2005), and Hawk (2007), each of whom prodded at the stability or reality of Berlin's categories. However, Gold (2012) wrote that "future scholarship will increasingly require not merely extending our disciplinary inquiries into a more diverse and representative range of institutions than Berlin studied, but also interrogating both his categorizations and the teleological line he drew between ideology and pedagogy" (p. 20). Where Paine (1999) focused on the teleological line, Gold (2012) argued that Berlin's discrete categories likely overlapped, competed, and intertwined. He hypothesized that, instead of being altogether erroneous, Berlin's categories "may have existed in the same locations, even the same classrooms, and on the same day" (p. 22). Berlin's categories represented discrete, epistemological universes that real compositionists did not live within. To understand ideologies and their influence on classroom practices, Gold (2012) wrote that historians need to "seek to locate pedagogical practices within their wider spheres of historical development" (p. 22).

Land-grant colleges were and remain suffused in ideological myths. Thankfully, because these ideologies manifested in the 1862 federal law, many of the ideological arguments have been captured in institutional archives, local newspapers, catalog statements, inauguration addresses, and textbooks. Each land-grant college interpreted the land-grant mission differently because of local, state, and federal exigencies; we have access to these debates. Historians first praised the land-grants for their democratic education initiatives

(Eddy, 1957; Ross, 1942b), but many later historians (Edmond, 1978; Geiger & Sorber, 2013; E. L. Johnson, 1981; Sorber & Geiger, 2014) poked holes in these self-aggrandizing histories of the land-grant colleges. Which students really attended, the poor farming children or the middle-class upstarts? Whose interests are actually being served, the local farmers or the industrial capitalists? The research ideal at universities certainly influenced the shape and scope of universities around the nation, but the Morrill Act of 1862 imposed a vague ideological imperative on land-grant colleges that educational leaders debated for decades. FYC at a land-grant college is a ripe institution to explore Paine's (1999) questions about the origins of ideology and how ideologies impact a composition program. My history joins one of the oldest conversations in Composition historiography by affirming many of Berlin's ideological categorizations. But to do so, affirming Berlin's ideological categories required me to follow Paine's (1999) advice to locate the clear pathways that ideology entered the classroom and Gold's (2012) advice to expect ideological overlap and ambiguity.

By looking into a flyover state college from the "Dark Ages of composition," we can see this era has more to offer compositionists than current-traditional pedagogies. To get beyond the textbook and intellectual history of FYC at Iowa State, I have argued that three methodological choices throughout this dissertation guided my perspective-taking: (1) centering an institution's influence on a composition program, (2) observing a single program's changes over time, and (3) focusing on WPAs and the transitions between their administrations. Without excluding rhetorical theories, I investigated how the program changed due to external pressures and individual administrators over time.

By observing the institution's influence on the composition program, I have found that the land-grant mission and the English composition program were inextricably tied in every era of this history. Because the various stakeholders at Iowa State conceived of the land-grant mission differently, the composition program shifted to align with the institution. Iowa State's

land-grant origins, its administration's sense of public duty, its rapid growth, its agricultural and applied industries focuses, and its emergence as a research institution all impacted Iowa State's composition curriculum in ways that Composition historians have not begun to explore. For the first thirty years, Welch staved off the agriculturalists to create a place for liberal studies. Under Welch's protection, Wynn created an enclave for liberal culture in the land-grant college. Alvin Noble played the "utility and culture" game, clearly straddling current-traditional and liberal culture rhetorics to offset the fear of shallow industrialism. Then, the Board of Education clamped down on any literary studies not correlated to the land-grant mission. Berlin did not have a category for writing in the disciplines, though the cooperation efforts mirrored the Deweyan efforts that Berlin associated with rhetoric for public discourse. As Iowa State understood an education for democracy, industrial training played a large part of their conception of democratic duty.

After 1910, the three-course sequence (a, b, and c, which later became 101, 102, and 103) could be construed to contain each of Berlin's categories: first quarter students learned current-traditional correctness, second quarter they learned argumentation via public discourse pedagogies, and third quarter they read literature to develop their style — a nod to liberal culture. And once Noble retired, the Derby era emulated the rise of the general sciences with a turn to general FYC infused with alleged scientific principles of composition, which may indicate a feverish devotion to particulars and correctness. However, several instructors in the English 103 course on narration and description injected as much liberal culture as they could through self-expressive creative writing. Under Berlin's distinct categories, all three rhetorics existed at Iowa State, which appears impossible based on how Berlin viewed his categories. Each ideology aligned with an institution's commitments (e.g., Harvard with scientific positivism, thus current-traditionalism). The land-grant institution should be current-

traditional through and through. Understanding this institutional context leads to the second methodological contribution of this dissertation.

I observed this program over time, which allowed me to see when the significant FYC changes occurred. My most suggestive finding is that the composition curriculum changed consistently when either a new program administrator arrived (which is true for every new arrival) or a clear institutional mandate forced the change (which we saw with the Board of Education takeover of the regent institutions). The intellectual influences of the time, found in rhetoric textbooks and published journals, moved quietly in the background of this history, having moderate influence on Iowa State's programs. Margaret Doolittle was the only instructor who changed the program to align with new rhetoric and composition pedagogies found in recently published textbooks, preferring the latest works from Scott, Denney, and Genung. The rest either rejected rhetoric (Wynn) or adapted rhetoric to their needs (Noble used the modes of discourse to organize the divisional writing program). Many Iowa State instructors needed to invent their own pedagogical texts (Moore, Tomkins, and MacLean with women's composition; Starbuck and Raymond with inductive composition; Hogrefe with creative writing and individual conferencing) or join what have been shown to be historically marginal pedagogical movements (the department generally embraced agricultural writing, oral composition, and cooperation efforts to bring subject-matter experts into the FYC sequence). Taken in isolation, these composition instructors would be easy to dismiss. Perhaps they were exceptional instructors. But taken together, we can see that the WPA can influence the entire direction of a writing program.

Thus, my third methodological perspective situated the WPA as a central, influential figure in Composition history, which I believe theoretically binds the general histories and the microhistories. As Gold (2012) predicted, on any given day, Berlin's rhetorical ideologies might exist in a classroom. Centering the WPAs makes this coexistence possible. WPAs

resisted, imported, and innovated within the constraints of Iowa State's mission. Wynn resisted, creating a small liberal arts bastion amidst the hardcore agriculturalists; Doolittle imported the new rhetorical perspectives of her time; Noble innovated a disciplinary FYC writing program to align with the school's new divisions. I have attempted to demonstrate that institutional influences, which were subject to an onslaught of local and national politics, met intelligent, resourceful department heads and WPAs who rose to the ever-fluctuating demands of the times. As Paine (1999) predicted, these individuals were neither "willing participants in hegemonic maneuvering [nor] unwitting stooges" (p. 33). They lived within the institutional contexts, marshalled what was useful from the rhetorical perspectives of their times, and directed their programs as best they could.

How does society-wide culture get into the university? It presses on people — from the students and their reasons for attending college to the budget allocations from various funding agencies — but it meets resistance. Or, when ideology encounters a willing adherent in a position of power, it finds willing expression. I want to return to one moment in this history to synthesize the relationship between my methodological lens and the scholarly discussion about ideology in the FYC curriculum. Noble's post-Board of Education cooperative writing scheme from 1914 to 1929 exhibits the importance of all three of this dissertation's methodological lenses. First, the importance of the institutional context to generating this program cannot be underestimated, for Noble could not have instituted the cooperative efforts across divisions on his own. Any WPA who has tried to foster a WAC or WID program can empathize with this. Russell (1989) wrote that,

cross-curricular writing instruction in America poses a particularly complex set of historical problems not only because of curricular differentiation by content areas or disciplines, but also because of institutional differentiation. American mass education; like the industrial organization it is largely modeled on, is specialized by its function.

Individual schools and specific programs within schools have different clienteles, organization, curricula, and-most importantly-purposes. (p. 400)

To understand how the separation of all freshmen into home economics, agriculture, veterinary science, and engineering writing sections, it is necessary to turn to the institution's beliefs about writing, disciplinarity, faculty leadership structures, division definitions, and more. Even the A&M division choices reflected the core tenets of the land-grant mission.

Second, by looking before and after this program, we can see more clearly its historical precedents and its lasting impacts. Before 1914, Noble's utility and culture program was well-appreciated by other departments, and the presidencies echoed the need for A&M students to receive both types of training. Divisionary writing did not come from an NCTE speech or a textbook; agriculturalists did not demand writing for their own division. The Board of Education instigated a crisis among the three regent institutions, largely because Iowan legislators did not want to waste money duplicating programs or allow competition between the regents. The Board of Education signaled that it would just as well have done away with English at Iowa State had the federal grant not protected liberal studies. Regardless, Iowa State's Industrial Science division needed to prove its noncompetitive spirit. When the divisional writing program ended — which we can now say predictably — after Noble's retirement, these pressures remained. Iowa State's commitment to cross-curricular writing manifested in the power-hungry Committee on Students' English as well as other ongoing cooperative efforts, which Dudley (1939) said created disciplinary writing courses outside of the English department. But, and more importantly, external pressures remained, but they did not require the exact manifestation of a divisional writing program. That took an individual to sustain.

Thus, beyond long-term institutional pressures, Noble as a WPA played a major role in guiding his department through these curricular and administrative shifts. Foremost, he asked

his department to treat the FYC problem as a worthy object of investigation. As discussed in Chapter 5, evidence of Noble's mentorship crept into book acknowledgements, dean's reports, and his national labor rights movements. Faculty credentials rose under his directorship, and the department found FYC as a fruitful outlet for research at an institution where no English major could exist. At other institutions, FYC was drudgery that every instructor escaped for the fields of literary research. Noble, capitalizing on the institution's lack of literature, reframed the dilemma into a research opportunity. His department's FYC research output beginning in the 1910s demonstrates his leadership at a tenuous institutional moment. Instead of resisting the land-grant mission and its constraints, Noble and his department innovated under the pressures, which helped them dodge excoriation as well as garner praise from the Board of Education.

These methodological perspectives are not limited to the land-grant institutions, but they may be particularly useful for other compositionists investigating land-grant colleges. Other historians, especially those at institutions that chose the liberal arts or elective research ideals, could find the administrative and political stances that brought external politics into the institution. However, land-grant colleges offer an interesting possibility for future research because of their curricular ties to public laws. The land-grant colleges that fervently adhered to the A&M mission constrained their literary education in sometimes innovative, sometimes terrifying, and usually unpredictable ways. At Ohio State, Joseph Denney launched a program in rhetoric without bothering with literature, earning praise from rhetoricians (Mendenhall, 2011). In the early years, Iowa State flirted with the classics and the Harvard composition program until switching to a writing in the disciplines program after the 1910 Board of Education restrictions. Other colleges did not fare as well. Many land-grant colleges that maintained a classical curriculum faced political backlash that the state universities never encountered. For instance, when the Texas state legislature investigated its land-grant college

in 1881, similar to Iowa State's 1874 "drifting away" investigation, Texas found that (1) the agricultural classes did not reach an acceptable level of collegiate rigor and (2) wealthy students avoided agricultural courses and flocked to classical courses. The Texas agricultural college fired its ancient languages professor in response to the legislature's findings (Richardson, 2013, p. 149). These publicly available, mission-driven investigations by state legislatures across the United States may provide a lens into the origins of composition studies, English departments, and WPAs that have heretofore been overlooked. What happened at institutions where literature was *not* institutionally powerful? How did composition instructors adapt literature or rhetoric texts to teach FYC in accordance with the schools' A&M missions? According to institutional leaders, what was the purpose of "literary" training in a school that did not offer an English major?

Finally, I believe a WPA-focused history valuably contributes to composition history, especially one that accounts for the time before the outgrowth of professionalism in the 1960s and 1970s of both Composition and Writing Program Administration. In Chapter 2, I discussed how historians of Composition have not attended to WPA histories, sometimes claiming that WPAs did not exist before 1970. This history of Iowa State demonstrates otherwise, and I believe that one cannot understand Iowa State's history without addressing the administrators who directed the composition program. Systems and ideas and textbooks influenced FYC, but individuals mattered. We could look at individual teachers, true, but WPAs exercised power over the composition curriculum, and they began emerging at all institutions attempting to cope with rising enrollments. As McLeod (2007) wrote, "because there were not yet professional organizations for WPAs, the history of writing program administration during the period from the beginning of FYC up to World War II is necessarily a history of individuals assigned to that task in individual programs" (p. 45). Were these individuals the heads of their departments? Could they hire, fire, and promote? If so, then who

did they promote? How did they negotiate the literature versus composition status divide — did the WPA tasks hang, yoke-like, around their necks, or did literature play almost no role at all? Did they expect a coordinated composition course across all sections? The *individual* WPA and their influence can serve as an ever-present lens in Composition history writing, and it may help to better explain curricular ideologies better than the teleological lines from textbook to classroom or social theory to classroom. The WPA gets in the way, productively.

As I close, I recall a collection of memos sitting in the archives at Iowa State, and they demand future research. They are the secret 1957 memos from the committee creating an English major at Iowa State. Nearly 100 years of administrative, local, economic, and political forces synthesized into presidents, administrators, and even WPAs who swore that no English major would ever exist at Iowa State. In the 1876 biennial report, celebrating his exoneration from the 1874 legislative investigation, President Welch wrote that an independent English major would be a violation of the land-grant mission:

Instruction in scientific and classical studies not connected with agriculture and the mechanic arts, is permitted, if such studies are deemed necessary, to give range and completeness to the college courses, but the creation of a department of general sciences and literature which would overshadow the departments essential to the enterprise, would be a manifest violation of the spirit and intent of the national law.

(Iowa State College, 1876, p. 49).

Yet, in 1957, Iowa State created the English major. How did the committee pull off that feat? What external forces loosened and why? How did the committee situate the program within the land-grant framework? What institutional allies did they lean on? How did upper-level administrators fold the new major into the public dialog about Iowa State's purpose? Times change, yes, but time erodes rocks; it does not create an English major. Clever, driven members of the English department capitalized on a kairotic moment and created that

opportunity for Iowa State. Those memos remind me that change remains possible in any program.

However, English at Iowa State certainly does not “overshadow the departments essential to the enterprise,” likely not by any choice of English department members. Administrative remnants of Iowa State’s history still permeate the institution and guide its innovative yet pragmatic approach to composition instruction. How does the land-grant mission — as imposed upon every member of the English department — still delimit the possible? What constraints does Iowa State face, and where do they come from? And, if Iowa State’s past remains any indicator of its present and future, how will its WPAs learn from its past to prepare for attacks on its programmatic and personnel choices from external actors? Recall Graham, Birmingham, and Zachry’s (1997) cautionary tale of the frontier courses. The administration required that all faculty return to first-year courses. These attacks will come (or, for those of us staring at budget deficits after COVID-19, they might already be here). What can we learn from the changes at Iowa State to better situate our own programs? How can a WPA turn external pressures into opportunities? What role can WPAs have in pushing back on external pressures? While professionalization in Composition and Writing Program Administration has incalculably benefited our intellectual and professional approaches to composition instruction, I hope this history demonstrates that, within each and every institution, hard-working, reflective, and innovative WPAs matter. They matter to their programs, and they matter to our histories.

REFERENCES

- Adams, C. F., Godkin, E. L., & Quincy, J. (1995). Report of the committee on composition and rhetoric (1892). In J. Brereton (Ed.), *The origins of composition studies in the American college, 1875–1925* (pp. 73–100). University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Adams, H. (1999). *The education of Henry Adams: An autobiography* (1999 Modern Library pbk. ed). Modern Library.
- Adonijah S. Welch*. (n.d.). Iowa State University Digital Scholarship & Initiatives.
<https://digital.lib.iastate.edu/online-exhibits/iowa-state-sesquicentennial/people-of-distinction/adonijah-s-welch>
- An act to repeal section 1621 of the Code of 1873, relating to the course of study for the State Agricultural College, Ch. 27, 2671 McClain’s Annotated Code and Statutes of the State of Iowa 687 (1884).
- Atherton, G. W. (1873). The relation of the general government to education. In *Addresses and journals of proceedings of the national education association, session of the year 1873, at Elmira, New York* (pp. 60–73). Nason.
- Attend teachers’ gathering. (1915, November 4). *Ames Weekly Tribune*.
- Aurner, C. R. (1916). *History of education in Iowa: Vol. IV*. State Historical Society of Iowa.
- Bagg, L. H. (1871). *Four years at Yale*. C. C. Chatfield & co.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/miun.age3953.0001.001>
- Bawarshi, A., & Reiff, M. J. (2013, Fall). *A conversation with Susan Miller*. Composition Forum. <https://compositionforum.com/issue/28/susan-miller-interview.php>
- Beal, W. J. (1915). *History of the Michigan agricultural college and biographical sketches of trustees and professors*. Agricultural College.
- Beardshear, W. M. (1904). *A boy again and other prose poems*. Republican Printing Co.

- Behle, J. G. (2013). Educating the toiling peoples: Students at the Illinois Industrial University, Spring 1868. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 73–94). Transaction Publishers.
- Berlin, J. A. (1980). Current-traditional rhetoric: Paradigm and practice. *Freshman English News*, 8(3), 1–4, 13–14.
- Berlin, J. A. (1984). *Writing instruction in nineteenth-century American colleges*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Berlin, J. A. (1987). *Rhetoric and reality: Writing instruction in American colleges, 1900–1985*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Berlin, J. A. (1988). Rhetoric and ideology in the writing class. *College English*, 50(5), 477–494. <https://doi.org/10.2307/377477>
- Biesecker, B. A. (2006). Of historicity, rhetoric: The archive as scene of invention. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 9(1), 124–131. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2006.0018>
- Bishop, W. (1987). Toward a definition of a writing program administrator: Expanding roles and evolving responsibilities. *Freshman English News*, 16(2), 11–14.
- Bohan, C. (2003). Early vanguards of progressive education: The Committee of Ten, the Committee of Seven, and social education. *Journal of Curriculum & Supervision*, 19(1), 73–94.
- Bowman, J. C. (1916). The use of the magazine in English. *The English Journal*, 5(5), 332–340. <https://doi.org/10.2307/801579>
- Bowman, J. C. (1920). The marking of English themes. *The English Journal*, 9(5), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.2307/802180>
- Brereton, J. (Ed.). (1995). *The origins of composition studies in the American college, 1875–1925: A documentary history*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

- Brown, R. W. (1995). Dean Briggs (1926). In J. Brereton (Ed.), *The origins of composition studies in the American college, 1875–1925* (pp. 28–33). University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Butler, N. M. (1895). What knowledge is of most worth? *The Journal of Education*, 42(6), 107–110.
- Campbell, J. F. (1996). *Toward a feminist rhetoric: The writing of Gertrude Buck*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Carr, J. F., Carr, S. L., & Schultz, L. M. (2009). From archives of instruction: Nineteenth-century rhetorics, readers, and composition books in the United States. In S. Miller (Ed.), *The Norton book of composition studies* (pp. 108–118). W.W. Norton & Co.
- Chapter 3. Of the state agricultural college and farm. (1873). In *The code: Containing all the statutes of the state of Iowa, of a general nature, passed at the adjourned session of the fourteenth general assembly* (pp. 299–303). G. W. Edwards, State Printer.
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/archives/code>
- Cifor, M., & Rawson, K. J. (2022). Mediating queer and trans pasts: The homosaurus as queer information activism. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2022.2072753>
- Clark, B. R. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.
- Clark, B. R. (1984). *Perspectives on higher education: Eight disciplinary and comparative views*. University of California Press.
- Clary-Lemon, J. (2014). Archival research processes: A case for material methods. *Rhetoric Review*, 33(4), 381–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2014.946871>
- Coles, W. E. (1978). *The plural I: The teaching of writing*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Connors, R. J. (1981a). Current-traditional rhetoric: Thirty years of writing with a purpose. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 11(4), 208–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773948109390614>
- Connors, R. J. (1981b). The rise and fall of the modes of discourse. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(4), 444–455. <https://doi.org/10.2307/356607>
- Connors, R. J. (1982). The rise of technical writing instruction in America. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 12(4), 329–352. <https://doi.org/10.2190/793K-X49Q-XG7M-C1ED>
- Connors, R. J. (1990). Overwork/underpay: Labor and status of composition teachers since 1880. *Rhetoric Review*, 9(1), 108–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350199009388919>
- Connors, R. J. (1997). *Composition-rhetoric: Backgrounds, theory, and pedagogy*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Corbett, E. P. J. (1993). A history of writing program administration. In T. Enos (Ed.), *Learning from the histories of rhetoric: Essays in honor of Winifred Bryan Horner* (pp. 60–71). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Cremin, L. A. (1988). *American education, the metropolitan experience, 1876-1980* (1st ed.). Harper & Row.
- Crowley, S. (1985). The evolution of invention in current-traditional rhetoric: 1850–1970. *Rhetoric Review*, 3(2), 146–162.
- Crowley, S. (1998). *Composition in the university: Historical and polemical essays*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Crowley, S. (2001). Judith Butler, Professor of Rhetoric. *JAC*, 21(1), 163–167.

- Crowley, S. (2002). How the professional lives of WPAs would change if FYC were elective. In S. C. Brown, T. Enos, & C. Chaput (Eds.), *The writing program administrator's resource: A guide to reflective institutional practice* (pp. 219–232). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crowley, S. (2010). *Methodical memory: Invention in current-traditional rhetoric*. Southern Illinois Univ. Press.
- Derroda, J. (1995). Archive fever: A Freudian impression (E. Prenowitz, Trans.). *Diacritics*, 25(2), 9–63.
- Dolch, E. W. (1916). A use for the textbook of “thought.” *The English Journal*, 5(6), 422–422. <https://doi.org/10.2307/801321>
- Donahue, P., & Moon, G. F. (Eds.). (2007). *Local histories: Reading the archives of composition*. Pittsburgh Press.
- Donawerth, J. (2012). *Conversational rhetoric: The rise and fall of a women's tradition, 1600-1900*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Doolittle, M. (1893a). Department of Rhetoric and Latin. In *Annual report to the board of trustees* (RS 2/5, box 1, folder 4, “Reports, 1893”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Doolittle, M. (1893b). English to-day. *The Aurora*, 22(3), 1–2.
- Doolittle, M. (1894). Department of Rhetoric and Latin. In *Annual report to the board of trustees* (RS 2/5, box 1, folder 5, “Reports, 1894”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Doolittle, M. (1896). English and Latin. In *The report for the board of trustees, May 12, 1896* (RS 2/5, box 1, folder 8, “Reports, 1896”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

- Doolittle, M. (1898). Department of Rhetoric and Latin. In *Annual report to the board of trustees* (RS 2/5, box 2, folder 1, “Reports, 1898”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Dorn, C. (2017). *For the common good: A new history of higher education in america*. Cornell University Press.
<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.7591/9781501712616/html>
- Dudley, F. A. (1929). Does freshman English “take”? *The English Journal*, 18(10), 823–833.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/803892>
- Dudley, F. A. (1939). The success of freshman English. *College English*, 1(1), 22–30.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/370736>
- Dyehouse, J. (2014). Theory in the archives: Fred Newton Scott and John Dewey on writing the social organism. *College English*, 76(3), 248–268.
- Eddy, E. D. (1957). *Colleges for our land and time: The land-grant idea in American education*. Harper.
- Edmond, J. B. (1978). *The magnificent charter: The origin and role of the Morrill land-grant colleges and universities*. Exposition Press.
- Elbow, P. (1998). The doubting game and the believing game—An analysis of the intellectual enterprise. In *Writing without teachers* (pp. 147–191). Oxford University Press.
<http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=516289>
- Enoch, J. (2008). *Refiguring rhetorical education: Women teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a students, 1865-1911*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Enos, R. L. (2002). The archaeology of women in rhetoric: Rhetorical sequencing as a research method for historical scholarship. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 32(1), 65–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773940209391221>

- Frisicaro-Pawlowski, E. (2011). Making knowledge, shaping history: Critical consciousness and the historical impulse in composition studies. In L. Massey & R. C. Gebhardt (Eds.), *The changing of knowledge in composition: Contemporary perspectives* (pp. 84–101). Utah State University Press.
- Gaillet, L. L. (2012). (Per)forming archival research methodologies. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 35–58.
- Gaillet, L. L., & Horner, W. B. (2010). *The present state of scholarship in the history of rhetoric: A twenty-first century guide*. University of Missouri Press.
- Geiger, R. L. (1986). *To advance knowledge: The growth of American research universities, 1900–1940*. Oxford University Press.
- Geiger, R. L. (2000). *The American college in the nineteenth century*. Vanderbilt University Press.
- Geiger, R. L., & Sorber, N. M. (Eds.). (2013). *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education*. Transaction Publishers.
- Geisler, C. (1994). *Academic literacy and the nature of expertise: Reading, writing, and knowing in academic philosophy*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- George, D. (2004). “Replacing nice, thin Bryn Mawr miss Crandall with fat, Harvard Savage”: WPAs at Bryn Mawr College, 1902 to 1923. In B. L’Eplattenier & L. Mastrangelo (Eds.), *Historical studies of writing program administration: Individuals, communities, and the formation of a discipline* (pp. 23–36). Parlor Press.
- Gibson, W. W. (1966). *Tough, sweet & stuffy: An essay on modern American prose styles*. Indiana University Press.
- Gibson, W. W. (1985). Theodore Baird. In J. Brereton (Ed.), *Traditions of inquiry* (pp. 136–152). Oxford University Press.

- Gilman, D. C. (1867). *Our national schools of science*. Ticknor and Fields; Reprinted in *North American Review*.
- Gladstein, J. M., & Regaignon, D. R. (2012). *Writing program administration at small liberal arts colleges*. Parlor Press.
- Goedeken, E. A. (1979). An academic controversy at Iowa State Agricultural College, 1890-1891. *The Annals of Iowa*, 45(2). <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.11090>
- Goedeken, E. A. (2017). From model farm to a college with students: Benjamin Gue, Peter Melendy, Adonijah Welch, and the Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm, 1867-1869. *The Annals of Iowa*, 76(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.12377>
- Goggin, M. D. (2000). *Authoring a discipline: Scholarly journals and the post-World War II emergence of rhetoric and composition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gold, D. (2008). *Rhetoric at the margins: Revising the history of writing instruction in American colleges, 1873–1947*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Gold, D. (2012). Remapping revisionist historiography. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 15–34.
- Graham, M. B., Birmingham, E., & Zachry, M. (1997). Reinventing first-year composition at the first land-grant university: A cautionary tale. *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 21(1), 31–43.
- Gue, B. F. (1869). Address of ex-lieut. Gov. B. F. Gue, president of the board of trustees. In *Addresses delivered at the opening of the Iowa State Agricultural College* (RS 2/1, box 1, folder 10; pp. 5–15). Gazette Premium Book & Job Printing Establishment; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives. <https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9252d>
- Gue, B. F. (1889). Ex-governor Gue's address. *The Aurora*, 18(1), 6–9.

Gue, B. F., & Melendy, P. (1868). Report of the committee on organization, and selection of faculty. In Iowa State College, *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, for the year 1867* (pp. 25–62). State Printer.

Guide to the Robert J. Connors writing center files, 1994–2010. (2022). University of New Hampshire Special Collections.

<https://library.unh.edu/find/archives/collections/robert-j-connors-writing-center-files-1994-2010>

Hamilton, C. (2000, February). *Welch, Adonijah Strong*. American National Biography.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.0900787>

Hawk, B. (2007). *A counter-history of composition: Toward methodologies of complexity*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

Heckathorn, A. (1999). *The struggle toward professionalization: The historical evolution of writing program administrators* (304538161) [Ph.D., Texas Christian University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/struggle-toward-professionalization-historical/docview/304538161/se-2?accountid=10906>

Heckathorn, A. (2004). Moving toward a group identity: WPA professionalization from the 1942 to the 1970s. In B. L'Eplattenier & L. Mastrangelo (Eds.), *Historical studies of writing program administration: Individuals, communities, and the formation of a discipline* (pp. 191–219). Parlor Press.

Henry, R. L. (1928). Freshman English in the middle west. *The English Journal*, 17(4), 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.2307/804033>

Herbst, J. (1965). *The German historical school in American scholarship: A study in the transfer of culture*. Cornell University Press.

- Herbst, J. (2004). The Yale report of 1828. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 11(2), 213–231.
- Hogrefe, P. (1933). Positive aims in English teaching. *The English Journal*, 22(8), 631–635.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/804909>
- Hogrefe, P. (1940a). Our opportunities in a democracy today. *College English*, 1(7), 595–604.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/371242>
- Hogrefe, P. (1940b). Self-exploration in creative writing. *College English*, 2(2), 156–160.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/370415>
- Hogrefe, P., & Jones, W. P. (1935). *Interpreting experience: Narrative and descriptive types for college use*. Ginn and company.
- Hopkins, E. M. (1912a). Can good composition teaching be done under present conditions? *The English Journal*, 1(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800827>
- Hopkins, E. M. (1912b). The forthcoming report of the committee on English composition teaching. *The English Journal*, 1(9), 568–570. <https://doi.org/10.2307/801061>
- Hopkins, E. M. (1912c). The labor and cost of composition teaching: The present conditions. *Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association of the United States*, 50, 747–751.
- Hopkins, E. M. (1923). *The labor and cost of the teaching of English in colleges and secondary schools, with especial reference to English composition*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Hosic, J. F. (1913). Effective ways of securing cooperation of all departments in the teaching of English composition. *NEA Proceedings and Addresses*, 478–485.
- Humphries, F. S. (1991). 1890 land-grant institutions: Their struggle for survival and equality. *Agricultural History*, 65(2), 3–11.

Information Service. (1942). *Fred Lorch new English head at Iowa State* (RS 13/10/54, box 15, folder 8). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

Inventory to the James Berlin paper, 1978–1994. (2011). Virginia Kelley Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries.

https://collections.lib.purdue.edu/fa/pdf/berlin_j2.pdf

Iowa Agricultural College. (1880). *Catalogue for the year 1880*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1883). *Catalogue for the year 1883*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1886). *Catalogue for the year 1886*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1890). *Catalogue for the year 1890*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1892). *Catalogue for the year 1892 and 1893*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1894). *1894 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9bw58>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1896). *Catalogue for the year 1896 and 1897*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1897). *1897 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w98h0z>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1898a). *1898 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w98h0z>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1898b). *Catalogue for the year 1898 and 1899*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1900). *Catalogue for the year 1900 and 1901*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1904a). *1904 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9204f>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1904b). *Catalogue for the year 1904 and 1905*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1905). *1905 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9s04z>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1906). *Catalogue for the year 1906 and 1907*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1912). *1912 Bomb* (LD2548 Io9b). Iowa State College Press; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
<https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9z91g>

Iowa Agricultural College. (1914). *Catalogue for the year 1914 and 1915*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1923). *Catalogue for the year 1923 and 1924*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1928). *Catalogue for the year 1928 and 1929*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1930). *Catalogue for the year 1930 and 1931*. Iowa Agricultural College.

Iowa Agricultural College. (1936). *Catalogue for the year 1936 and 1937*. Iowa Agricultural College.

- Iowa General Assembly. (1874). *Report of the joint committee of investigation appointed by the fifteenth general assembly to examine into the affairs of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm.*
- Iowa General Assembly Committee on State Educational Institutions. (1906). *Report to the thirty-first General assembly on state educational institutions.* publisher not identified.
- Iowa State Board of Education. (1910). *First biennial report of the Iowa State Board of Education.* State Printer.
- Iowa State Board of Education. (1912). *Second biennial report of the Iowa State Board of Education.* State Printer.
- Iowa State Board of Education. (1914). *Third biennial report of the Iowa State Board of Education.* State Printer.
- Iowa State Board of Education. (1916). *Fourth biennial report of the Iowa State Board of Education.* State Printer.
- Iowa State Board of Education. (1924). *Eighth biennial report of the Iowa State Board of Education.* State Printer.
- Iowa State College. (1861). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the year 1860.* State Printer.
- Iowa State College. (1864). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the year 1863.* State Printer.
- Iowa State College. (1870). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the year 1869.* State Printer.
- Iowa State College. (1872). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the years 1870 and 1871.* State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1874). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the years 1872 and 1873*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1876). *Annual report of the secretary of Iowa State Agricultural College to the general assembly of the State of Iowa, for the years 1874 and 1875*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1885). *Eleventh biennial report of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm, for the years 1884 and 1885*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1887). *Twelfth biennial report of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm, for the years 1886 and 1887*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1895). *Sixteenth biennial report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts made to the governor of the state for the years 1894 and 1895*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1899). *Eighteenth biennial report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the years 1898–1899*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1903). *Twentieth biennial report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the years 1902-1903*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1907). *Twenty-second report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the period July 1, 1905 to June 30, 1906*. State Printer.

Iowa State College. (1908). *Twenty-third biennial report of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts for the biennial period July 1, 1906 to June 30, 1908*. State Printer.

Johnson, E. L. (1981). Misconceptions about the early land-grant colleges. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 52(4), 333–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1981.11780153>

- Johnson, N. (1991). *Nineteenth-century rhetoric in North America*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Johnson, N. (2002). *Gender and rhetorical space in American life, 1866–1910*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Jones, E. S. (1931). *Practical English composition* (Special ed.). The Century co.
- Journal of the senate of the thirty-fifth general assembly of the state of Iowa*. (1913). State Printer. <https://publications.iowa.gov/42033/>
- Kantor, K. J. (1975). Creative expression in the English curriculum: An historical perspective. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(1), 5–29.
- Kerekes, F., & Lange, P. (1937). Maintaining English skills. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 8(8), 435–441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1937.11775440>
- Kimball, B. A. (1986). *Orators & philosophers: A history of the idea of liberal education*. Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Kitzhaber, A. R. (1990). *Rhetoric in American colleges, 1850–1900*. Southern Methodist University Press.
- Kliebard, H. M. (2004). *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893–1958* (3rd ed.). Routledge Falmer.
- Kuhn, M. (1955). *Michigan State: The first hundred years, 1855-1955*. Michigan State University Press.
- Landolt, M. (2021, July 30). *Welch, Adonijah Strong*. Iowa State University Biographical Dictionary. <https://isubios.pubpub.org/pub/z1shkaxg>
- Lasley, R. L. (1921). Review: Present-day punctuation [Review of *Review: Present-day punctuation*, by G. Summey]. *The English Journal*, 10(4), 235–236. <https://doi.org/10.2307/802128>

- Lauzon, G. P. (2021). Uniting labor and study in the Michigan Agricultural College's first generation. *American Educational History Journal*, 48(1), 25–43.
- Leahy, E. (2017). *Writing from the border: Frontier rhetoric and rhetorical education at University of Arizona and University of New Mexico, 1885-1910* [Ph.D., The University of Arizona].
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1927662988/abstract/8F94DA84BB074B57PQ/1>
- LeCourt, D. (2004). *Identity matters: Schooling the student body in academic discourse*. State University of New York Press.
- L'Eplattenier, B. E. (2009). An argument for archival research methods: Thinking beyond methodology. *College English*, 72(1), 67–79.
- L'Eplattenier, B., & Mastrangelo, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Historical studies of writing program administration: Individuals, communities, and the formation of a discipline*. Parlor Press.
- Lerner, N. (2001). Searching for Robert Moore. *The Writing Center Journal*, 22(1), 9–32.
- Lerner, N. (2016). Remembering Roger Garrison: Composition studies and the star-making machine. In B. McComiskey (Ed.), *Microhistories of composition* (pp. 217–236). Utah State University Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (2015). *The Screwtape Letters with Screw Proposes a Toast*. HarperOne.
- Lindemann, E. (Ed.). (2010). *Reading the past, writing the future: A century of American literacy education and the National Council of Teachers of English*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Locals. (1883). *The Aurora*, 11(9), 163.
- Logan, S. W. (2008). *Liberating language: Sites of rhetorical education in nineteenth century Black America*. Southern Illinois University Press.

- Lorch, F. W. (1936). *Memorandum* (RS 13/10/54, box 1, folder 15). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- State of Iowa legislative act, 91: Agricultural college, no. 91 (1858).
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/iactc/7.1/CH0091.pdf>
- Lucas, C. J. (2006). *American higher education: A history* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maher, J. (1997). *Mina P. Shaughnessy: Her life and work*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Mallam, D. (1957). *Memorandum from English major planning committee* (RS 13/10/1, box 1, Folder 1, “Committee-Planning, 1957-1958”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Marston, A. (1936). *Alvin Buell Noble: An appreciation* (RS 11/1/11, box 8, folder 3). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Process and post-process: A discursive history. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(1), 65–83. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743\(02\)00127-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(02)00127-3)
- McComiskey, B. (2016). *Microhistories of composition*. Utah State University Press.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/44860>
- McKee, H. A., & Porter, J. (2012). The ethics of archival research. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 59–81.
- McLeod, S. H. (2007). *Writing program administration*. Parlor Press LLC.
<http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3440367>
- McLeod, S. H., & Hughes, B. T. (2017). Understanding the stories of two WPA pioneers: Ednah Thomas and Joyce Steward. *The WAC Clearinghouse*.
<https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/thomas-steward/pioneers.pdf>
- Mendenhall, A. S. (2011). Joseph V. Denney, the land-grant mission, and rhetorical education at Ohio State: An institutional history. *College English*, 74(2), 131–156.

- Miller, S. (1982). Is there a text in this class? *Freshman English News*, 11(1), 20–24.
- Miller, T. P. (1993). Reinventing rhetorical traditions. In T. Enos (Ed.), *Learning from the histories of rhetoric: Essays in honor of Winifred Bryan Horner* (pp. 26–41). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Moore, E., Tompkins, D. G., & MacLean, M. (1916). *English composition for college women*. The Macmillan Company.
- Moore, G. E. (1988). The involvement of experiment stations in secondary agricultural education, 1887-1917. *Agricultural History*, 62(2), 164–176.
- Morgan, B. (1934). *A history of the extension service of Iowa State College*. Collegiate Press, Inc.
- Morrill Land Grant Act, Pub. L. No. 37–108 (1862).
- Morris, S. L., & Rose, S. K. (2010). Invisible hands: Recognizing archivists' work to make records accessible. In A. E. Ramsey, W. B. Sharer, B. L'Eplattenier, & L. Mastrangelo (Eds.), *Working in the archives: Practical research methods for rhetoric and composition* (pp. 51–78). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Murphy, J. J. (Ed.). (2001). *A Short history of writing instruction: From ancient Greece to modern America* (2nd ed). Erlbaum.
- Nelson, A. R. (2013). Institutionalizing agricultural research in the early American republic: An international perspective. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 13–40). Transaction Publishers.
- News and notes. (1926). *The English Journal*, 15(1), 77–83.
- Noble, A. B. (1898). English literature & rhetoric. In *November report to the board of trustees, November 15, 1898* (RS 2/5, box 2, folder 1, "Reports, 1898"; pp. 29–31). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

- Noble, A. B. (1899). English literature & rhetoric. In *Annual report to the board of trustees, July 18, 1899* (RS 2/5, box 2, folder 2, “Reports, 1899”; pp. 91–101). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1900). English literature & rhetoric. In *Report of the president of the Iowa State College for the annual meeting, July 17th, 1900* (RS 2/5, box 2, folder 4, “Reports, 1900”; pp. 101–109). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1902). Department of English literature and rhetoric. In *Annual report to the board of trustees, 1902* (RS 2/5, box 2, folder 7, “Reports, Annual report to the Board of Trustees, 1902”; pp. 150–158). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1903). Department of literature and rhetoric. In *President’s annual report to the board of trustees, July 15, 1903* (RS 2/6, box 1, folder 1, “Reports”; pp. 151–164). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1904). I have the following from Prof. Noble. In *Reports, 1906* (RS 2/6, box 1, folder 4, “Annual Report of Departments, 1904”; pp. 176–189). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1906). Department of English. In *Reports, 1906* (RS 2/6, box 2, folder 4, “Reports, 1906”). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1916). The preparation of college teachers of English. *The English Journal*, 5(10), 665–670. <https://doi.org/10.2307/801709>
- Noble, A. B. (1929a). *A. B. Noble began teaching in Iowa State College in July 1898* (RS 13/10/11, box 1, folder 1). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

- Noble, A. B. (1929b). *Teachers who have remained in the English department three years or more* (RS 13/10/11, box 1, folder 1). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1905, November 24). *In reply to your request concerning the needs of the Department of English* (RS 13/10/11, box 1, folder 1). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1908, June 4). *Letter to Dr. Storms regarding reductions of the English expense fund* (RS 2/6, box 3, folder 8, "Correspondence - General, 1908"). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Noble, A. B. (1911, May 11). The need of new school buildings. *Ames Times*.
- Noble, A. B. (1921, July 5). Stepping stones to correct taste. *Special Meeting*. The National Council of Teachers of English, Des Moines, Iowa.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/802527>
- Nordin, D. S. (1974). *Rich harvest: A history of the Grange, 1867-1900*. University Press of Mississippi.
- North, S. M. (1987). *The making of knowledge in composition: Portrait of an emerging field*. Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Nunes, M. J. (2015). *The theme system: Current-traditionalism, writing assignments, and the development of first-year composition* [Ph.D., Ohio University].
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1914693321/abstract/3ED52D1593294A5EPQ/1>
- O'Brien, H. R. (1914). Agricultural English. *The English Journal*, 3(8), 470–479.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/801723>
- Octalog. (1988). The Politics of Historiography. *Rhetoric Review*, 7(1), 5–49.
- Octalog. (1997). Octalog II: The (continuing) politics of historiography. *Rhetoric Review*, 16(1), 22–44.

- Octalog. (2011). Octalog III: The politics of historiography in 2010. *Rhetoric Review*, 30(2), 109–134.
- Office of the Registrar. (2023). *Enrollment statistics*. Iowa State University Office of the Registrar. <https://www.registrar.iastate.edu/resources/enrollment-statistics>
- Paine, C. (1999). *The resistant writer: Rhetoric as immunity, 1850 to the present*. State University of New York Press.
- Parker, N. (1856). *Parker's sectional & geological map of Iowa exhibiting her iron, lead, copper, coal and other geological resources and all rail roads completed, in progress, and projected compiled from from the U.S. surveys and personal reconnoissance* [Map]. J.H. Colton & Co.
- Parker, W. R. (1967). Where do English departments come from? *College English*, 28(5), 339–351.
- Payne, W. M. (Ed.). (1895). *English in American universities, by professors in the English departments of twenty representative institutions*. D. C. Heath & Co.
- Pearson, R. (1915). *An answer to criticisms: Of proposed appropriations for Iowa State College as recommended by the State Board of Education* (RS 2/7, box 1, folder 15). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Popken, R. (2004a). Edwin Hopkins and the costly labor of composition teaching. *College Composition and Communication*, 55(4), 618–641. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4140665>
- Popken, R. (2004b). The WPA as publishing scholar: Edwin Hopkins and *The labor and cost of the teaching of English*. In B. L'Eplattenier & L. Mastrangelo (Eds.), *Historical studies of writing program administration: Individuals, communities, and the formation of a discipline* (pp. 5–22). Parlor Press.
- Porter, N. (1878). *The American colleges and the American public*. C.C. Chatfield & co. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/pst.000017368476>

- Proceedings of the seventeenth annual meeting of the Iowa Improved Stock Breeders' Association held at Oskaloosa, December 3, 4, and 5, 1890.* (1891). G. H. Ragsdale, State Printer. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b2982452>
- Prof. A. B. Noble of Iowa State dies. (1936, September 24). *Ames Daily Tribune*.
- Pullman, G. (1999). Stepping yet again into the same current. In T. Kent (Ed.), *Post-process theory: Beyond the writing-process paradigm* (pp. 16–29). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Purdy, D. (1986). A polemical history of freshman composition in our time. *College English*, 48(8), 791–796. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376724>
- Radke-Moss, A. G. (2008). *Bright epoch: Women & coeducation in the American West*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Ramsey, A. E., Sharer, W. B., L'Eplattenier, B., & Mastrangelo, L. (Eds.). (2010). *Working in the archives: Practical research methods for rhetoric and composition*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rasmussen, W. D. (1989). *Taking the university to the people: Seventy-five years of cooperative extension* (1st ed.). Iowa State University Press.
- Rawlins, J. D., & Wilson, G. D. (2014). Agency and interactive data displays: Internet graphics as co-created rhetorical spaces. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 23(4), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2014.942468>
- Raymond, W. R., & Lathorp, H. B. (1924). What is the aim of the required college courses in English composition? *Annual Meeting*, 13, 600–608.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/802301>
- Reuben, J. A. (2005). Writing when everything has been said: The history of American higher education following Laurence Veysey's classic. *History of Education Quarterly*, 45(3), 412–419. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2005.tb00043.x>

- Rhetoric and the digital humanities. (2015). In J. Ridolfo & W. Hart-Davidson (Eds.), *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*. University of Chicago Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226176727>
- Rhetoric for juniors and sophomores. (1890). *The Aurora*, 19(1), 116.
- Richardson, S. R. (2013). “An elephant in the hands of the state”: Creating the Texas land-grant college. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 131–154). Transaction Publishers.
- Ritter, K. (2009). *Before Shaughnessy: Basic writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ritter, K. (2018). Making (collective) memory public: WPA histories in dialogue. *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 41(2), 35–64.
- Roberts-Miller, P. (2004). *Deliberate conflict: Argument, political theory, and composition classes*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Rockas, L. (1981). The Quintilian of Amherst: John Franklin Genung. *The New England Quarterly*, 54(1), 54–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/365731>
- Röhrs, H. (1995). *The classical German concept of the university and its influence on higher education in the United States*. P. Lang.
- Rose, M. (1985). The language of exclusion: Writing instruction at the university. *College English*, 47(4), 341–359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376957>
- Ross, E. D. (1942a). *A history of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts*. The Iowa State College Press.
- Ross, E. D. (1942b). *Democracy's college: The land-grant movement in the formative stage*. The Iowa State College Press.

- Royster, J. J., & Williams, J. C. (1999). History in the spaces left: African American presence and narratives of composition studies. *College Composition and Communication*, 50(4), 563–584. <https://doi.org/10.2307/358481>
- Rudolph, F. (1977). *Curriculum: A history of the American undergraduate course of study since 1636*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history*. University of Georgia Press.
- Russell, D. R. (1989). The cooperation movement: Language across the curriculum and mass education, 1900-1930. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 23(4), 399–423.
- Russell, D. R. (1990). Writing across the curriculum in historical perspective: Toward a social interpretation. *College English*, 52(1), 52–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/377412>
- Russell, D. R. (2002). *Writing in the academic disciplines: A curricular history* (2nd ed.). Southern Illinois University Press.
- Safford, R. B. (1930). *An introduction to narrative writing*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Sale, R. (1969). *On writing*. McGraw Hill Text.
- Sanchez, R. (2005). *The function of theory in composition studies*. State University of New York Press.
- Savin, W. H. (1967, November 16). *To the editor* (RS 13/10/11, box 1, folder 1). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Schwalm, D. E. (2002). The writing program (administrator) in context: Where am I, and can I still behave like a faculty member? In I. Ward & W. J. Carpenter (Eds.), *The Allyn & Bacon sourcebook for writing program administrators* (pp. 9–22). Longman.
- Scott, F. N. (1895). English at the University of Michigan. In W. M. Payne (Ed.), *English in American universities, by professors in the English departments of twenty representative institutions* (pp. 116–123). D. C. Heath & Co.

- Senator Preston M. Sutton. (n.d.). The Iowa Legislature. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/legislator?ga=21&personID=4252>
- Shamoon, L. K., & Burns, D. H. (1995). A critique of pure tutoring. *The Writing Center Journal*, 15(2), 134–151.
- Shepley, N. (2016). *Placing the history of college writing: Stories from the incomplete archive*. Parlor Press.
- Sillman, B. (Ed.). (1829). Original papers in relation to a course of liberal education. *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, XV, 297–351.
- Simpson Centenary College. (1870). *Catalogue of the Simpson Centenary College, 1869-70*. (3/0/0/0 Catalogs, Course). Simpson College Archives.
- Skinnell, R. (2011). *Writing, programs, and administration at Arizona State University the first hundred years* (865316331) [Ph.D., Arizona State University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/writing-programs-administration-at-arizona-state/docview/865316331/se-2?accountid=10906>
- Skinnell, R. (2016). *Conceding composition: A crooked history of composition's institutional fortunes*. Utah State University Press.
- Smith, B. P. (1878). *The history of Dartmouth College*. Houghton, Osgood, and Co. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/28641/28641-h/28641-h.htm#Page_157
- Smith, D. D. (1998). Iowa prairie: Original extent and loss, preservation and recovery attempts. *Journal of the Iowa Academy of Science: JIAS*, 105(3), 94–108.
- Sorber, N. M. (2013a). Creating colleges of science, industry, and national advancement: The origins of the New England land-grant colleges. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 41–72). Transaction Publishers.

- Sorber, N. M. (2013b). Introduction to part II: The politics of launching land-grant colleges, 1862-1890. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 97–104). Transaction Publishers.
- Sorber, N. M. (2018). *Land-grant colleges and popular revolt: The origins of the Morrill Act and the reform of higher education*. Cornell University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501709739>
- Sorber, N. M., & Geiger, R. L. (2014). The welding of opposite views: Land-grant historiography at 150 years. In M. B. Paulsen (Ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research: Volume 29* (pp. 385–422). Springer Netherlands.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_9
- Starbuck, A. (1924). Sentence outline, outlined sentence, and parallel structure. *The English Journal*, 13(6), 408–412. <https://doi.org/10.2307/802881>
- Starbuck, A. (1930). Thus saith the handbook. *The English Journal*, 19(3), 214–220.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/803586>
- Starbuck, A. (1929, November 29). *Improving methods in teaching composition*. Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, Kansas City, MO.
- Starbuck, A., & Raymond, W. R. (1937). *Inductive English composition*. The Macmillan Company.
- Stewart, D. C. (1985). Fred Newton Scott. In J. Brereton (Ed.), *Traditions of inquiry* (pp. 26–49). Oxford University Press.
- Stewart, D. C. (1992). Harvard's influence on English studies: Perceptions from three universities in the early twentieth century. *College Composition and Communication*, 43(4), 455–471. <https://doi.org/10.2307/358637>
- Stewart, D. C., & Stewart, P. L. (1997). *The life and legacy of Fred Newton Scott*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

- Stock, D. M. (2012). *The distribution of rhetorical education at a public midwest university, 1874–1927* (1038138654) [Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/distribution-rhetorical-education-at-public/docview/1038138654/se-2?accountid=10906>
- Storms, A. B. (1904). *The outlook: Inaugural address* (RS 2/6 box 4, folder 23). Press of the Republican; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives. <https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9wp3d>
- Stuckslager, W. (1909). Report from the committee appointed to visit the several state institutions. In *Journal of the senate of the thirty-third general assembly of the state of Iowa* (pp. 747–757). State Printer.
<https://publications.iowa.gov/42029/1/senate%20jr%201909%2033GA.pdf>
- Sullivan, D. L. (1989). Attitudes toward imitation: Classical culture and the modern temper. *Rhetoric Review*, 8(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198909388875>
- Sutton, P. (1884). Appendix three: Redefining the function of the college: Senator Sutton's bill. In E. D. Ross, *A history of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts* (pp. 382–402). The Iowa State College Press.
- Thelin, J. R. (1990). Supplemental bibliography. In F. Rudolph, *The American college and university: A history* (pp. 517–525). University of Georgia Press.
- Tirabassi, K. E. (2010). Journeying into the archives: Exploring the pragmatics of archival research. In A. E. Ramsey, W. B. Sharer, B. L'Eplattenier, & L. Mastrangelo (Eds.), *Working in the archives: Practical research methods for rhetoric and composition* (pp. 169–180). Southern Illinois University Press.

- United States Bureau of Education. (1916). *State higher educational institutions of Iowa: A report to the Iowa State Board of Education of a survey made under the direction of the Commissioner of Education*. Govt. Print. Off.
- University of Michigan. (1843). *General register*. University of Michigan.
- University of Michigan. (1852). *General register*. University of Michigan.
- University of Michigan. (1923). *Catalogue of graduates, non-graduates, officers, and members of the faculties, 1837-1921* (H. L. Sensemann, Ed.). University Press.
- University of Michigan Board of Regents. (2000). *Proceedings of the Board of Regents (1837-1864)*. University of Michigan, Digital Library Production Service.
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/ACW7513.1837.001>
- VanHaitsma, P. (2019). Digital LGBTQ archives as sites of public memory and pedagogy. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 22(2), 253–280.
- VanHaitsma, P. (2020). Between archival absence and information abundance: Reconstructing Sallie Holley’s abolitionist rhetoric through digital surrogates and metadata. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 106(1), 25–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2019.1706188>
- VanHaitsma, P. (2021). An archival framework for affirming black women’s bisexual rhetorics in the Primus collections. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 51(1), 27–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2020.1841274>
- Varnum, R. (1992a). Reclaiming our history: Theodore Baird and English 1–2 at Amherst College, 1938–1966. *Writing on the Edge*, 4(1), 31–39.
- Varnum, R. (1992b). The history of composition: Reclaiming our lost generations. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 12(1), 39–55.

- Varnum, R. (1996). *Fencing with words: A history of writing instruction at Amherst College during the era of Theodore Baird, 1938–1966*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Veysey, L. R. (1965). *The emergence of the American university*. University of Chicago Press.
- Vico, G. (1976). On the Heroic Mind (E. Sewell & A. C. Sirignano, Trans.). *Social Research*, 43(4), 886–903.
- Walker, A. L. (1973). *Lesson plan, English 104, 1973* (RS 13/10/15, box 1, folder 11). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.
- Ward, I., & Carpenter, W. J. (Eds.). (2002). *The Allyn & Bacon sourcebook for writing program administrators*. Longman.
- Welch, A. S. (1855). *Analysis of the English sentence, designed for advanced classes*. A. S. Barnes & co. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011222898>
- Welch, A. S. (1868). *Plan of organization of the Iowa State Agricultural College, Ames, Story County*. Mills & Co.'s Steam Printing House.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiuo.ark:/13960/t85j3j84b>
- Welch, A. S. (1869). Inaugural address. In *Addresses delivered at the opening of the Iowa State Agricultural College* (RS 2/1, box 1, folder 10; pp. 22–40). Gazette Premium Book & Job Printing Establishment; Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives. <https://n2t.net/ark:/87292/w9252d>
- State of Iowa legislative act, 198: State board of education, no. 198, Thirty-third General Assembly of the State of Iowa (1909).
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=33&ba=SF%20198>
- Wozniak, J. M. (1978). *English composition in eastern colleges, 1850–1940*. University Press of America.
- Wynn, W. H. (1876). Educational driftings, number two. *The Aurora*, 4(4), 1, 8.

Wynn, W. H. (1889). *Untitled draft of eulogy for President Welch* (RS 2/1, box 1, folder 1).

Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

You, X. (2010). *Writing in the devil's tongue: A history of English composition in China*.

Southern Illinois University Press.

Zieren, G. (2013). Robert H. Thurston, modern engineering education, and its diffusion through land-grant universities. In R. L. Geiger & N. M. Sorber (Eds.), *The land-grant colleges and the reshaping of American higher education* (pp. 195–214). Transaction Publishers.

APPENDIX: Letter from Alvin Noble to President Storms, 1905³⁵

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. Ph., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS: ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, Ph. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A.M.

English

J

Ames, Iowa, NOV. 24, 1905. 190

Dear Doctor Storms,-

In reply to your request concerning the needs of the Department of English for the next biennial period, I respectfully submit the following:

The needs of the department may be summarized under three heads:

- Books for the English Library,
- A Larger Teaching Force,
- A Better Salary for Instructors.

BOOKS FOR ENGLISH LIBRARY: IN NEW CENTRAL BUILDING.

Now that we are soon to move into the new Central Building, I shall need books to equip the English library of "laboratory", for which a special room has been provided, to be equipped with book shelves and other library furniture. I should be glad to equip this library at once so as to make it of value right at the start. For this equipment I should be glad to have \$1,000. It could, of course, be started on less, but now that we have the room and the furniture it seems to me desirable that it should be made good use of without delay. I therefore, recommend an appropriation of \$1,000 for this need. If this amount can be secured, I should ask for nothing in the way of annual appropriation at present. If it is impossible to procure this amount, I should be glad if there could be an annual appro-

³⁵ Noble, A. B. (1905, November 24). *In reply to your request concerning the needs of the Department of English* (RS 13/10/11, box 1, folder 1). Iowa State University Library Special Collections and University Archives.

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. DE., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #2.

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

priation of say \$100 to supplement the smaller initial sum.

II. A LARGER TEACHING FORCE.

In presenting this, the most imperative need of the department, I ask to present as evidence bundles of essays and exercises representing the written work that comes to the respective teachers week by week. I ask you to look into these piles of papers. I should be very glad to have you go through one whole set and make your own estimate of the time required. The papers themselves speak more eloquently than I could as to the work involved in correcting them.

1. Sections Too Large.

My first point is that with as few teachers as we now have, many sections are too large. For good results no section should exceed twenty-five.

In English I. we need one additional section. The classes now contain, respectively, 31, 25, and 38 students.

In English II. we need an additional section. The classes are now as follows: 27, 28, 33, an excess of thirteen, or a total of 88, which would make four sections of 22 each, could an equal distribution be effected.

In English III. there are six sections that exceed 25, as follows: 36, 28, 30, 34, 27, 35. The excess is 40, which calls for two additional sections.

In English IV. the sections are respectively 32,

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS (ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #3.

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

26, and 36, an excess of 19, which calls for an additional section.

In English V. two sections exceed 25, by 8 and by 10, respectively, which also calls for an additional section.

2. Correction of Essays and Exercises Too Heavy a Drain on The Teacher.

The following table shows the number of essays and exercises received weekly by the respective teachers:

	<u>Essays.</u>	<u>EXERCISES.</u>	
		Daily (exc. Monday.)	For Week.
Miss Larrabee	115	51	204
" Maclean	115	78	316
" Abel	128	91	364
" Moore	117	81	244
" Tompkins	83	83	332

A. Time Required for Exercises.

All exercises should be read by the teacher and corrected. Unless this is done the student soon learns that it does not matter particularly what he hands in, which means that from this time on he will make but little progress. To make valuable criticism, the teacher must read carefully, thoughtfully. It needs no argument to say that for thoughtful reading each exercise requires at least three minutes. This is the minimum. But I base the estimate on the minimum, to make sure that I do not overstate. On exercises alone this means the following demand on the time of the teachers, respectively, this term:

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS (ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #4.

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

	Daily (4 days)	Weekly.
Miss Larrabee	2 1/2 hrs.	10
" Maclean	4 "	16
" Abel	4 1/2 "	18
" Moore	4 "	16
" Tompkins	4 "	16

With the exception of Miss Larrabee, this equals the time spent in the class-room.

B. TIME REQUIRED FOR WEEKLY ESSAYS.

An essay should have at the minimum ten minutes. Rushed as we are, it does not always get it, but it should have at least that much time. Each teacher has one set of essays, averaging about thirty, corrected by a reader. Making this deduction, and estimating the remainder at ten minutes each, we have the following:

Miss Larrabee	85 essays	14 hrs. per week.
" Maclean	85 "	14 " " "
" Abel	98 "	16 " " "
" Moore	87 "	14 " " "
" Tompkins	63 "	10 " " "

To each of the above should be added at least one hour for glancing over the thirty essays corrected by the reader.

Bringing together, the three items of work, all reduced to hours per week we have the following:

	Class. (Hours)	Essays. (In hours)	Exercises. (In hours)	Total. (Hours)
Miss Larrabee	15	15	10	40
" Maclean	17	15	16	48
" Abel	17	17	18	52
" Moore	16	15	16	47
" Tompkins	15	11	16	42
Total	80	73	76	229

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #5

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

Now each of the above items is essential. Correcting essays and exercises, doing it daily, and doing it thoughtfully and carefully is as important in teaching English as hearing recitations. It ought not to be done mechanically; but when it crowds upon one, hour after hour, day after day, it is very difficult to keep fresh and alert. When one is compelled to read essays on the rush, or when fatigued, it is all but impossible to give fresh and vital suggestions. The teachers suffer from the strain they are now under, and the work itself suffers. It simply could not be otherwise. Nothing will go so far toward improving the quality of English work here, as reducing the amount of work now required of the teachers, thereby rendering possible the doing of better work.

It should be noted, moreover, that the above table makes no reckoning of time spent in consulting with students about their essays, in extra time given to drilling backward students. This is of great importance. The teachers all spend a considerable time each week, and were it possible to do so they would all gladly spend more time in this way, to the great advantage of students.

TABLES SHOWING THE WORK OF EACH TEACHER: EACH TABLE
 FOLLOWED BY THE TEACHER'S OWN STATEMENT.

<u>Miss Larrabee.</u>	Course.	Hrs. Class.	Essays	Exercises per wk.
	Lit. IV.	3	---	---
	Eng. III.	5	36	4x36 = 144
	" "	5	15	4x15 = 60

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #6

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

Miss Larrabee (cont.)	Course.	Hrs. Class.	Essays.	Exercises per. wk.
	Eng. IV.	1	32	
	" "	1	26	
	Total	15	115	204

"If all essay sections could be kept down to twenty-five the work would be about right. The wear on the teacher does not come from the number of hours spent in the class-room, but from the criticism of themes. It is impossible to correct seventy-five themes a day and do it carefully and well."

Miss Maclean	Course.	Hrs. Class.	Essays.	Exercises per wk.
	Eng. I.	5		5x31 = 155
	II.	5	27	3x27 = 81
	III.	5	20	4x20 = 80
	V.	1	33	
	V.	1	35	
	Total	17	115	316

"The above themes (115 and 316) are all criticised, (the exercises as well as time will permit, the essays conscientiously, carefully) and returned. I should not mind the number of hours (17) in the class room. That is the easiest part of the work, but to do reading as it should be done, to be of best value to the students, is the wearing part."

Miss Abel	Course.	Hrs. Class.	Essays.	Exercises per wk.
	Eng. II.	5	33	4x33 = 132
	" III.	5	28	4x28 = 112
	" "	5	30	4x30 = 120
	" V.	1	17	
	" V.	1	20	
	Total	17	128	364

"I teach seventeen hours a week. My English V. sections are all right; my English III. sections each contain thirty students; my English II. section contains thirty also. These latter sections are, I think, a little too large to get really good work from the class, and to leave me any leisure time".

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A.M.

Storms #7.

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

<u>Miss Moore</u>	Course	Hrs. Class.	Essays.	Exercises per wk.
	Eng. A.	5	20	
	" III.	5	34	4x34 = 136
	" "	5	27	4x27 = 108
	" IV.	1	36	
Total		16	117	244

"I teach sixteen hours a week, three five hour courses, and one one hour course. I have in all 115 students. From all these students weekly essays are required, and to obtain best results daily exercises from 89 should be required and carefully corrected. As a matter of fact I get daily exercises from only sixty, and do not correct them carefully, yet I work often seven days in the week until ten thirty P. M., taking out time only for attending such college gatherings as all are expected to attend.

Ten hours a week with sixty students could easily keep an English teacher busy to do her best work".

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC

Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS } ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, Ph. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #8

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

	Course.	Hrs. Class.	Essays.	Exercises per w.
<u>Miss Tompkins</u>	Eng. II.	5	28	4x28 = 112
	" III.	5	35	4x35 = 140
	" "	5	20	4x20 = 80
		<u>15</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>332</u>

"I teach fifteen hours a week--three five-hour courses, I have in all eighty-six students. In all these courses weekly essays are required, and, to obtain the best results daily exercises should be required and carefully corrected. I find it absolutely impossible to do this correcting as it should be done and have time and strength left to plan the work and to make the necessary preparation for it. Moreover, if one spends six or eight hours between the class work of one day and that of the next in reading freshmen productions, the deadening effect on one's own spirit must be felt in the class room. I think I could spend three hours a day in correcting work and two or three hours a day in preparation, with, perhaps, six or eight hours on Saturday, and still have some freshness and vigor to bring to the three hours in the class room."

<u>A. B. Noble</u>	Literature V.	5 hrs. with papers
	" I.	3 " "
	" VI.	2 " "
	English V.	1 19 essays
	" V.	1 " 20 "
	Debating (Eng. VII.)	2 "
		<u>14 hrs. 39 essays, with papers</u>

Besides this I have spent with the debating team unnumbered hours, and in addition have had the supervision of a department enrolling over eight hundred students. The work is more than any man can do and do well.

The work of supervision should have far more time and thought than it has been possible for me to give it. To keep the work unified I should have time for frequent consultations with the teachers. To assist in the important problem of bringing up poor students to better work I should have time to consult

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Storms #9

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

with these students, adding whatever influence I could exert to what the teacher is doing. There is always the demand for some change or improvement within the department; without such, the work tends to fall into a rut, which means gradual degeneration. For none of these needs have I had adequate time. This work of supervision is expected of me; it is perhaps the first and most important duty attaching to the position.

In respect to the coaching of the debating team, I would say that I gave them all the time I possibly could, but with the other demands upon my time, it was simply impossible to obtain for myself that clear grasp of the problem, that first hand knowledge of the literature of the subject, which is essential to successful coaching. Professor Todd, the coach of the Normal team, informed me that besides the debating, his only work this term was the teaching of a class of twelve in oratory. ~~Under these conditions~~ It is easy to see how unequal were the conditions under which he and I labored. I am deeply interested in this problem of debating, and shall be glad to accept whatever plan seems best for strengthening the work. I am interested in it, not simply for the inter-collegiate debate, but also for our inter-society debates, and back of this for the weekly debates in the various societies. Some one should have time to give counsel and suggestions for all of these. I trust I am not presumptuous if I say I believe I could give good help in

WIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 SAMUEL B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. D., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A. M.

Sto:ms #10

Ames, Iowa, _____ 190

all these undertakings, if I had the time. Under present conditions I have been unable to do for the debating team all that should have been done, and for the inter-society debates and the weekly debates in the various societies, I have been unable to do anything to speak of.

If it is desired that I should continue as coach of the debating team,--and I should be glad to do so,--my class work should be materially reduced. In addition to the supervision of the department, and the coaching of the debating team, my class work should be limited to one five hour course in literature and the class in debating. This term I have had, in addition to that, five hours in literature and two sections of English V.

I have already spoken of my inability to give the time I should to the work of supervision and to debating. It now remains to say that I am equally dissatisfied with the best I have been able to do in literature and in English V. In literature I have been forced many a day to go before the class with less than an hour of preparation. Many times I have been unable to plan the next assignment carefully, that is, to assign definite topics of study, without which the students' preparation is apt to be vague and hazy, a mere reading, not a careful study. In some instances I have had to go before the class with no fresh study to guide me, nothing but the uncertain memory of previous study.

ALVIN B. NOBLE, B. PH., Professor.
 BESSIE B. LARRABEE, A. B., Assistant Professor.
 ELIZABETH MACLEAN, M. DI., Assistant Professor.

Department of
LITERATURE AND RHETORIC
 Iowa State College of Agriculture
 and Mechanic Arts

INSTRUCTORS { ROSE ABEL, A. B.
 ELIZABETH MOORE, PH. M.
 DORA GILBERT TOMPKINS, A.M.

Storms 11.

Ames, Iowa, _____

190

In English V. I have not had time to plan the assignments carefully, to select the best models, and to have that easy familiarity with them which is necessary to proper emphasis, and the most helpful suggestions for essays to be based on these models. In reading the essays I have frequently been forced to take up a set of twenty essays at ten o'clock at night or later, and finish them before going to bed. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to give fresh and vital suggestions; the best one can do is to correct in a mechanical way. Moreover it has been impossible to meet students and talk over their mistakes and answer their questions. In many cases this consultation is essential to good results, but it has been a sheer impossibility.