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"Speaking Truth to Power": A History of the California State University English Council

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“SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER”: A HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY ENGLISH COUNCIL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2012

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The dissertation’s subject is the California State University (CSU) English Council, an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English established to support the English Studies faculty of the twenty-three campuses of the CSU. This study relates the history to date of the Council, but its particular focus is on English Council’s consideration of remediation and access for underserved students within composition studies; these issues developed into substantial conflicts between the Council and administration in two distinct eras. According to CSU policy, students accepted to the University must take an English Placement Test (EPT), which was designed and is scored by CSU English Studies faculty. As many as 50 percent of students taking the EPT in a given year are placed in remedial composition courses. In 1997, however, the CSU introduced Executive Order 665, which declared that by 2007, the CSU would admit no more than ten percent of applicants requiring remedial courses. This policy is problematic as it directly contradicts the *Master Plan for Higher Education* in California, which dictates that the CSU must accept the top third of graduates from California high schools. A significant part of my study describes how English Council has addressed this conflict between EO 665 and the *Master Plan*.

The study details how English Council has worked to represent the interests of faculty as they have organized to resist pressure from administrations, boards of education, and others who have power over the educational process but few qualifications in the teaching of writing.

Moreover, English Council has served as an incubator for emerging ideas about such issues as assessment (approaches such as holistic scoring and directed self-placement are explored), programmatic developments (such as stretch composition and the integration of reading and writing), and intersegmental collaborations (such as a partnership between California high schools and the CSU to improve college readiness). Inasmuch as the challenges addressed by English Council are not unique to California, I believe that the strategies used and the lessons learned by English Council have much to teach those of us working in the field of English Studies throughout the nation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
History from a Different Angle.....	1
The Origins of English Council	3
Narrowing My Focus	8
Describing My Study	9
Chapter 1	9
Chapter 2.....	9
Chapter 3.....	11
Chapter 4.....	12
Chapter 5.....	14
Chapter 6.....	14
1 ENGLISH COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 665: LINES BEING DRAWN	16
English Council.....	17
A Meeting Becomes a Dissertation.....	23
A Plan to Eliminate Remediation	26
The Board of Trustees and Executive Order 665.....	30
Responses to Executive Order 665: Inside and Outside the CSU	34
Methodology	42
Data Collection	44
Present Day Perceptions	44
Publicly Available Data	45
A Specialized Archive	47
Interviews.....	50
Narrative Historiography	52
2 THE ORIGINS OF REMEDIATION IN THE CSU	54
How Higher Education in California Is Organized and Overseen.....	55
Ethnicity and Diversity in California	61
English Council’s First Crisis	65
The Triple “E”	73
Designing the Test	73
Assessing the EEE	78
Results of the EEE	82
One Test Spawns Another	83
Alignment: Curriculum, Students and the Test.....	83
Developing the EPT	86
Convincing the Skeptics	88
Implications of a Decade that Changed the Cal State System	91

Chapter		Page
3	THIRTY YEARS OF THE EPT AND REMEDIATION	94
	An Introduction to the Chapter	94
	Problematizing Remediation.....	96
	Manufacturing a Crisis.....	96
	Remedial, Developmental or Basic?.....	99
	Terminology within English Council.....	101
	Alternatives to the Term “Remedial”	103
	A Model and a Myth: of Deficits and Transience.....	105
	Changes to the EPT.....	110
	A Systemwide Cut Score for the EPT.....	111
	Attempts at Lowering the Cut Score.....	113
	Implications of the Uniform Cut Score.....	116
	Executive Order 514: A Point of Agreement.....	119
	The Switch to On-Line Scoring	120
	Restricting Basic Writing.....	125
	Basic Writing Programs under Scrutiny	127
	Protecting Basic Writing.....	132
	Who Should Teach Basic Writing?.....	133
	Contingent Faculty	138
	Class Size	143
	Outsourcing.....	147
	Thirty Years in Review	152
4	INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 665	153
	Limiting Remediation à la Executive Order 665	153
	Community College Implications	154
	EO 665: “A Double-Edged Sword”	157
	Cross-Sector Collaboration.....	158
	Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiative.....	160
	The Course Compromise	162
	A Rift within English Council	167
	Mainstreaming as an Alternative to Remediation.....	171
	Defining Terms	171
	Mainstreaming vs. Gatekeeping.....	171
	Directed Self-Placement (DSP)	174
	Stretch Composition.....	177
	College-Level Curriculum	177
	Credit for Composition	180
	A Lack of Consensus: Rocks in the (Main) Stream.....	184

Chapter	Page
5	ON THE HORIZON: REMEDIATION REDUX 190
	Deliverology 192
	The Chancellor’s Graduation Initiative 196
	Critiques of Deliverology and the Graduation Initiative 199
	Early Start 202
	English Council Gets a Preview 202
	Early Start Becomes CSU Policy..... 205
	A Review of the Options for Providing an Early Start 209
	English Council’s Stand against Mandatory Early Start..... 211
	Partners in the Fight: Statewide Academic Senate and Access and Equity..... 215
	Statewide Academic Senate 215
	Access and Equity 217
	Joining Forces in a Common Critique 219
	“Could We All Agree?” A Litmus Test of English Council’s Unity..... 222
	Detaching the Bell..... 226
6	CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS 227
	The Once and Future English Council 229
	Education: Encouraging Effective Teaching 231
	Advocacy: Improving the Conditions 234
	Autonomy and Support: a Paradox 240
	Public Intellectuals 243
	Context is Everything: California, Here We Are 247
	Master Plan in Jeopardy 248
	Alliances beyond the CSU 250
	Overcoming a Legacy of Testing 252
	Implications beyond California 253
	Final Thoughts 259
	WORKS CITED 261
	APPENDICIES 284
	Appendix A – English Council Timeline 284
	Appendix B – Sample English Placement Test 285
	Appendix C – Interview Questions 293

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Links in the Chain	194

INTRODUCTION

History from a Different Angle

“The biggest.” “The most populous.” “The most ethnically diverse.” “Twenty-three campuses with over 412,000 students, and 43 thousand faculty and staff.” “Nearly 2.5 million degrees granted since 1961” (“About the CSU”). These are just a few attributes of the California State University (CSU) system. However, another significant statistic for this study is that, since remedial programs began in 1977, up to forty percent of entering, admitted students have tested into remedial math and writing courses. Up to the 1990s when Chancellor Barry Munitz sounded the call to end remediation, some form of basic writing took place on all of the CSU campuses.

To study the history of basic writing in a university the size of the CSU is indeed a daunting task. However, I opted to further complicate my project by studying not just one campus or program, but by studying the CSU on the system level. While I was defining a dissertation topic, I attended a particularly interesting meeting of the CSU English Council at which the “end of remediation” in the CSU was the main topic. I learned that, while English Council was the subject of two articles, one written in the 1970s and the other in the mid-1980s, no one had ever compiled the history of the organization. That is what I set out to do—write a history of the CSU English Council, but center it on the history of remediation in the CSU. I took on my task with excitement—I was writing about something I knew, that I cared about and I felt myself becoming a part of—however some six years into the effort I realized that I was writing a new kind of history.

In the introduction to their 2004 collection entitled *Historical Studies of WPA*, Barbara L’Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo explain that while there have been histories written on the topic of first-year composition, those histories have tended to address 1) “the ideological

/pedagogical theories and practices of composition; and 2) more localized inquiries into the classroom practices of individual teachers” (xvii). They cite James Berlin’s *Rhetoric and Reality* as an example of a history of the theories and practices of composition and then they note that there have been several histories written over the years of famous teachers (xviii). L’Eplattenier and Mastrangelo argue that the aforementioned histories are important to the field of composition because they have helped to “legitimize our discipline.” by identifying both theory and pedagogy tied to composition. L’Eplattenier and Mastrangelo argue that the aforementioned histories are important to the field of composition because they have helped to “legitimize our discipline.” But, according to the authors, these macro and micro level studies only provide part of the picture of the field in that “they do not reflect the fact that these programs or teachers required an administrative space in which to function” (xvii). These editors argue that their collection supports the claim that “local politics are an important component in the creation and shape of the composition program” (xix).

This dissertation also looks at administrative spaces of composition studies, but on a slightly larger canvas than the studies of individual campuses. Mine is not a history of the field, or the classroom, or even an English department. This is a history of how a faculty organization within the CSU system called the CSU English Council has addressed the issue of remediation. This is another kind of history of the ways the faculty of the twenty-three CSU English Studies programs have attempted to work together to serve diverse faculty—and student—populations. The history extends from the Council’s inception in the early 1970s to its battles over the elimination of remedial programs through 2010. (A timeline of the most significant milestones of my study can be found in Appendix A.) My study differs from the local level studies which focus on individual classrooms and national level studies which focus on the formation of the

composition program[s], such as the ones L'Eplattenier and Mastrangelo discuss in their introduction (xix). Instead, my study explores composition studies from the level of the university system within the context of the California State University English Council. My access to minutes, handouts, letters, resolutions and e-mails that span almost thirty years of English Council history allows me the opportunity to consider how Writing Program Administrators across twenty-three campuses working under the same Chancellor, Board of Trustees and mandates keep programs functioning and support one another and students along the way.

The Origins of English Council

In order to understand how English Council has remained as unified as it has in the face of various crises I will be describing throughout my study; it is helpful to understand the history of the organization. At present, there are twenty-three campuses in the California State University (CSU). When English Council was formed in 1961, there were only fourteen campuses;¹ English Studies faculty realized that it would be useful for them to meet twice-yearly to discuss issues they had in common and to learn from one another. Professor Emeritus Edward

¹ When the *Master Plan* was written, what is now referred to as the CSU was called “the state colleges.” In 1972, fourteen campuses were permitted by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees to change their distinction from “colleges” to “universities.” It was not until 1982 that the remainder of the campuses that chose to do so took on the title of “university” (“Historic Milestones”). Five campuses chose to retain the ‘State College’ moniker, while both Pomona and San Luis Obispo have “California State Polytechnic University” in their names, and the California Maritime Academy is also a member-campus of the CSU (“Campus Homepages”).

White of CSU San Bernardino, early English Council member and organization president, describes those first meetings as a way “to provide opportunities for exchanging information among English department chairs and, as positions developed, composition coordinators” (311). In fact, the original title of the organization was “the Council of State College English Department Chairmen and Coordinators of Freshman English.” So, from its inception, composition studies has been at the heart of the work of English Council. As White informed me:

for about a century after Harvard began f[irst] y[ear] c[omposition] in the 1880s, the course was generally called Freshman English and was not really distinguished from any other English course. So, until W[riting] P[rogram] A[dministrations]s began to have an identity, during the 1970s, a meeting of what we now call WPAs would have been the same as a meeting of English chairs. So it was with English Council. (Ed White “Re: A Question”)

Therefore, in White’s view, issues of composition *were* issues of English. Since no faculty members were specialists in the teaching of writing when English Council came about in the late 1960s—i.e., there were no compositions as we would define the term today—all English department faculty were expected to teach composition at least some of the time during their careers. These composition issues were matters for all English Studies faculty. Any split or separation of composition from literature was to come later in English Council history.

In its current discussion of the topic, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) offers several reasons for forming affiliate groups. Among these are “professional development opportunities, electronic and face-to-face networks, print and on-line publications, and, *most importantly, the collected wisdom of many of the best teachers in the field*” (emphasis

in original). They also promise that “[w]hen you join your local NCTE affiliate you'll find the connections and tools you need to be innovative, creative, and inventive as you work to connect with each of your students” (NCTE). But for English Council, the status would prove to serve an even more important function—it allowed the Council autonomy from the CSU.

The original founders worked for autonomy and legitimacy for the new English Council. They knew that in the 1950s, organizations “such as the organization of State College Presidents, the organization of Deans of Instruction, and the Organization of Graduate Coordinators” formed and attempted to become autonomous from the University’s administration (Hornback 2). It is not clear why but, according to Vernon Hornback, an early English Council member, they were required to disband. These organizations never achieved the level of independence for which they strived, so that when the early California State College Chancellors ordered them to dissolve, these other councils had no recourse and did so (Hornback 2). In order to avoid a similar outcome for English Council, the founders sought affiliate status with the California Association of Teachers of English (CATE), the state National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) affiliate.

Although the first president of the Council, Clyde Enroth of Cal State Sacramento, began working to gain affiliate status for the organization with CATE, it was not granted until the second English Council President, Gerhardt Friedrich of Cal State Fullerton, was serving his term. Hornback writes,

This [affiliate] status conferred upon the new organization a kind of autonomy with which the state system could not easily interfere, and which has, over the years, made it possible for the Council to take some strong, independent, often controversial stands on important issues. (Hornback 2)

Having affiliate status also helped faculty obtain release time and funding for dues and travel.

After gaining its affiliate status, English Council continued to meet regularly for the next four years. Then, in 1965, according to Hornback, “[p]erhaps because the discipline of English was still fairly unchallenged in its assumptions about itself,” the organization gave up meeting for more than three years (2). English Council would find it necessary to reconvene when, in 1968, the Chancellor introduced a series of equivalency examinations that were intended to greatly reduce the number of students enrolled in composition courses in the Cal State system (Hornback 2).

Their NCTE affiliate status would serve English Council well over the years, as various Chancellors of the CSU have attempted more than once—during the battle over equivalency testing, especially—to disband the organization. The discussion of equivalency testing and the “birth” of remediation in the CSU will be the primary focus of Chapter 2. We will return to the early days of English Council but now, before giving an overview of the five chapters of my study, I will describe what takes place at the biannual English Council meetings.

English Council meetings are open to anyone interested in attending them. Each CSU campus is encouraged to send its English Studies faculty, but who actually comes to the meetings varies between campuses widely. Those who are most likely to attend often hold administrative positions in their departments such as English department chairs (who commonly are literature specialists), and coordinators or directors of various areas of focus within or related to English Studies such as: composition, English Education, TESOL, graduate programs, and writing centers. However, faculty who do not hold administrative positions within their English departments are welcome to attend and are often invited to present on panels.

English Council meetings officially begin on Thursday mornings with registration, and then plenary sessions of interest to all branches of English Studies are held. For example, in fall 2006, the plenary panel was titled “New Directions in Pedagogy” and sessions included “Student Achievement in 3 Instructional Presentations,” “Using Web-based Multimedia Material to Teach Phonetics,” “Teaching and Popularizing Medieval Literature,” “Using Read-aloud Protocols in Teacher Preparation and Composition Classes,” and “Sustained Silent Writing in Literature Courses” (English Council Archives). In just this one panel we see four areas of English Studies represented. After lunch, Thursday afternoon is a time for disciplinary breakout sessions, which often include one or more groups that allow members to continue discussing the plenary panel in more detail. Thursday’s activities conclude with a cocktail party hosted by the past president, with food and beverages provided by the Executive Committee.² The meeting officially ends midday on Friday, after a business meeting at which reports are delivered.

A Wednesday evening composition meeting also is held. Toward the end of the 1970s, composition coordinators decided that they did not have enough time in the Thursday afternoon breakout to discuss all of the issues they needed to cover. So, they requested that the Executive Board allocate funds to book a room for a Wednesday evening meeting (White, “Re: A Question”). Anyone is free to attend this meeting, and some dedicated English department members outside composition do attend (including department chairs, writing center directors, TESOL coordinators, and English Education coordinators). However, because composition is the focus of the meeting, literature faculty are less inclined to attend and, in fact, typically few are

² The Executive Committee consists of the current President, Vice President, Composition Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer and the most recent past President of the Council.

present. With its narrowed focus and 7:00 p.m. start time, the night before English Council officially begins, the composition meeting is often not as well attended at the Thursday meetings.

Narrowing My Focus

Throughout the coming chapters, whenever relevant, I will include details from English Council meetings and what took place in various breakout sessions. Of particular interest to my study are the Wednesday night composition meeting and the composition breakout sessions. These are sessions at which remediation and polices that impact developmental writing are most likely to be discussed. In my initial review of English Council meetings, it became clear to me that these meetings have provided English Studies faculty around the CSU the opportunity to meet and confer about issues of common interest. Amy Heckathorn notes, in her article “Moving toward a Group Identity: WPA Professionalization from the 1940s to the 1970s,” that WPAs during the period she discusses frequently sought “new ways to approach their difficulties; they began re-envisioning the position and its theoretical base in the discipline” (211). From its start in 1961, English Council gave burgeoning WPAs a venue in which to gather as colleagues to strategize about the logistics of their administrative work and to enrich their knowledge of the field of English Studies.

Poring through English Council notes, minutes, and correspondence, I often found myself tempted to linger, reading about issues not directly applicable to this study. I read about the difficulties of starting new Master of Arts programs, issues of developing teacher education programs in light of a great deal of pressure from the state, and other challenges faced by English Studies faculty within the largest state university system in the country. All of these were enlightening, even important stories. However, because of my decision to narrow the focus of this study of English Council to issues of remediation, within this dissertation I was only able to

address in cursory ways much of English Council's rich history. Despite the narrowed focus of the study, I believe that this history of English Council provides valuable insights for anyone interested in English Studies programs as it provides a means of, in Heckathorn's terms, "re-envision[ing]" our positions in the field and in the universities in which we work.

Describing My Study

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for how English Council's history is tied to the history of remediation in the CSU. What began in the 1970s as an attempt to provide services to at-risk students is linked to efforts in the early 2000s to eliminate not only those services, but the students themselves, and English Council is involved in that history. Once I recognized how the Council is implicated in the CSU's history of remediation, I decided not only to study the group, but to study specifically how English Council came to be so involved in remediation and how the Council is working to make the CSU's policies toward students serve those students better. Once this basis for the study is established, I discuss the methods for conducting the research.

Chapter 2

In the first part of Chapter 2, I clarify the particular features of the CSU system that are germane to my study as well as the CSU's position within California's tripartite higher education structure which comprises CSUs, UCs (University of California), and CCs (California Community College). All of these institutions are bound by the constraints of *A Master Plan for Higher Education*, which dictates not only which students go to which institutions, but also what kinds of services these students are eligible to receive. Thus an understanding of the *Master Plan* is essential to understanding how EO 665 affects students and the teaching of remedial writing in California. This chapter also expands upon the history of the CSU English Council begun in

Chapter 1 in order to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the organization and its early skirmishes with the Chancellor's Office.

While not much has been disseminated on the history of English Council, Professor Emeritus Edward White of CSU San Bernardino has published articles on the topic. In addition to his long tenure at CSU San Bernardino, where he received the Outstanding Professor award in 1994, White currently holds the title of visiting professor at the University of Arizona, teaching in both the graduate program (Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English) and the writing program. He serves as a consultant for universities and schools on “writing programs, writing across the curriculum, and writing assessment” (“Home Page”) and is an actively contributing member of the Writing Program Administrator listserv. As of 2006, White had “written, edited, or co-edited thirteen books and about one hundred book chapters and articles” and received an “outstanding research award” from the Modern Language Association for the book *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (“Home Page”). White reflected in 2001 that in order to engage effectively with the Chancellor and the Trustees, English Council needed to function “as a locus of community building and compromise” (“Opening” 307). In Chapter 2, I use White's insights to detail the form this “locus of community building and compromise” has taken and how it has functioned. This chapter illustrates how, in the 1970s and 1980s, English Council adapted to tension and conflict among its members and also how the members compromised with external forces.

In addition to citing journal articles written by White and Hornback, meeting minutes, resolutions and correspondence between council members, I attempted to interview original members of English Council. I was only able to interview one of these members—Professor White. White's many experiences and contributions to the field of English Studies and

assessment in particular make him an invaluable resource for this project. While it would have been helpful to gain the perspectives of others who had been members of English Council from the organization's beginning, Professor White's contributions to the study are both considerable and enlightening.³

As a founding member of English Council, White led the organization both as president and as one of the first people in English Studies generally and in the CSU system in particular to work in the area of assessment in composition. White and I met at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in New York in March, 2007, and spoke for almost two hours, during which time he shared his memories of the early days of English Council and his interpretation of how those early decisions about the teaching and assessing of writing are influencing the Council today. Professor White's insights are useful and informative in understanding the struggles currently faced by the CSU English Council.

Chapter 3

According to White, English Council's past skirmishes with CSU Chancellors over assessment and remediation have helped English Council members to realize that they must be vigilant in protecting their programs. White refers to these skirmishes when he says, "Forces no less hostile to English [than those of the 1970s] are ever with us, and we have no choice but to combat them, using what we have learned from the past" (307). Chapter 3 explores the thirty years of the English Placement Test (EPT) and remedial composition in the CSU. I pay particular attention to the features of the EPT and remedial composition that have made them vulnerable to

³ I made several attempts, both by telephone and e-mail, to contact other members of English Council from the 1960s and 1970s but was unable to reach them.

EO 665. I consider the implication of the decision not to grant course credit for remedial courses, the use of temporary funding tied to test scores, and the staffing of the programs with vulnerable contingent faculty. English Council was actively engaged in each of these decisions and, I argue, the positions they took regarding remedial writing programs have affected the current conflict over remediation. This chapter also examines the terms used by both compositionists and those determining funding for remedial programs use to describe composition programs. The chapter also considers how terms like “remedial” tend to shape perceptions of those programs.

Chapter 3 relies heavily on the three boxes of documents collected by Carol Burr and Gale Larson, both English Council presidents. A few months before his death, Larson sent the boxes to John Edlund, then president of the Council, thinking that he might find them useful. These boxes contain minutes from English Council meetings from 1980-1999, resolutions from the period, handouts from the meetings, and all of the correspondence of Larson and Burr. There are letters to and from members of the Chancellors’ staffs, members of English Council, potential speakers at English Council meetings, and responses from campus administrators in response to the resolutions and positions taken by English Council.

Chapter 4

While the first three chapters of this study are intended to familiarize readers with the ideals held in common among English Council members, Chapter 4 focuses almost entirely on strategies—both successful and unsuccessful—used by the Council to teach developmental composition to CSU students. In this chapter, I explore three strategies endorsed by English Council and used at individual campuses to serve students impacted by Executive Order 665 (a 1997 mandate which threatens to disenroll student from the University if they are unable to complete all of their remedial coursework within their first year of enrollment). These strategies

have been particularly important for CSU composition programs because they all received some recognition from the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees for their innovation and effectiveness.

The first approach—a high school level expository writing course—is not linked to any specific campus, but is designed to help eleventh and twelfth grade students who are considering applying to the CSU to improve their writing. The course targets students who are identified (by a placement test administered in the eleventh grade) as being in need of remedial writing once they get to college.

The other two approaches I will cover in this chapter, stretch composition and directed self-placement (DSP) programs, have been implemented by multiple campuses. In both cases, the programs were piloted on one CSU campus, were presented at meetings of English Council, and then were adapted to fit needs on other campuses. I scrutinize these new programs to learn how effective English Council has been in its efforts to balance the dictates of EO 665 with the duty to provide the best possible composition instruction to students who have been traditionally excluded from University education. In addition to drawing on press releases, newspaper articles and meeting minutes, this chapter will incorporate interviews with current, active members of English Council.

In Chapter 4 I also examine how this variety of solutions influences English Council as a whole. One positive repercussion of EO 665 I explore is how it led faculty to reconsider their curriculum and English Council provides a venue for CSU colleagues to learn about the resulting curricular changes. I explore the advantages and consequences of taking different roads to fulfilling the EO 665 requirement and discuss whether something of value is lost when campuses move away from a single approach (the English Placement Test) to remediation.

Chapter 5

Chapter Five addresses the post-EO 665 CSU. EO 665 expired in 2007 with essentially no change to the remediation rate of entering first year students. The date by when the Chancellor intended that EO 665 was supposed to have accomplished its goal (that by the year 2007 only 10 percent of incoming students would need to take remedial courses) happened to coincide with the worst recession in the state since the Great Depression of the 1930s (Bivens). The recession led Chancellor Reed to search for ways to relieve the CSU's budget woes. Chapter Five will focus on how Reed and the Trustees applied a business model called "deliverology" which emphasizes deadlines and "delivery systems" rather than what actually takes place in the classroom. This stress on deliverology led Reed to mandate yet another executive order. This one, EO 1048, presents the Chancellor's Graduation Initiative and a mandatory "Early Start" program that requires all students who test into remedial courses to begin that remedial work the summer before their first year at a CSU. Chapter Five explores these policies, the protests generated from English Council, and the partnerships English Council has forged with the statewide Academic Senate and the California Faculty Association during this fight.

Chapter 6

As the conclusion, Chapter 6 explores the impact that the remediation crisis has had on English Council as an organization, as distinguished from individual campuses. Each campus' response to restrictive remediation policies was specific to that campus. This chapter addresses the strengths of English Council: providing education and support for all CSU English Studies faculty and the chance to become advocates on behalf of students, and even to promote new pedagogy. This chapter also discusses challenges English Council is encountering as it faces its future, such as the tension between unity for the organization and autonomy for those campuses

that want to go their own way. I conclude the study by observing similarities between the problems faced by the CSU and those faced by other universities across the United States and suggest ways others could benefit from an English Council-style organization.

Compositionists within English Council have been actively engaged with the feat of teaching and assessing writing in a system that educates large numbers of students who, upon admission, are recognized as needing additional help in writing. By documenting the history of the CSU English Council and the ways the organization has served faculty and students for over thirty years, I hope to help English Council and other faculty organizations to respond more effectively to mandates such as EO 665. Recording, studying, and learning from both the successes and failures of English Council are vital for the future life and health of the organization; in order for the organization to flourish, it must understand which strategies are effective when negotiating with powerful critics of developmental composition programs often including Boards of Trustees. But the lessons learned in the study of the CSU English Council are valuable beyond California's borders. While the significance of this dissertation is in no way limited to the cutting of programs generally, it can be applied immediately to such problems because, at the time this study was completed, there were budget cuts and calls for reductions of programs for at-risk students throughout the nation. New York and other states are facing similar cuts to their remedial programs, and other, smaller, state systems are also facing similar crises (Gleason; Singer). Beyond these current crises, English Studies faculty members will continue to need strategies that will help them speak the truth of what they know about their field to the powers that seek to limit access to students.

CHAPTER 1

ENGLISH COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 665: LINES BEING DRAWN

In the spring of 2005, more than a hundred people gathered in San Francisco at the semi-annual meeting of the California State University (CSU) English Council. English Council is an organization made up of English Studies faculty from the 23 campuses in the CSU system. Discussions at these meetings generally address issues such as class size, faculty retention, and curricular matters, issues similar to those that might be discussed at faculty meetings on individual campuses. I had attended a number of English Council meetings, and I had little reason to expect that this one would be substantially different from meetings over the preceding few years. It came as a surprise, then, when faculty from the different campuses began discussing the possibility of joining together to resist an order that had been passed down eight years earlier by the Chancellor and that a consensus of composition faculty believed to be ill-advised: Executive Order 665 (EO 665).

EO 665, which was mandated in 1997 by then-Chancellor of the CSU, Barry Munitz, dictates that students are to be disenrolled from the University if they are unable to complete all of their remedial non-credit coursework within their first year of enrollment. (Significantly, as of 2010, the executive order continues to impact approximately 55% of first-year students in the CSU (“English, Math”).) The first draft of the order, distributed in 1995, stated that within five years all remedial programs would be eliminated from the CSU. While it may seem odd to eliminate a program that serves so many students, the Chancellor was responding to calls from his board—particularly Ralph Pesqueira, who will be discussed at length later in the study—for the CSU to “get out of the remediation business” (Irving) by no longer offering remedial courses at the CSU. However, after public protest (which will be described throughout this chapter), the

policy was revised to mandate that as of 2001, the CSU would be able to establish “clearer performance standards and ways of measuring students’ skills” that would be used to bring about a “10 percent decline in the number of new freshmen needing remediation” (“New Proposal” A4). Furthermore, “By the fall of 2004, the number of new freshmen needing help should be reduced to half the present levels.” The Chancellor and his board projected that as of 2007 “only 10 percent of new students [would] need supplemental academic help” (“New Proposal” A4). A key concern of my study is not only the elimination of courses designed to serve students; it is the fate of these students the CSU no longer serves when remediation is eliminated. Cuts in remedial services come at a cost and this cost is paid by those students who least can afford it. By the time English Council meeting was held in April 2005, EO 665 had been in effect at CSU campuses for over eight years. While the topic of EO 665 had been raised at earlier meetings, no systemwide response had been adopted, and many English Council members assumed that each campus would wrestle with this controversial policy on its own.

English Council

As the spring 2005 meeting began, mindful of the 2007 deadline approaching, composition faculty from across the CSU system came together for the usual Wednesday night composition meeting. The meeting began at seven o’clock in the evening in a routine enough setting—a nondescript hotel meeting room. At these meetings, there is never enough food available for those who have just arrived from the airport, the freeway, or an evening class. A glass of wine and a handful of nuts are often the only dinner many of the compositionists will get on a Wednesday night of English Council. There also tend to be a great number of wheeled suitcases in the corner belonging to the many faculty members who come straight to the meeting room before checking into the hotel.

At this particular meeting, strategies for addressing EO 665 were on the agenda. Several compositionist English Council members shared their concerns about the consequences of EO 665 for their campuses; members observed angrily that regularly-admitted students who placed into remedial courses were at risk of being disenrolled from the University. These comments prompted others to share strategies being used on individual campuses to protect these students from the threat of disenrollment. For example, some campuses elected to give credit for introductory courses that had previously been considered “remedial” and not credit-bearing. EO 665 would not affect students taking these courses because the policy only applies to remedial courses.

Some members shared how, by implementing Directed Self-Placement—a program enabling students to place themselves in composition courses rather than being placed by the results of standardized tests—they no longer found it necessary to offer remedial courses. All of their courses were credit-bearing. This was a new concept to many at the meeting and, while those in attendance worried about students’ abilities to accurately place themselves in the appropriate writing class, for some it seemed the answer to both their troubles with EO 665 and their desire to become free to use placement methods other than the CSU-designed English Placement Test (EPT) for placing students in composition courses.

Faculty from different campuses had different concerns. For example, a faculty member from a campus that had been offering non-credit remedial courses was concerned that because EO 665 cut off the funding for remedial courses, “the money that used to be attached to the courses is now drying up” (English Council Notes). Because the money for remedial courses was no longer available, there were calls from many quarters for “streamlined courses to help administrators to come on line” with the changes to the programs (English Council Notes).

“Streamlining,” in this case, meant modification of composition programs to eliminate non-credit remedial courses as a prerequisite for first-year composition (FYC). Instead these students would take a two-semester “stretch” composition courses, allowing them to complete the remedial work and FYC within the credit-bearing two-semester course instead of in three separate courses—one, or even two, of which would carry the remedial designation. The baccalaureate stretch course would conform to the demands of EO 665 and also serve the students—students would receive the instruction they need and not be in danger of disenrollment if they did not pass the course on the first try.

As the discussion continued, attendees recognized that “the remedial designation served students in its day, but that day is over. We need baccalaureate courses now” (English Council Notes). English Council’s recognition that the CSU needs baccalaureate courses instead of remedial ones should not be interpreted as the Council’s acceptance of EO 665, so much as an acknowledgement of the need to alter programs in order to serve (and retain) students. This discussion was the first step in helping English Council to develop a collective response to what many members considered a draconian policy designed to disenroll students. Hearing about the strategies being incorporated across the CSU system allowed the faculty to see that they were not alone in fighting EO 665; there were alternatives to simply accepting the policy and losing students.

In the years leading up to that eventful spring 2005 meeting, instead of learning about what was happening on the various CSU campuses, most composition programs had been grappling with the EO 665 policy on their own. However, the 2005 discussion showed that some specific strategies had been considered on more than one campus. For example, San Francisco had recently put a stretch program in place, and San Bernardino was considering one. The

composition faculty on these campuses were learning from one another and building upon one another's programs. The composition faculty at San Bernardino used the data gathered at San Francisco to help convince administrators of the efficacy of the program. As with most administrations, the administration at CSU San Bernardino would be far more likely to approve an innovative approach if they knew it already had been successfully implemented at another CSU. English Council members from other campuses took notes and learned about the alternatives from their CSU colleagues.

The meeting ended in what can be seen as a pivotal moment of the CSU English Council. After the animated discussion went on for more than thirty minutes, one member proclaimed, "these courses must be credit-bearing," to which many in the room heartily agreed (English Council Notes). While the importance of this final discussion may not yet be evident to most readers, I introduce it here, at the beginning of my study, in order to highlight one of the main reasons I took on this study and will expand upon it throughout the dissertation. One of my primary aims in this study is to consider the ways that English Council has advocated on behalf of marginalized students in the CSU. The call to offer credit for basic writing is the kind of advocacy I set out to study. The claim that "these courses must be credit-bearing" may not seem such a new or revolutionary idea, but when considered in the context of the CSU and its history with remedial, not-for-credit courses, it was indeed groundbreaking.

Chapter 2 of this study will cover the history of English Council in detail. While awaiting that more detailed explanation, let it suffice to know that an important part of this story is that, in the early 1970s, CSU faculty and administrators spent a great deal of time and energy working to offer remedial courses to the students who were not being served in the standard curriculum of composition courses. When the CSU was permitted by the legislature to offer basic writing

courses (in 1978), it was with the proviso that the students taking these courses would not receive credit for taking them. English Council members lamented the compromise at the time; as Professor Emeritus Edward White of CSU San Bernardino pointed out, “I have argued right from the start [circa 1978] that they should get credit and I remember arguments. . . . It is very hard to win that politically” (Personal Interview). In a description of how she and her colleagues at CSU Chico worked to assign credit to their basic writing courses in the 1990s, Judith Rodby reflects:

We first tried to change the credit situation, rather than abandon the basic writing courses, but the no-credit arrangement was continually naturalized through a series of circular moves: We were told that remedial courses cannot receive credit because they are remedial and the university does not give credit for remedial courses; we were also told that our campus cannot give credit for those courses because we only offer one semester of freshman writing for credit, and so those courses must be classified as remedial. Why is/was there this insistence on no-credit writing courses? Nostalgia. (108)

Rodby notes that she is using cultural critic Susan Steward’s definition of the term nostalgia—the longing for a past that never really existed. Rodby believes that this nostalgia was a powerful force that most CSU faculty charged with designing and administered basic writing programs. As Rodby suggests, the problem with such nostalgia is it keeps change at bay and while the term itself sounds benign enough, students are the ones who pay for it—both literally and figuratively. They pay literally for the additional courses which do count as part of their course load, but do not count toward graduation. They pay figuratively in becoming targets for disenrollment under the EO 665 policy. And which students are paying? As I will clarify in the coming chapters:

those least equipped to do so. Somewhat ironically, it was not until the emergence of EO 665 and the threat of disenrolling the very students their programs were designed to serve that faculty were able to break free from the grip of nostalgia and begin to offer credit for the kinds of writing courses at-risk writers needed most.

Unexpectedly, EO 665 provided the opportunity for CSUs to begin granting baccalaureate credit for composition coursework that up to this point had been designated as remedial. When English Council members mentioned above declared that the remedial “courses must be credit bearing,” she was declaring that the CSU needs to retain these courses and retain the students, while dropping the remedial designation. This was no idle comment, but a call to action for English Council to engage with the administration over this important issue.

That evening in 2005, long after the meeting was scheduled to end, various plans for a collective English Council response to EO 665 were still being developed and organized. Members were listening to one another and sharing ideas in ways that I had not seen at past meetings. People who rarely agreed on anything were listening eagerly to one another in order to learn a variety of strategies and discern which ones might work on their campuses. Some members volunteered to draft a resolution to the Chancellor, calling for the flexibility to allow individual campuses to make their own decisions about how best to meet the goal of curtailing remediation in the CSU. Others volunteered to collect data about the different strategies for complying with EO 665.

The lively, rapid, and powerful response of English Council at the spring 2005 meeting to what the faculty felt was a flawed policy suggests the kind of potential for action and advocacy a group of English Studies faculty can have. Riding the bus back to the airport after the meeting, I wondered how English Council had dealt in the past with pressure from the Chancellor and

Board of Trustees. EO 665 was surely not the first instance of an unpopular mandate from the Chancellor's Office. Were there lessons to be learned from English Council's past that could inform the current situation—not only in California, but nationwide? What I hope I have accomplished in my study is not unlike Patricia Thatcher's goal for her dissertation, "An Historical Perspective on the Resolution Process of the National Council of Teachers of English." Thatcher writes that she sees it as her responsibility to "write about each historical period in a way that reflects the thoughts and attitude of the people in that particular time" (26) in order to inform current decisions the organization and the faculty within it are making. I seek to shed light on the CSUs complicated present with regard to remediation by looking at the choices made in its equally complicated past.

A Meeting Becomes a Dissertation

In part, my study explores how English Studies faculty, primarily from composition studies, hailing from twenty-three campuses with varied student populations, organized to resist pressure from administrations, boards of education, and others who had a great deal of power over the educational process, yet tended to have few qualifications in education. This study also documents the strategies that English Council used to negotiate with administrators and boards. As one who regularly attends English Council meetings and hopes to spend her career working in English Studies in the CSU system, I wanted to know and understand the history of English Council and the potential the group has to influence future education policy in the state of California.

My goal was not only to explore the history of English Council of the CSU, but also to discern if English Council has been effective in enabling English Studies faculty at CSU campuses to respond when faced with policies like EO 665. Inasmuch as pressures of the sort

faced by English Council are not California's alone, I believe that the strategies used and the lessons learned by English Council have much to teach those of us working in the field of English Studies throughout the nation. I examined the current conflict created by EO 665 in California and documented English Council's evolution by comparing its responses to this conflict with its response to earlier crises. I identified some of the purposes English Council serves for its members.

English Council is not the only such organization in existence in the CSU or in the country. In addition to English Council, a Council of Math Chairs exists in the CSU. The Council of Math Chairs is similar to English Council in that it also meets once a semester (usually in October and April) and according to Ivona Grzegorzcyk, chair of the CSU Channel Islands math department, "take[s] stands on various issues, and often sends resolutions to the C[hancellor's] O[ffice] on educational matters." But the membership and voting practices of the Math Council differ from English Council. This "group is made up of chairs and some advisors" but "only chairs can vote" (Grzegorzcyk). While other university systems have systemwide meetings of department chairs, and there are regional councils of NCTE across the country and in Canada (NCTE). Unfortunately, no record of the histories of those councils is available.

I believe that other state university systems can learn a great deal from the CSU English Council. All of the English Council members I interviewed for this study told me that they see the council as vital to their administrative work (whether as writing program administrator, department chair, or any other capacity) in the CSU. Kim Flachmann, a long-time English Council member from the Bakersfield, declared that she doesn't know how anyone can *have* an administrative role in an English department and not come to English Council. Flachmann

almost always pays to come to EC out of her own pocket and even chose to come when she was on sabbatical (Personal Interview).

English Council does not always succeed in convincing the powers that be of the rightness of its positions, but it does provide an opportunity for faculty to learn about the English Studies programs on the various CSU campuses. Flachmann noted that it helps faculty stay informed about the policies coming out of the Chancellor's office (a representative from the Chancellor's office almost always attends some portion of English Council meeting) and English Council allows for alliances across campuses and strands of English Studies that might not come about without such a council (Personal Interview). Nathan Stein (pseudonym), an English Council member, noted that for him—and he believes for others Council members as well—English Council serves both as an “authoritative source” and an “effective resource” of information to take back to his campus and share with administrators. As an example, Stein noted that his dean would not listen to the idea of using an alternative placement method until Stein told the dean he had learned about it from another CSU colleague while at English Council (Personal Interview). These kinds of connections need not be unique to the CSU English Council; the CSU may be the largest university system in the country, but it is not the only university system facing these challenges. While English Council's history is specific to the CSU, the model of such a council need not be. English Studies faculty across the country could benefit from such a model. The goal of the remainder of Chapter 1 is to establish how basic writing—particularly those programs which the CSU came to describe as remedial—came under scrutiny.

A Plan to Eliminate Remediation

EO 665 has been one of the primary conflicts in which English Council has taken on a CSU Chancellor. On February 27, 1997, CSU Chancellor Barry Munitz sent a memorandum to every CSU president outlining the details of EO 665. This document superseded all previous directives pertaining to “remediation” and dictated the guidelines for admitting and matriculating students who are found to be in need of remedial coursework:

Campuses shall ensure that students who do not demonstrate requisite competence are required to enroll in appropriate remedial or developmental programs/activities during their first term of enrollment and each subsequent term until such time as they demonstrate competence. (Office of the Chancellor, “Executive Order 665”)

This part of the policy did not create controversy for most English Council members. Most faculty agreed with the Chancellor’s Office representatives that students who were found to be in need of remedial coursework often avoided taking those courses until late in their college careers. However, the next line of the executive order proved to be problematic to many CSU faculty and students: “Campuses are encouraged to establish and enforce limits on remedial activity and advise students who are not making adequate progress in developing foundational skills to consider enrolling in other educational institutions as appropriate” (Office of the Chancellor, “Executive Order 665”). A description of the policy posted on the Chancellor’s Office Web site states that, “[t]he CSU will successfully remediate, within one year, all students who are not fully prepared to begin college-level mathematics and English composition” (Committee of Educational Policy 17).

As of 2012, the EO 665 policy and the CSU Web site incorporate positive language to describe the goals of EO 665; for example, as noted above, students who do not make “adequate progress” are urged to “consider enrolling” elsewhere, and the declaration that “[t]he CSU will successfully remediate” students. Many individual campus Web sites, however, make it known that “students who are unable to pass all remedial course work within one year from the time of admission are subject to disenrollment from the university” (“Undergraduate Graduation Requirements”). The campuses are not choosing to interpret EO 665 more harshly than the authors of the policy intended; they are simply choosing to state it more bluntly. This is the section of the executive order that is controversial for many English Council members and CSU students. When students first learned that the policy would lead to disenrollment of students who had met admission requirements for the CSU, many of them attended hearings regarding the policy, and some students protested. According to a *Los Angeles Times* article, during a large protest of the policy at CSU Northridge, “. . . the leader of a group of about 50 Latinos who staged a vocal demonstration . . . call[ed] it ‘legalized segregation’” (Chandler 3).

When first introduced in the mid-1990s, EO 665 proposed that all remediation would end by 2001. In a letter written to the *Los Angeles Times*, James Highsmith, Chair of the CSU Systemwide Academic Senate and professor of business law at CSU Long Beach, argued that the earlier draft of EO 665 “would have imposed an additional entrance requirement for CSU students—one beyond that of the University of California and most other US colleges. CSU doors would have slammed shut to thousands with modest academic deficiencies.” Highsmith reminded readers that it was not enough for the CSU to “tackle standards and evaluation.” Lawmakers also must “increase the investment in effective education” by focusing not only on the CSU, but on improving teacher preparation and performance in K-12 education (4).

Highsmith worried that, as proposed, EO 665 would only increase the pressure on the high schools without offering them any additional support.

It was not only CSU faculty and students who raised concerns about EO 665. Public hearings were held across the state to present the policy to the public and provide a forum for response. According to a 1995 article from the *Sacramento Bee*, at the San Diego hearing the principal of Cordova High School regarded EO 665 as an indictment of California public schools, saying, “Politically, this is going to be another way to hammer the secondary schools...” Others in attendance at the hearing raised concerns about the policy. “Skeptics argue,” wrote reporter James Richardson, “that the policy could drive tens of thousands of students away from CSU, particularly those who are not white or native English speakers” (4). The responses at these hearings indicate that EO 665 was met with objection not only by CSU faculty, but by many in the public as well. In response to student and community protests, the Chancellor’s Office modified the goal to mandate that the proportion of students in need of remediation admitted to CSUs be at 10% or fewer of total admission by the fall of 2007 (“English, Math”).

Since EO 665 became official CSU policy in 1997, nearly 50% of CSU students have begun their first year under the threat of expulsion because they were not able to complete all of the remedial courses they are required to take within one year. Once students are admitted to the CSU, they are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT) which was designed by CSU faculty and first offered in 1977. While there have been changes made to the test and the procedures surrounding its administration, at its core, the EPT is essentially the same test today as it was in 1977 with the same failure rate over all of that time. (Chapter 2 discusses the design and administration of the test and Chapter 3 covers changes made to it in over its over thirty year history. A sample of the current test can be found in Appendix B.) A student’s EPT score

determines whether or not she or he will be required to take up to six units of remedial coursework. Chapter 2 However, the percentage of students who test into remedial writing is a systemwide average derived from all the students enrolled at the twenty-three CSU campuses. At rural, less ethnically and linguistically diverse campuses such as Humboldt and San Luis Obispo, the percentages of students who test into remedial writing are comparatively low. In contrast, the number of first-year students who test into remedial writing courses on diverse, urban campuses like Dominguez Hills and Los Angeles are comparatively high. This kind of variation and diversity means that EO 665 has more influence on some campuses than others.

Over the ten-year period from 1998 to 2007, a large majority of students in need of remediation upon admission were able to demonstrate proficiency (by passing all remedial courses) within twelve months (Fig. 1). A more immediate problem for CSU faculty is the number of students who actually fail to complete remedial coursework in one year. According to a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article about remediation in the CSU system, of the 4,000 students who were regularly admitted in 1998 in need of remediation at admission and still in need of remediation twelve months later in 1999, 1,440 were asked to leave the University and 1,300 were allowed to stay as “conditionally” admitted students. To further complicate matters, another 1,260 opted to leave the University without completing their remedial work. (These numbers are rounded to the nearest ten.) These 1,260 students’ reasons for leaving are not clear from the data, but it is possible that some of those students chose to leave before being informed that they would need to do so (Selingo A28).

The cumulative effects of EO 665 have been substantial. Over the ten years for which data have been available on EO 665, a total of 11.3% (25,530 students) of all students found to

be in need of remediation (226,388 students) did not complete their remedial math and writing courses within one year of admission and consequently were not permitted to re-enroll.

But this is just part of the picture. Another 3.1% (7,017 students) did not complete their remedial courses and fell into the category of “left campus unremediated.” Still another 4.8% (10,963 students) did not complete their remedial courses, but as a result of petitions and other advocacy on their behalf, were permitted to re-enroll and chose to do so. In total, over the ten years from 1998 to 2007, 19.1% (38,035 first-year students) were in need of remediation but did not complete it in their first-year, and over 75% of them, 14.4% (32,547 of the total population of first-year student), were asked, or chose for undocumented reasons, not to return to the CSU system for their second year (“CSU Fall 2007”). It is possible that some students left the University for reasons other than EO 665, but EO 665 and their inability to pass their remedial courses within one year may well have been a factor in their decision making process.

The Board of Trustees and Executive Order 665

A driving force behind EO 665 was a Board of Trustees member, Ralph R. Pesqueira. Pesqueira noted that EO 665 was designed to get the CSU “out of the remediation business.” When introducing the policy, Pesqueira boldly stated, “CSU has [told students], ‘enough is enough,’ you are not going to come to CSU unless you are prepared” (qtd. in Irving). When asked to talk about the reasons for the lack of preparation of incoming students, Pesqueira sounded rather more like a radio talk show host or pundit than a member of the CSU Board of Trustees, suggesting that California’s elementary and high schools were to blame. He remarked, “[t]he ghetto should not be CSU's problem. Why is K-12 playing dead? There's no discipline. If kids in Mexico fail to show up with their homework, they're out in the street for the rest of their lives” (qtd. in Irving). Pesqueira’s comments do appeal to some Californians and even some

within the CSU. In a *Los Angeles Times* letter to the editor, one reader asked several questions: “Why is the cash-strapped university spending \$10 million per year on remedial programs? Indeed, why are underprepared students admitted to the CSU campuses in the first place? Why not deny them admission until they are ready?” (Williams, A6). This reader contends that remedial coursework is a repeat of the work done in high school and it is not the job of the taxpayer to support students who didn’t learn this material the first time through (as will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3). While this view is not uncommon, it seems an extreme one to be held by the man appointed to chair the committee for the CSU Board of Trustees on reforming remedial education.

Pesqueira’s statements above led me to wonder who makes up the CSU Board of Trustees and what qualifications members making some of the most important educational policies in the state needed to have. Serving a similar function to Boards of Higher Education in other states, the Board of Trustees has broad authority over the CSU system to “adopt rules, regulations, and policies governing the [CSU]” and to maintain “authority over curricular development, use of property, development of facilities, and fiscal and human resources management” (Board of Trustees). Eric Gould, who is both a professor of English and an administrator at the University of Denver, points out, “The power to run higher education has always been shared by a mix of faculty, administrators, students, alumni, local and federal governments, accrediting agencies, and public representatives of governing boards” (114). However, the balance of power, Gould further observes, has recently shifted toward board members with business credentials. This trend certainly appears in the CSU system. Of the nineteen currently appointed Trustees, only three have experience working in higher education, while nine of them come from business backgrounds (“Board of Trustees”). An example of the

latter is Pesqueira, a millionaire taco restaurateur from the Mexican border town of San Diego with no higher education credentials.

Pesqueira's position toward students reflects an attitude that was prevalent among administrators and politicians in the 1990s. George Otte and Rebecca Mlynarczyk, in *Basic Writing*, agree with Bruce Horner's analysis of this period in *Representing the Other*. All three saw this time as one in which the focus shifted from concern about the material conditions of students to reducing the funding of programs they branded as ineffective. According to Otte and Mlynarczyk, in the 1990s, "Assuming an increasingly activist stance toward postsecondary 'remediation,' state legislatures across the country began passing laws limiting the availability of remedial programs" (167).

Educators and politicians such as Marc Bousquet and Ira Shor have argued that because those with business credentials are the largest contributors to governors' election campaigns, they will always be granted Board of Trustees positions. And often inherent in the argument to appoint trustees with business and banking backgrounds is the notion that these individuals bring with them a strong understanding of market conditions and how they influence universities. Yet, Bousquet argues in *How the University Works*, "The knowledge has taken hold everywhere that 'markets' are real but 'rights' are insubstantial, as if 'market driven' indicated imperatives beyond the human and political, of necessity itself, rather than the lovingly crafted and tirelessly maintained best case scenario for the quite specific minority interest of wealth" (93). At the writing of this dissertation, the poor state of the American economy is causing people to recognize that the market is far from a benign force. It may indeed be useful to have a few Trustees with banking and business experience in order to make informed financial and budget-related decisions. However, when Boards of Trustees are no longer made up of a variety of

stakeholders representing the interests of various communities such as students, faculty, or even the public, people like Bousquet feel it is unlikely these interests will be given the consideration they deserve.

The inclination to administer universities according to business models of education is one potential cause for the increased scrutiny given to remedial programs. In addition, some see the elimination of remedial courses as a means of excluding people of color from the academy. In the 1997 article, “Our Apartheid,” Ira Shor laments the role of basic writing within composition. In terms that could be applied to EO 665, Shor writes, “Conservative lawmakers hungry to lower taxes for the wealthy and for corporations appear eager to cut [basic writing] and public college budgets. Perhaps many in authority believe that allegedly illiterate [basic writing] students don’t belong in college in the first place” (91). Shor refers to basic writing as a “gate below the gate” of first year composition and calls remediation one more manifestation of segregation in the United States. Remedial programs segregate both students and faculty who those in power believe belong in college.

Not one to mince words, Shor uses a metaphor that would take on new significance post 2001; he refers to “[t]racking and testing” and the “Twin Towers” of what he calls the “Unequal City wherein BW resides.” He contends, “these towers rose from an American foundation of low-spending and hostile management directed to non-elite students” (97). Charging students to take basic writing courses for which they don’t receive credit and then threatening to disenroll students who are unable to complete them within an arbitrary time period such as the one the CSU has established (viz. one year), in the words of Shor “. . . maintains the inequality built over the last century or two, tilting resources to elite students and lush campuses, rewarding those who speak and look like those already in power. This arrangement is undemocratic and immoral”

(Shor, “Our Apartheid” 98). The powerful critiques lodged by Bousquet and Shor are justified when one considers Pesqueira’s advice that the CSU should “throw [regularly admitted CSU students] out into the streets.” This suggestion does not reflect a complete understanding of, or sensitivity to, the challenging work of crafting policies for educating California’s citizens.

What’s more, Pesqueira’s comments regarding preparation and admissions appear to put the current Board of Trustees at odds with the mission statement of the CSU and the admissions policies of *A Master Plan for Higher Education in California*. The mission statement takes on added significance when read in the context of *A Master Plan for Higher Education in California*, adopted in 1960. The *Master Plan* requires CSUs to accept the top 1/3 (or 33.3%) of the students who graduate from California high schools (California State Department of Education 4). Revised in 1985, the CSU mission statement declares that the CSU system “seeks out individuals with collegiate promise who face cultural, geographical, physical, educational, financial, or personal barriers to assist them in advancing to the highest educational levels they can reach” (“Mission Statement”). Notifying students that they will be disenrolled as a result of failing one or two particular classes does not appear to be in conformity with “seek[ing] out individuals with collegiate promise” whose “barriers” to education may include attending a poorly funded urban secondary school.

Responses to Executive Order 665: Inside and Outside the CSU

As EO 665 was implemented in the CSU system, it became important for English Studies faculty (Writing Program Administrators in particular) across the system to develop programs that would fit the needs of their campuses and student bodies. While some campuses were forced to resort to outsourcing composition courses to the California Community Colleges (CCs), others were able to both conform to the policy and retain their students. The Channel Islands, San

Francisco and San Bernardino campuses, for example, put progressive programs like “stretch” composition courses in place to help students become acclimated to college writing at a more manageable pace. Students take, over two semesters, what is usually a one semester course (Lalicker). In the best case scenarios these courses are not remedial and therefore are credit-bearing—often one semester of work is awarded composition credit and the other can be used as an elective. Students are strongly encouraged to remain in the same class at semester break and remain with the same instructor over the two semesters. According to Bob Mayberry, director of the composition program at Channel Islands,

Typically, stretch courses are not remedial and therefore do carry college credit.

The model provides novice writers with a supportive writing group and feedback for an entire year, which is why students are expected to stay in the same class with the same teacher for both semesters. The rapport developed between students and teacher is instrumental in the development of novice writers. (Mayberry)

The stretch model allows students and faculty to build this rapport and develop over time as writers.

Generally, when new programs are introduced to the University, the University receives the funding to implement them. For example, when remedial courses were first offered in the CSU in the 1970s, the University system was granted \$770,000 dollars by the state of California to implement the program (Forester, “College Freshmen”). However, while CSU campuses are able to apply for funding from grant sources like the US Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to pay for new programs (“Integrated Reading and Writing Program”), EO 665 only provided funds for programs that focus on preparation for college and that strengthen the ties between high schools and CSUs. For 1999-2000, the

California state budget allocated “\$9 million to CSU to work collaboratively with selected California high schools A total of \$5 million was appropriated to establish CSU-High School Faculty-to-Faculty Alliances and \$4 million for learning assistance programs” (Committee on Educational Policy 15).

The funding for the learning assistance programs mentioned here was not renewed in subsequent years. Instead, state funds were used to design a test to be taken by all junior-level high school students hoping to attend a CSU, as well as to devise an expository reading and writing course to be taken by high school students who did not perform well on the junior-level test. Therefore, CSU campuses working to alter their composition programs to comply with EO 665 are unable to rely on funding from the state. For example, the San Francisco and Fresno campuses have developed or redesigned their composition programs (with the stretch programs mentioned above and other programs which will be described in later chapters) in response to EO 665, but these programs receive no new funding.

Further complicating implementation is the fact that not all writing program administrators have been permitted by their campus administrators to redesign their composition programs in light of EO 665’s requirement to reduce remediation to 10%. CSU Maritime has greatly reduced the number of sections of remedial composition offered; in fact the only courses offered on campus are through Extended Education. This campus is not waiting until students have attempted their first year of composition to send them elsewhere. Instead, students admitted to these campuses who are placed into remedial composition by the EPT are given a list of area community colleges and institutions offering the remedial composition and math courses they need. These are permitted to take other coursework at Maritime while they are completing their remedial work (California Maritime Academy).

A 2007 study in California of the barriers to degree completion for community college students found that 76% of degree-seeking students attending community colleges did not complete an associate's degree or transfer to a four-year institution within six years of beginning their studies at a CC (Shulock and Moore 8). For comparison, note that for the years 2000 to 2006, 43.5% of degree-seeking students attending the CSU were unable to complete their degrees and did not continue beyond their sixth year (Consortium for Student Retention). It appears impossible that all of the community college students who had trouble completing their degrees were remedial students, and no study is available which identifies how many students who were disenrolled and then transferred to a CC actually returned (or will return) to the CSU system to complete their degrees; but as the Shulock and Moore's study suggests, those who begin their educations at community colleges are substantially less likely to earn a four-year degree in a timely manner than those students who both begin and end their college careers at a four-year institution.

Indeed, the CSU's own data suggest that the CC fallback does not work. In March of 2007, a report was posted in the Public Affairs section of the CSU Web site stating that students who are unable to complete their remedial coursework are encouraged to complete that coursework at a California Community College (CC) "with the promise of automatic reentry to the CSU campus when proficiency is established." But the report goes on to admit that

This policy, however, is not resulting in community college enrollment or in return to the CSU by these students, at a high rate, as anticipated. Between 2000 and 2003, only 10 to 13% returned to the CSU one year after disenrollment. In addition, the report shows a steady decline in community college enrollment by

such students. In 2000, 77% of these students enrolled in community college but in 2004 only 34% did. (“English, Math”)

The CSU Web site did not provide any reasons for the marked decrease in the percentage of disenrolled CSU students attending CC campuses, but one thing is clear from the statistics: dismissing CSU students—even with the promise that they will be allowed to come back once they are “ready”—is not proving to be an attractive solution for students. There are no data available at this time about the outcomes for the increasing number of students who do not subsequently enroll in a CC.⁴ English Council has been opposed to this kind of outsourcing since it first appeared in the 1980s. The primary reasons are that requiring students to complete remediation by taking non-CSU courses is disruptive for students and faculty at both CSU and CC campuses. Since these students have been admitted to the CSU it is the CSU’s responsibility to educate them (CSU English Council, “Resolution #6”). Shor claims that as “younger sibling in the comp (sic) story, [basic writing] has added an extra sorting-out gate in front of the comp gate, a curricula mechanism to secure unequal power relations in yet another age of instability, the protest years of the 1960s and after” (92). And he further argues “While BW enables colleges to divide incoming students into regular and remedial groups, economically speaking, BW helps slow down the students’ progress towards the college degree which could enable them to expect higher wages in the job market” (95).

⁴ Despite searches of the CSU Web site, consultation with five CSU staff members involved in academic persistence and retention, and phone calls made to the Chancellor’s Office, no data are available that sheds any light upon what has become of all those students who left the CSU because of EO 665 and did not enroll at a community college.

Not only is EO 665 a heavy burden for students to bear, but it also encumbers composition instructors. As a result of the policy, CSU faculty have a new concern each time a first-year student fails a composition class, as the non-passing grade (at some campuses a C- or lower) could lead to disenrollment. Composition has long been seen as a gate-keeping course for the University, and at least in this context, EO 665 makes the role of gate-keeper a central one for compositionists. Disenrolling students who are unable to pass remedial classes in their first year does not allow faculty to fulfill the primary roles of helping students develop their writing over time, and puts undue pressure on faculty to, as Linda Brodkey calls it, “guard the gates of the profession” (221). Gatekeeping changes classrooms from places where exploration and processes are valued to being only places where students’ competencies are constantly assessed, evaluated, and often found lacking. Some, like Jeff Smith, argue that since gate-keeping “brackets our efforts” as composition faculty “like bookends,” it is fruitless to resist them (301). Instead it is the job of faculty “work to make the gatekeeping rational and fair” instead of working to tear down the gates (319). Rebecca Howard does not embrace our role as gatekeepers as Smith seems to, but she does take a practical stance, noting:

The gatekeeper makes sure that the standards of the academy itself—and hence the academy itself—are preserved; teachers disposed toward gatekeeping are concerned that students be certified only when they have demonstrated the necessary qualifications. Teachers disposed toward facilitation, in contrast, make sure that students have every chance to meet those qualifications: facilitating teachers are student—rather than discipline—oriented, striving to provide students with the tools requisite to success (28-29).

It is the facilitation model that Howard champions here that many CSU faculty in favor of stretch composition and other credit-bearing alternatives are working to bring to their campuses.

While EO 665 is a policy that has excluded and continues to exclude thousands of students, at the same time it has provided the impetus for English Council to become unified and energized with a common goal. Because of its dictates about writing, one might assume that only the compositionists on English Council would be involved in resisting the EO 665 mandate. This has not been the case. The fight has gathered support from faculty from across English Studies in the CSU. Faculty across English Studies are committed to supporting their departmental colleagues and the efforts of English Council (English Council Archives).

Over the years, English Council has written resolutions to support various specializations within English Studies—not just composition. Resolutions have been written regarding English Education policies, the educations of graduate students, the preparation and qualifications of those who teach English Language Learners. There are many more resolutions that relate to composition than literature or the other areas of English Studies, but this is due in large part to the public's view of composition. As Linda Brodkey, Sharon Crowley, and Susan Miller have all argued, the public, pundits, and “reformers” have long taken an interest in dictating the curriculum of composition. This has not been the case, or at least not to the same extent as it is for composition, for literature and the other strands of English Studies. Why does composition dominate the agenda of English Council? English Council records tell us this is because composition—especially developmental composition—is so often under the scrutiny of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. Literature, linguistics, creative writing, English Education, and TESOL colleagues who are committed to participating in English Council recognize this and

therefore agree—albeit often after vigorous and meaningful debate—to support their colleagues in composition.

While CSU campuses must all follow executive orders coming from the chancellor, there is a long history of a certain level of autonomy of faculty from campus to campus. So, regardless of specialization, English Studies faculty support their colleagues' rights to design and implement pedagogically sound programs without interference from the Chancellor's Office. The battle over EO 665 has forced English Council members, regardless of specialization, to re-examine their individual and collective attitudes toward standardized testing and not-for-credit composition courses. And perhaps most importantly, it has caused us to consider the implications of the programs we design for the at-risk students enrolled in them.

According to Shor, “[basic writing], in sum, has functioned inside the larger saga of American society; it has been part of the undemocratic tracking system pervading American mass education, an added layer of linguistic control to help manage some disturbing economic and political conditions on campus and off” (93). These tendencies of stakeholders from outside the field of English Studies to endeavor to dictate how and to whom writing should be taught are evident within the CSU, as my study will reveal. Educational reformers dedicated to improving access to higher education to marginalized groups will not be surprised that EO 665 disproportionately cuts services to the poor and to people of color (as my study will demonstrate). In effect, EO 665 declares to many of those students who are least able to change their material circumstances that even though they were accepted to the CSU, they are unprepared for college and are thus unwelcome in the system.

Before going into the details of basic writing in the CSU and how English Council participated in this story, it is necessary to consider *how* I met the goals this project. As James

Berlin noted, “We do not read and write rhetorical histories to avoid repeating the past. We could not repeat the past if we tried. . . . We read and write histories to understand better our differences from the past and this difference provides the point of illumination for the present” (Berlin 12). It was in pursuit of understanding and illumination that I took on this project. The methods used to collect and analyze the data for this study shape the study itself.

Methodology

As this study is primarily a history of the CSU English Council, focusing on remediation within Composition, historical methods were applied. The writing of history within the field of composition is not new. James Berlin, Robert Connors and Sharon Crowley have each written important histories of writing instruction in the United States that incorporate historical methods. Each of these composition researchers describes their approaches toward the writing of history within composition. According to Berlin, “The historian of rhetoric must deny pretensions of objectivity, looking upon the production of histories as dialectical interaction between the set of conceptions brought to the materials of history and the materials themselves” (“Politics” 6). Similarly, Connors writes that composition historians are “are forced to make judgments and take sides in everything we write” (6). For her part, Crowley claims that “we write history because we still live in a professional world which is directly shaped by our intellectual and institutional histories” (7). Crowley works hard to avoid what she calls, “canon-formation” when writing history even though many readers are quick to “reify” these histories and award them “quasi-metaphysical status” (7). According to Nancy Peterson, both Crowley and Berlin pose alternatives to “canon-formation” by “encourag[ing] compositionists to see the field as constructed and to imagine more self-conscious ways to enact future constructions” of the field of composition within English Studies. For these historians of composition, then, this type of

writing is neither objective nor a means of creating a canon for the field. These histories are both constructed and continuously enacted by those of us teaching composition and directing composition programs.

In a much more limited way, this too is a goal for my study. While my study is on a far smaller scale than those conducted by Connors, Berlin, or Crowley, the history in the present study answers a call Peterson makes when she notes that large scale studies like the ones mentioned above “create openings for an increasing number of smaller identity narratives that reflect and describe more localized pedagogical and professional experiences . . .” (Peterson 124). Reading the studies by Crowley, Berlin, and Connors provided a context in which to place the history of English Council, but has also helped distinguish how local conditions and factors impact the stories of English Council and the CSU.

In her historical dissertation about the resolution process for the NCTE, Thatcher notes one of her goals for her dissertation is

[M]eeting the challenge of extracting information from the past and placing it in proper perspective to the present and the future. Understanding the past; being well informed; and having the ability to look back, see forward, and perceive foreshadowed events all enhance the decisions we make as teachers, facilitating our pedagogical choices. (26)

I hope my history of the CSU English Council will also reflect and describe the “local pedagogical and professional experiences” of teaching composition within the California State University system while connecting to the broader field of composition studies. The remainder of the chapter will consider how I selected, read and analyzed the materials included in the study.

Data Collection

This study relies on four kinds of data. The first data set consists of first-person data or what Connors calls “perceptions of the present day” (16). He writes that such knowledge is not only data, but “among the most important data for the historical researcher of composition studies” (16). He states that “Until we have some knowledge of the situation *a posteriori*, our ability to understand the prior situation is hopelessly lacking” (Connors 16). The other three kinds of data include: published data; data that I will term as a “specialized archive,” but which has not yet been added to a library archive; and interviews with English Council members. In this section, I will briefly describe the kinds of data and how they were selected for each of these sections.

Present Day Perceptions

Working for the University for the past twelve years has shaped my knowledge of the CSU’s past and present. In addition to teaching and working in writing centers in the CSU, I have attended English Council meeting for seven years. Furthermore, my experience of teaching in the CSU is not limited to one campus. The first campus at which I worked was a large, very ethnically diverse, urban campus at which over eighty percent of the students were considered to be in need of remedial coursework. My current campus is a small rural campus at which the majority of students are white and the number of students found to be in need of remediation is closer to the University average of fifty percent. These two campuses not only have very different demographics, but also approach the issues surrounding remediation very differently.

While such personal knowledge is an advantage to me as a researcher, it also carries with it a certain bias. As Berlin warns, “All histories are partial accounts, are both biased and incomplete. The good histories admit this and then tell their stories” (12). I have collected

meeting minutes, notes, memos, and e-mails, but I do not have the whole story. My knowledge of the CSU provides me with a great deal of insight about the University, but there are gaps in that history. By working in the CSU and attending English Council meetings for this length of time, I have established working relationships with faculty members across the CSU and have become aware of multiple stances toward remediation before beginning this study. Taking up Berlin's call for a dialectic rather than objective study to heart, I soon realized that even if I were tempted to do so, I could not approach this project with complete objectivity. With my knowledge of the stances taken by my colleagues and with the relationships I have with the participants of my study comes bias. As Shulamit Reinharz describes it, in *Feminist Research Methods*, self-disclosure allows for, "maximum engagement" with both my participants and my topic (34). As a feminist researcher, I am comfortable with the concept of working with a "double consciousness" that allows me, as Maria Meis, author of "Toward a Methodology for Feminist Research," puts it, to replace "value-free research with [the] partiality" of an "active participant" (122-123) in the work of the CSU English Council. This kind of "conscious partiality" (122), as Meis calls it, allows me to see that neither bias nor gaps in the data should ever be entirely overcome; I remain ever conscious of their influences and, as Crowley, Connors, and Berlin encourage me to do, go on to tell this story of the CSU English Council.

Publicly Available Data

Very little has been published about the CSU English Council specifically, but by linking the existing articles about English Council with other sources concerning the CSU on websites and from conference presentations, I have been able to amass a substantial bibliography on my topic. The discussion of sources in this section, then, is not merely a listing of the sources I chose

to include in my study; instead it is a brief overview of *all* of the publicly available, published sources that relate to my topic.

Only two journal articles have been published about English Council specifically; one article is by Vernon Hornback from 1973 and another is by Edward White from 2001, both of whom are former English Council presidents. These articles were of great help in chronicling the early meetings of the organization. English Council is actually cited as author of one publication in the CCCs and that is their local response to the “CCCC Statement on the Teaching of Writing in Higher Education.” These three documents account for the materials published about the CSU English Council. There are also a few sources of unpublished material relating to my topic. Sugie Goen’s (who has since changed her last name to Goen-Salter)⁵ doctoral dissertation on teaching basic writing at a public university in California has been of great use, as have several conference presentations. In particular, a talk given by Kim Costino and Mary Boland at the Writing Research across Borders conference in 2008 was very informative.

A few other books and articles specifically related to the teaching of writing in the CSU are available. While these books make no mention of English Council, they have been of great help in my study. There have been two books written on the history of the CSU in general—one, by Irving Hendrick, was written in 1980 and the other, by Donald Gerth, was published in 2010. These books provided much needed background about the institution. A book that shaped the formation of my dissertation topic is Tom Fox’s *Defending Access: a Critique of Standards in Higher Education*, in which he contrasts the concepts of access and standards. The book is

⁵ In the study the names Sugie Goen and Sugie Goen-Salter will appear throughout the study. These refer to the same person.

geared toward a broad academic audience and the setting is CSU Chico, Fox's home campus. Similarly, White has published ten books and over sixty articles that address testing and teaching writing. In many of these, White specifically mentions the struggles and successes he met in his work in the CSU.

A small number of journal articles and on-line sources are available that address the teaching of writing in the CSU and that have informed my study. Judith Rodby of Chico and Sugie-Goen Salter of San Francisco have both published articles (in the *CCCC* and *Journal of Basic Writing*) about the CSU's efforts to eliminate remediation—these will be discussed in Chapter 4. Over the past thirty years many newspaper articles have been written about remediation in the CSU, both in local and college newspapers and in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. I have also relied on many on-line sources such as the CSU website on which trustee meeting agendas and minutes are archived, and I have used the CSU analytical studies site for statistical data about remediation. I have also followed the CSU English Council listerv to keep up with the issues within the Council surrounding remediation in the CSU. The sources listed here account for the entirety of published resources pertaining directly to the teaching of writing by the CSU or English Council. Since the short articles about the genesis of English Council written by White and Hornback, this is the first study of English Council. At present it is the only history of an organization that addresses the idea of cross-system collaboration surrounding remediation.

A Specialized Archive

The archival data I used fell, almost literally, into my lap. In 2005, as I was deciding on a dissertation topic, I visited my former employer, professor, and member of my Master of Arts thesis committee, John Edlund. After I told him about my idea to write a history of English

Council in the hope of learning how the organization's history and past activism might inform the current conflict with the Chancellor surrounding EO 665, Edlund entrusted me with three boxes of documents collected by Gale Larson, longtime English Council president. A few months before his death, Larson sent the boxes to Edlund, president of the Council from 2003-2009, thinking that he might find them of use. In all, the collection contains five heavy-weight, four-inch binders and seven manila file folders all filled to capacity. This amounts to almost twenty years' worth of meeting minutes, notes, hotel arrangements, correspondence, and ephemera from 1980-1999. Larson seems to have saved every hand out, agenda, letter and set of meeting minutes that he received or sent during his nineteen years as an English Council member during some of which (1985-1988) he served as president. Larson's files show that English Council has been involved in the following areas of English Studies:

- English Education
- Coordination of services with area high schools, the CCs, and UCs
- the teaching of literature and linguistics
- graduate programs
- assessing the competence of all CSU students at the junior level by means of a graduation writing assessment
- composition and rhetoric
- remediation/basic writing
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

While there is no way for me to know if the archives to which I have access are complete, there is a great deal of information available.

The focus of the present investigation of English Council was narrowed to those issues that relate to the teaching of composition, primarily remedial programs because this is the area of composition that attracts the most attention from the Chancellor of the CSU and the Board of Trustees. There is no record of the Chancellor issuing an executive order dictating how or what literature should be taught in the CSU. Even though the scope of my study does not include issues surrounding the teaching of literature, it should be noted that no literature specialists took part in English Council's discussions of composition and how to address mandates from the Chancellor regarding the teaching of writing.

Once I had determined to narrow my study to English Council and writing remediation, I was able to read through Larson's materials more strategically. I coded the materials according to the following categories:

- Membership/constitution
- Resolutions/directives
- Definitions of terms
- Class size
- Issues relating to part time faculty
- Credit for composition
- Outsourcing composition
- Foreshadows of EO 665

In studying these materials from the early 1980s through the early 2000s it becomes clear that the place of remediation in the CSU has been contested since the beginning of the CSU system. However, addressing the issues of assessing the proficiency of incoming students and the

educating of at-risk students have been a central task of English Council. (Assessment is discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.)

Interviews

In addition to gathering published and unpublished data, I interviewed two different groups of participants: emeriti/emeritus faculty who participated in English Council in the 1970s and 1980s (the time period in which remedial education was introduced in the CSU), and current faculty who are involved in adapting programs in response to EO 665. Edward White, Professor Emeritus of CSU San Bernardino, who was president during its early years and who has published accounts of his experiences with English Council, agreed to meet with me at the CCCC in New York in 2007. White and I met for over two hours to discuss English Council and his insights added tremendously to my findings from the archives and from the limited, publications available about the early days of English Council. Interviews with six English Council members (one of whom has since retired) took place at one of the biannual English Council meetings, or over the telephone.

I employed feminist research techniques in this study. Before each interview I disclosed to each participant⁶ that I have attended English Council for several years and that I have been a faculty member at both CSU Los Angeles and Channel Islands. My goal, in order to engage in what feminist researcher Patti Lather refers to as “praxis-oriented inquiry,” was either to build upon existing relationships or develop relationships with those I interviewed in which we would all gain new awareness of the history and potential of our organization and “participate in

⁶ A substantial number of participants either recognized me from English Council meetings or know me from other CSU functions.

transformative social action” (qtd. in Miller & Treitel 20). All participants were offered the opportunity to have all information that could identify them (including the names of their campuses) withheld from the dissertation. I offered to use pseudonyms in order to “ensur[e] anonymity” for the participants who are still participating in English Council (Erlandson et al. 92). All senior/emeritus faculty members consented to disclose their identities, while the junior faculty chose to use pseudonyms.

I provided opportunities for participants to review the transcripts of the recorded interview data and make additions or deletions to that information. As Reinharz, in *Feminist Research Methods*, suggested it would (37), this review process enriched my study. Participants recalled additional information and answered questions I had not known to ask.

In preparation for each interview, I familiarized myself with the participant’s history with the CSU, the role(s), whenever possible, the participant has had with English Council, and any publications of the participant that were germane to the study. (See attached list in Appendix C.) My goal in developing these questions was to follow the guidelines set up by Erlandson et al.. They stress that,

It is important to prepare a list of carefully worded questions that reflect the basic research questions and problems of the study. However, the researcher must be careful not to be bound or overly structured by those questions and allow them to naturally emerge over the course of the interview (88).

This advice also served me well: every interview veered from my original questions, though these questions served as the essential foundation for the interviews. I projected that most interviews would be concluded within 30 to 60 minutes and, in most cases, they did.

Narrative Historiography

As I was not a member of the organization until eight years ago, I have told the majority of the story of English Council using the words of others. However, there were times when I was able to employ first person narrative, particularly for those English Council meetings at which I was a participant. While I have some concerns about this shift in style from third to first person, I am reminded of the words of Gian Pagnucci in *Living the Narrative Life*. He writes of narrative dissertations: “Books and journals are not the most important territory over which we should be battling. The real place where narrative is most devalued is in the writing of dissertations: introduction, literature, methodology, data analysis, findings” (14). Pagnucci’s call to incorporate narrative within the dissertation genre encouraged me to incorporate my own experiences and perceptions of current happenings within English Council in the sections of the dissertation where it would serve the project best.

Narrative is essential to historiography. According to Connors, “All [historical research] can do is tell us stories [. . .]” (“Dreams” 31). In the same way, Crowley notes that “Historians of rhetoric and composition are also more sensitive than many professional historians to the fact that histories are constructed narratives, that there exist no objective means of finding, interpreting, or assembling historical data which could guarantee the truth of the resulting narrative” (7). How better to tell a story in which I have played a small part than to share my experience in the first person? These occasions are not frequent, but if I attended a meeting or participated in a conversation, I have not been reticent in telling the story in my own voice. What I attempted to achieve by combining the various data I had at my disposal was to offer what Clifford Geertz terms “thick description” of English Council’s positions and actions regarding remediation. Geertz refers to thick description as “. . . a multiplicity of complex conceptual

structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which [one] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render” (Geertz 60). It has been through this process of first grasping and then rendering the story of English Council that this project has taken shape.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF REMEDIATION IN THE CSU

In the 1970s, a conflict arose between California State University (CSU) faculty and administration over the assessment and placement of students into composition courses. The dispute was sparked when then-Chancellor of the CSU Glenn Dumke tried to mandate that equivalency testing would almost entirely replace the teaching of composition in the CSU. That conflict shares many similarities to the current crisis over remedial writing brought on by Executive Order (EO) 665. As noted in the introduction, according to Berlin, the point of writing such a history is not to repeat the past, but to “understand better our differences from the past and this difference provides the point of illumination for the present” (Berlin 12). By studying the CSU English Council’s responses in the 1970s to conflicts regarding reducing enrollment, the current members of English Council may be better equipped to respond to the current challenge faced by the organization because of EO 665.

The opening section of this chapter provides the setting for the rest of the dissertation by presenting some specific information about the particular features of higher education in California, including the makeup of the college and university system. This description of higher education in California is important because, as observed by a joint task force from NCTE and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), “The principles of effective writing assessment . . . are highly contextual, and should be adapted or modified in accordance with local needs, issues, purposes, and concerns of local stakeholders” (NCTE-WPA). Describing the functions and mission of higher education in the state will enable the reader to better understand needs and circumstances specific to higher education in California. Over the next several pages, I describe California’s multiple local contexts, in particular, how the ethnic makeup of various

regions align with performance of placement tests. Then, I depict the early days of the California State University English Council, focusing on its formation and its disagreements in the 1970s with the Chancellor and Board of Trustees regarding the issues of equivalency testing and remedial writing.

How Higher Education in California Is Organized and Overseen

English Council comprises faculty from the CSU, which has a specific role in California higher education. This role distinguishes the CSU from other universities or colleges, and details of this distinction became important in the conflict over equivalency testing. Currently, the CSU system Web site describes the CSU as “. . . the largest university system in the country, with 409,000 students and 44,000 faculty and staff members on twenty-three campuses” (“Board of Trustees”). Although some level of autonomy exists on the individual campuses, they all are required to take direction from the Chancellor, the administrators whom (s)he appoints (Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and representatives from the following areas: Human Resources, General Counsel, Auditor, and Academic Affairs), and the Board of Trustees (“Board of Trustees”).

The twenty-five Trustee board members are charged with appointing the Chancellor, vice Chancellor, and the presidents of the twenty-three campuses. Their other duties include “developing broad administrative policy for the campuses, providing broad direction and coordination to campus curricular development,” and providing fiscal oversight for all property, facilities, and investments (“Board of Trustees”). The Board of Trustees includes “the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Chancellor” who all serve as voting ex officio Trustees (“Board of Trustees”). One Alumnae/Alumni Trustee is appointed by the CSU Alumni Council; one Faculty Trustee and two

Student Trustees serve two-year terms. (Their appointments are staggered a year apart and they are only permitted to vote in their second year, which results in one voting Student Trustee in any given year.) The sixteen other members of the Board “are selected by the Governor, approved by the State Senate and serve for eight years” (“Board of Trustees”). This brings the total to twenty-five members, of whom twenty-four vote.

The CSU system is large but is, in fact, one of three state-funded branches of higher education. The other two are the University of California System (UC) and the many community colleges (CC) distributed throughout the state. As of the 1950s, all three branches of the public higher education system (the CSU, UC, and CC systems) have been in competition for both students and state funding. According to California historian John Aubrey Douglass, in the late 1950s UC President Clark Kerr became increasingly concerned about the rapid growth of the CSU; new CSU campuses were being proposed and built all over the state at a rate that made President Kerr fear that the UC would soon lose its position as the largest and most powerful branch of the California higher education system (258). These CSU campuses were not only vying with the UC for funds, but they were eager to expand their areas of focus into what had traditionally been the UC’s domain; areas of particular concern included funding for faculty research and the permission to offer graduate education. Kerr argued that because the UC had always been the sole public research institution for California, it was in the best position to assure high quality graduate education, and, therefore, it should continue to do so exclusively. The presidents and local lawmakers of the San Jose and San Diego CSU campuses saw things differently and argued that being unable to grant doctoral degrees and conduct research in their regions was harming the communities that these campuses were meant to serve. Malcolm Love of San Diego State argued that in order for California to provide teachers for area schools and for

the CSU faculty to prepare those teachers, the campus needed to offer a doctoral program in education (251). Since the CSU was recruiting faculty from top tier institutions, Love argued it was essential that these individuals be able to continue the work they had begun, and they argued, “faculty involved in research make better teachers” (254).

The conflict between the CSU and UC began to attract the attention of the state legislature and Governor Pat Brown who decided to lay out a plan for the future of higher education in the state. In 1959 over twenty bills, multiple resolutions, and even two constitutional amendments all regarding higher education came before the legislature. The committee that wrote the legislation was made up of a “survey team” chaired by Bakersfield Assemblywoman Dorothy Donahoe and consisted of “two representatives each from the three providers of higher education in California,” and two people were also chosen to represent the interests of the member colleges of the Association of Independent California Colleges (Commission for Review 5). The team’s final report includes only those recommendations upon which the committee could come to consensus—no dissenting opinions or views are offered in the report (Commission for Review 5). What came to be named the Donahoe Act called for various stakeholders from all areas of education in California, both public and private, to devise the structure higher education would take in California. According to Donald Gerth, author of *The People’s University*, all of these stakeholders were able to come together to develop the *Master Plan* in 1960 because, “Leaders in higher education knew that change must come, from within higher education or without” (74) and therefore they chose to become involved in the processes of molding that change. In 1960, the survey team introduced *A Master Plan for Higher Education in California*, which was accepted later that year by the California legislature.

Although it has been revised over the years, this important document remains in effect (Hendrick 63).

While the significance of the *Master Plan* will be discussed at length in Chapter 6, it is worth noting some of the plan's impact here. As noted in an article from the office of the UC President, "The *Master Plan* created, for the first time anywhere, a system that combined exceptional quality with broad access for students" ("The California Master Plan for Higher Education in Perspective"). This impact is evidenced in comments made by an international team from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development which came to the United States in 1988 to study higher education in this country. They called the *California Master Plan for Higher Education* "a model for other nations" in the way it encourages both "constructive competition," "cooperation" and "creativity among the institutions ("Master Plan for Higher Education in Perspective"). Finally, as recently as 2011, a report called *A Master Plan for the Midwest* specifically names the California Master Plan as its inspiration, but goes a step further in the effort to consider not only a plan for the future of higher education but a "strategic process" (4) that considers the "challenges and opportunities confronting the American Midwest" with the same kind of "profound vision and commitment" shown in the *California Master Plan* (19-20). Thus, the *Master Plan* has not only shaped higher education in California, but it also has a wider significance.

A key feature of the *Master Plan* is that it defines admission standards for the UCs, CSUs, and the CCs. According to these standards, UCs accept the top 1/8 (or 12.5%) of high school graduates. The CSUs accept the top 1/3 (or 33.3%) of students who graduate from California high schools and, most comprehensively, the CCs are required to accept all interested applicants (California State Department of Education 4).

The plan not only stipulates which students the institutions can accept; it also dictates the missions of the institutions. Irving Hendrick, in *California Education: A Brief History*, describes the differing missions of the three branches of higher education (the UCs, CSUs and the CCs). The UCs are charged with functioning as research institutions. In addition to directing all state-assisted law and medical programs in California, the UC system also maintains “authority to award the doctoral degree in all fields” (63). This authority is not conferred upon the other two branches of higher education operating under the auspices of the state, with the exception of the very few joint doctoral programs the CSU system offers—usually in partnership with the UC.⁷

The *Master Plan* further defined the courses of study to be offered at the UC, CSU, and CC. The plan directs the CCs to “offer liberal arts instruction not beyond the fourteenth grade as well as vocational and technical programs leading to employment” (*Master Plan* 64), effectively meaning that the role of the CCs is to offer Associate of Arts degrees “as preparation for [transfer to] the UC and CSU” in addition to “vocational and technical” programs (Douglass 309). The CSUs, then, were charged with “provid[ing] undergraduate and graduate education in all fields and at all levels not left exclusively to the University” (*Master Plan* 63). The CSUs were therefore given “primary responsibility for teacher credential, minor research, and public service functions” (Douglass 309).

In addition to setting admissions standards and program guidelines, the *Master Plan* designates what types of remedial services the institutions are permitted to offer their students.

⁷ These programs, in the areas of Education and Engineering, are permitted because during the Space Race with the Soviets, the CSUs were able to convince the developers of the *Master Plan* that there was a great demand for “high-level workers” (Douglass, 251).

The *Master Plan* states: “If the state colleges and the University have real differentiation of functions between them. . . . Both should be exacting (in contrast to public higher educational institutions in most other states) because the junior colleges relieve them of the burden of doing remedial work” (66). Consequently, the CC is the only system in California public higher education with a clear mandate to provide remedial instruction to students. As stated in the *Master Plan*, “Among the many useful services of the junior colleges [as the CCs were then called] is that of providing a proving ground for those who have not made records in high school good enough to justify direct entry into senior college” (71). Significantly, the *Master Plan* does mandate that students’ writing abilities be tested before being accepted into the CSUs or UCs.

The UCs have managed to skirt the remediation requirements of the Master Plan in part by administering writing placement exams to students *after* they are accepted into the system. In 1924 a writing placement test called the “Subject A Exam” became a prerequisite for all speech and English classes in the UC system (Jones 33). Although the Subject A has been revised several times over the years and its name was changed to the Analytical Writing Placement Exam, it is still in effect. Students who receive low scores on the examination are required to complete a remedial credit-bearing course in composition early in their baccalaureate careers (“Analytical Writing Placement Exam”).⁸ According to White, since the Subject A Exam

⁸ As of 1931 the Subject A consisted of an essay and an 80-item objective section; “36 discrete-point grammar items, a 9-item spelling section, 10 sentence-structure items, a 5-item punctuations subtest, a 10-item capitalization subtest, and a 10-sentence dictation subtest” (Stanley 60). There is not a great deal of information available as to how the exam has been scored. According to Jones, in the 1930’s the exams were “graded *passed* or *failed* by the Subject A staff” but few details are available as to how the staff went about their “correcting” of the

predates the *Master Plan*, it is grandfathered in with respect to the remediation requirements (“Re: Kathleen’s”). However, the history of testing incoming UC students has been almost as troubled as it has been for the CSUs. According to Jane Stanley of UC Berkeley, who writes of remediation in the UC system in *The Rhetoric of Remediation*, “Despite the number of years Subject A has been at the University, it has never managed to get tenure. Every few years, Subject A, and more importantly, the students associated with it, are the focus of complaints and charges of inadequacy” (98). Thus, offering remedial writing to students admitted into both the CSU and UC systems is a problematic endeavor for students, faculty, and administrations. Only the CCs are mandated to offer such courses.

Ethnicity and Diversity in California

The distinct ethnic composition of the CSU student population further complicates the debate over which institutions should offer remedial courses. California is not only the most populous state in the nation, but according to the 2000 census, it is also one of the most ethnically diverse (Bean et al. 310). This diversity appears in the CSU system. Only five of the twenty-three campuses have a majority of white students. Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills are two of the most diverse campuses, with fewer than 20% of the student body identifying

exams (33). Jane Stanley reports that before the objective section was added in 1930 the Subject A was scored by a single individual, in 1931 it was found that such scoring was not reliable, therefore an additional scorer was added (*Remediation and the Subject A* 61). According to Jones, the exams were “graded passed or *failed* by the Subject A staff” but few details are available as to how the staff went about their “correcting” of the exams (emphasis in original, 33).

themselves as white. On these campuses, more than 30% of the students identify themselves as “Mexican or Latino” (“Statistical Reports”). Both the Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills campuses also have large percentages of African American, Asian, and Filipino students (“Statistical Reports”).

However, that level of ethnic diversity is not uniform across the CSU system. In 2007, on smaller or more rural campuses such as San Luis Obispo and Sonoma, more than 60% of the students self-identified as white. In the same year, San Luis Obispo and Sonoma campuses had fewer than 10% each of Asian American and Mexican American or Latino students and fewer than 3% African American students (“Statistical Reports”). These numbers have remained quite consistent over the past decade, and reflect the variation in ethnic makeup among the CSU campuses.

A pattern exists across the CSU system, illustrated by the Los Angeles, Dominguez Hills, San Luis Obispo, and Sonoma campuses: greater ethnic and cultural diversity corresponds to greater variety in literacies (“Fall 2007”). Unfortunately, there is a direct line between ethnic and linguistic diversity and placement into remedial courses. For example, at rural, less ethnically and linguistically diverse campuses such as Sonoma and San Luis Obispo, the percentage of students who test into remedial writing is comparatively low. According to the most current data available, as of the fall of 2007, 49% of students at Sonoma and 14% of students at San Luis Obispo tested into remedial writing. In contrast, the percentage of first-year students who tested into remedial writing courses on two diverse, urban campuses, Dominguez Hills and Los Angeles, are comparatively high, and reached 92% and 86% respectively in 2007 (“Fall 2007”). In 2007, 65% of African American students, 58% of Mexican/Latino students, and 56% of Asian students admitted to the CSU system tested into remedial English, while only 26% of white/non-

Latino students required such courses (“Fall 2007”). It is difficult not to link these patterns of remediation to an issue of race and class, as Trustee Pesqueira so famously noted, [t]he ghetto should not be CSU's problem” and that the CSU needs to “get out of the remediation business.” Which students are found to be in need of remediation? Those at campuses like Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills, the campus situated in a disadvantaged area of Los Angeles County,⁹ have been referred to many times as the ghetto.

And as composition researchers Mina Shaughnessy and Keith Gilyard have pointed out, with varying literacies come varying educational needs that often go unmet. For example, Shaughnessy depicts her open admissions students of 1960s New York as “strangers in academia” who are “unacquainted with the rules and rituals of college life, unprepared for the sorts of tasks their teachers were about to assign them” (3). She goes on to explain that “Many had spoken other languages or dialects at home and never successfully reconciled the worlds of home and school, a fact which by now had worked its way deep into their feelings about school and about themselves as students” (3). And Gilyard argues, “Masses and masses of minority students have not been able to use the public school system as a ladder of upward mobility. It is clear that whatever benefits the school can claim to have offered can be matched, if not overshadowed, by a legacy of default” (63). With policies like EO 665 in place, remedial programs designed to help students make the transition to college an easier one have instead become lightning rods targeting for expulsion those students most at risk.

The problem of over-representation of ethnic minorities in remedial courses is not unique to the CSU. In a 2011 study conducted as a part of the Civil Rights Project, CSU Los Angeles

⁹ CSU Dominguez Hills was built as a special project of California governor Pat Brown in part as response to the Watts Riots of 1965 (Gerth 157).

employees Kimberly King, Suzanne McEvoy and their former LA colleague Steve Teixeira cite a longitudinal study of US ninth graders released in 2000 and conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, “61% of African American students and 35% of Whites were in remedial courses.” In other words, “African American students have a 16% greater probability of participating in remediation” (17 cited in King, McEvoy, and Teixeira). When studying the effects of EO 665 on campus enrollment these authors also found that, “As the percentage of African Americans on a campus increases, so does the percentage of remedial students disenrolled within their first year” (30). Conversely, they found that “the larger the percentage of White students on a campus, the lower the disenrollment rate” (30).

The most recent data available demonstrate that universities with higher ethnic diversity also have larger segments of their student bodies that are in danger of losing their places in the University within one year if they cannot complete their remedial coursework—even though they met the admissions standards of the University. In 2007 at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, only 14% of the admitted students were required to do remedial coursework, and after one year, only 3% of the students were disenrolled due to their failure to complete their remedial coursework. At CSU Dominguez Hills, however, 91% of the first-year students were required to take remedial courses, and 26% of the first-year students did not complete the work and were therefore disenrolled (“CSU Fall 2008”). When regarded in this light, it is not difficult to see EO 665 as a means of codifying that legacy of default as *de facto* policy.

Irving Hendrick, author of *California Education: a Brief History*, offers insights on the achievements and limitations of education in California that are particularly applicable to the CSU. Hendrick argues that, “Perhaps the major achievement of public education during its first century was the difference it made in the lives of white working-class children, not only in their

economic success, but also in their expanded knowledge and cultural awareness” (84). Hendrick does not end with this sanguine picture, however. “For the decades ahead,” he writes, “the challenge will be to extend to the poor and nonwhite the social and economic benefits of schooling, while at the same time continuing to serve those classes that historically have been the principal beneficiaries of the system” (84). This challenge, of which Hendrick wrote in 1980, has yet to be met, possibly because the *Master Plan* did not address the varying literacies that the state would come to have. As my study will make clear, the development of the *Master Plan* in 1960 and Executive Order 665 in 1995 both effectively restricted the benefits of higher education to white working class students while putting them out of reach to students of color—who have become a large percentage of students now enrolled in the Cal State system.

Throughout the thirty years preceding the speech cited in the Introduction—in which Trustee Pesqueira declared that the CSU was “going out of the remediation business”—English Studies faculty disagreed with various Chancellors and Boards of Trustees over what kinds of services should be offered to students who meet admissions standards for the CSU system but who test into remedial courses. Among the earliest of these disagreements of the 1970s, described at length later in this chapter was a conflict over a proposed policy allowing students to receive credit for a year’s worth of composition coursework by taking a thirty-minute exam. In addition to concerns about the validity of the results of such a test generally, many members were upset that the test was not designed by composition specialists, but by people from outside the field (White, Personal Interview).

English Council’s First Crisis

This section documents the events and actions of the late 1960s and early 1970s that ensued when English Council learned of a plan by the Chancellor of the CSU to allow massive

numbers of students to test out of composition—a potential side effect of which might be the dismantling of composition teaching. By 1968, Chancellor Glenn Dumke was concerned that the Cal State System would not be equipped to serve the large and increasing number of students applying to the system that had grown to nineteen campuses (Hornback 2). The Chancellor was likely made aware of this concern by the *Master Plan* which stated, “By 1975, according to latest projections, more than one million students, 661,350 of them attending full time [12 or more units], will enroll in California institutions of higher education” (45-46). The *Master Plan* attributes growth in California to immigration: “This influx of population is expected to show net gains of 300,000 or more annually in the years ahead” (46). In addition to increasing the number of campuses, the *Master Plan* proposed that the Cal State and UC systems should reduce the number of lower division students attending the universities, “. . . so that by 1975 it will be . . . in the neighborhood of 41 per cent” (60). This was to be a systemwide goal rather than an objective for either the UC or the CSU system in particular, and was meant to ensure that neither would ignore the CCs and their mandate to serve lower division students.

In 1971, responding to these predictions of growth and the mandate to reduce the number of lower division students attending California State Colleges, Chancellor Dumke gave a speech entitled “New Directions in Higher Education.” Dumke used the speech to express his concern about serving the increasing number of students enrolling in the Cal State system and announced his desire to address the problem by allowing students to receive college credit for certain courses by taking examinations. The reasoning behind this policy was that it would allow students to graduate more quickly and allow campuses to conform to the guidelines set out in the *Master Plan*. White recalled that the speech was not given much consideration by the news media or by Cal State administrators and faculty when it was given. Later that year, in light of

Chancellor Dumke's plans for allowing students to test out of many first year courses, the significance of the speech became clear to English Council (Personal Interview).

According to both White and Hornback, later, in 1971, Chancellor Dumke convinced the campus presidents of Cal State San Francisco and Cal State Bakersfield to make the credit-by-exam program in humanities, social science, natural science, math, and English a reality. These were short, multiple-choice tests "designed so that students could take all five in under three hours" (White, "Opening" 312). The CLEP English examination, offered in partnership with the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of a private company called Educational Testing Service (ETS), had 120 multiple-choice questions that focused on knowledge of grammatical and literary terms (312). In addition, the test required students to describe the diction used in a given paragraph and to rephrase and repunctuate sentences (Apstein 351). The composition exam was one of several that CLEP was offering to the CSU and students who passed all of these examinations were allowed to bypass freshman year altogether.

White and other members of English Council saw the CLEP program as a threat to English Studies programs. Although other areas of study were included in the new credit-by-exam policy, White and others viewed CLEP as an attack on a significant and important part of a university education: "The focus of the attack was on the first-year composition (FYC) class, the one that advisers were accustomed to telling students to 'get out of the way' as soon as possible." White viewed CLEP as resulting from, "[t]hat vision of composition as instrumental and preparatory, remedial in every sense of the word, [which] was as offensive then as it is now, at least to those of us who see the intellectual substance of the first-year course as important, even crucial for student learning" (308). According to White, English Council felt it needed to ensure that what was happening in San Francisco and Bakersfield would not spread from those

campuses to the other seventeen state colleges, as the Chancellor clearly intended to happen (“Re: Kathleen’s”).

Fortunately, English Council had an important ally within the Chancellor’s inner circle. Gerhardt Friedrich, former Council president and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, alerted the members of English Council to Chancellor Dumke’s plan to severely limit first-year writing instruction in the California State College system. White pointed out in his “Opening” piece that during Friedrich’s lifetime, very few people knew about how he met with English Council members and informed them of the Chancellor’s plans. White feels strongly that had the Chancellor learned of Friedrich’s communications with English Council during this contentious time, Friedrich would have lost his job. In fact, it was not until ten years after Friedrich’s death that White felt comfortable writing about him and the important role he had played.

When Friedrich first learned about the plans to implement the new writing tests, he made it his business to learn as much as possible about them. He obtained all five of the examinations and carefully studied them. He then asked a great number of questions about the source of the examinations, the qualifications of the designers of the tests, and the role of faculty on the campuses in assuring that these were appropriate tests for the California State College system. He also asked the Chancellor if it would be possible for the CLEP program to be limited to the San Francisco and Bakersfield campuses until it was certain that the exams met the California State Colleges’ needs. All of these questions and suggestions did little to ingratiate Friedrich to Chancellor Dumke, and “after a brief meeting with the Chancellor, at which time he pressed his concerns more directly, [Friedrich] was excluded from further meetings on the plan, even though he was academic vice president for the system” (312). It was at this point that Friedrich chose to inform English Council of the Chancellor’s plans.

Instead of meeting with the entire Council to discuss the crisis, Friedrich met with the Executive Board members Edward White of San Bernardino, Carolyn Shrodes of San Francisco, and Harry Firestone of Northridge, informed them of the plan, and encouraged them to take action.¹⁰ White remembered Friedrich “propos[ing] that we [English Council] were the only ones who could reassert faculty prerogatives in the face of the administrative onslaught” (313). White said English Council’s first formal resolution, which had been drafted by a number of English Council members, was presented before the whole group in the fall of 1971. One of the most important components of the resolution, White recalled, was that it included concessions to Chancellor Dumke and to his concern about rising enrollment. English Council made it clear that they agreed on the need for some mechanism allowing well-prepared students to test out of the first-year writing course. At Friedrich’s urging, the Council chose to emphasize in its resolution the importance of local control over the CLEP examinations. As White put it, “We were the ones who should be assessing that knowledge and awarding college credit, not some outside agency” (313). The writing of the resolution was painstaking work, and White remembered that there was

¹⁰ The organizational structure of English Council is provided by the Executive Committee, which is made up of the President, Vice President, Composition Coordinator, Secretary, past President and Treasurer of the organization. While this group occasionally meets outside the twice-yearly English Council meetings, they have their business meeting either before English Council meeting begins or after it ends. In addition to the duties reflected in their titles, this group plans meeting agendas and invites speakers to panels. The task often falls to this committee to develop and to submit resolutions that the larger group approved during the council meeting and respond to the recipients of resolutions—usually Chancellor’s Office representatives, but occasionally others as well.

much debate about whether they were “shocked” or “outraged” over being excluded from the decision to use the test to give course credit. But this process of arguing over wording built camaraderie among English Council members and, once the resolution was submitted, all who worked on it were invested in the outcome.

Before submitting the resolution to Chancellor Dumke, some English Council members decided to make the most of connections they had with members of the news media across the state to convince the public of the validity of their position and rally support for it. They gave interviews to their contacts at newspapers. William Trombley, Education reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote a series of articles on the issue—some of which appeared on the front page of the paper. In one such article, Trombley used the term “instant sophomores” to describe those students who passed the series of CLEP tests. Trombley went on to quote an unnamed critic who asked: “[W]hat is an instant sophomore? . . . Do you just add water and stir?” (Trombley, “Tests” AB). The term lent flair to the discussion of CLEP exams, and it illustrated to the public that if students were to receive credit on these exams, they would be fulfilling a year’s worth of requirements in a matter of hours. Moreover, the term “instant sophomores” seems to have resonated with the press and the public, because it appears in several articles related to the issue.

In the “Tests” piece, Trombley quotes Hornback, chairperson of the English department at Cal State Sacramento, as calling the CLEP examinations, “. . . another series of efforts to cut costs by programs that on the surface appear to be more democratic but really are not fair to students” (AB). And Carolyn Shrodes of San Francisco told the press that the test “doesn’t correspond in concept, scope, or depth with course work. No objective test can really measure writing skill” (Trombley, “Tests” AB). English Council used these interviews with the press not only to express their dissatisfaction with the tests, but also to inform the public about what kinds

of testing they did value. It was not that English Council was opposed to testing per se; they just wanted testing that would be directly linked to the work that students would be doing in Cal State composition courses.

Publicly, Chancellor Dumke responded to these news stories by characterizing his position as being correct and not altogether dissimilar from that of the faculty. In an interview in October of 1972, Chancellor Dumke spoke confidently about the early findings on the CLEP pass rates. These results revealed, reported Dumke, ““that certain courses typically required of all students may, instead, be applicable to only some students”” (qtd. in Greenwood), depicting the CLEP as a useful tool. In an earlier *Los Angeles Times* article from September of 1972, Donald Garrity, the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Cal State San Francisco, had remarked that he ““was a little discouraged by some of the reaction”” from faculty regarding the tests. Garrity admitted the CLEP tests may be flawed, but he intimated that the faculty’s response was disproportionate, stating, ““a lot of it was a kind of protectionist reaction on the part of the faculty”” (qtd. in Greenwood). In another Trombley article from October of 1972, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs William Langsdorf stressed that the use of the CLEP tests was ““a trial, an experiment, a pilot program”” (Trombley, “College” AB). It is not surprising that Langsdorf made the most of the fact that the program was a pilot, given the backlash against it. Yet, Langsdorf’s comment does not reveal the amount of effort it took Gerhard Friedrich to convince the Chancellor and the Board to limit the program to a campus or two before incorporating it systemwide.

Friedrich informed White that all of this public pressure upset the Chancellor and caused him to realize the necessity of coming to a compromise with English Council (White “Opening”). After a period of negotiation, the Chancellor and English Council agreed to form a

committee chosen from the ranks of English Council to devise a test that they believed to be appropriate to serve the students of the Cal State system. One by one, all the other agencies agreed to the compromise. As White put it, “The Cal State system faculty senate, the central Chancellor’s Office, the legislature, the governor, and the state funding agencies all in turn were persuaded to follow the lead of the English faculties, a situation as astonishing as it was unprecedented” (White, “Opening” 309). This presented English Council with the first opportunity to design an equivalency test instead of being instructed to rely on one chosen by a testing company or board members who knew nothing what the contents of such a test should be.

English Council’s concerns over the big business of testing were timely in the 1970s and continue to be so today. However, a significant difference between the culture of testing in the 1970s and the current era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), high school exit exams, and the standardized testing going on at the college-level is that these days tests are more likely to be used for exclusionary “sticks” than as the “carrot” of promotion offered in the form of the CLEP. As will be discussed at some length in Chapter 5, the culture of standardized testing that George Bush and Margaret Spellings introduced to K-12 education is likely to take root at the college level as well. In Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa’s 2011 book, *Academically Adrift*, the authors encourage “externally mandated accountability systems” such as NCLB for higher education (137). Further, in an article from *Inside Higher Ed* entitled, “No College Left Behind?,” author Doug Lederman discusses the pressure on colleges to engage in large-scale assessment of students. Lederman notes that “slew of institutionally developed exams” are being developed to measure student learning. He cites a Professor Katz of Princeton University as saying, “There will always be legislators and legislatures that would like more bang for the buck, bigger results for less money,” and they will require some sort of “proof” that students are

leaving college ready to join the workforce (quoted in Lederman). This comment is reminiscent of the pressures White and the committee faced as they were designing the EEE.

At the same time as the pressures are coming from business and the government, Anthony Carnevale and Jeff Strohl, in a 2010 article, cite a current study of both ACT and the SAT (an ETS product) resolved that neither test can predict students' aptitude for college—so much that SAT is no longer to be taken as an acronym for “student aptitude test,” but is now simply the name of the test (101). The authors explain that what the tests actually measure is “‘G,’ which in turn correlates most equally with socioeconomic status and the ability to achieve a freshman grade point of 2.5 out of a possible 4.0.” They go on to lament that, “At best, ‘G’ is self-referential; we do not know the extent to which it measures some particular slice of innate ability, or whether it is simply a measure of socioeconomic status (101).” The idea that the SAT is unable to assess aptitude for college performance is damning news indeed. And yet those students (and their parents) who can afford to do so spend thousands of dollars preparing for these tests and universities perpetuate such spending by requiring such tests.

The middle of a story about the early 1970s may seem like an odd place to discuss the current culture of testing in higher education. Yet, it is vital to keep in mind that by developing their equivalency test, English Council was taking a path that implicates current members in the testing industry into 2012.

The Triple “E”

Designing the Test

In this section I will detail the period from 1972-1975 and the process of designing the resulting exam, called the EEE. The exam was one of the first in the country to be designed by faculty according to the “needs, issues, purposes, and concerns of local stakeholders”

(NCTE/WPA) and not those of a testing company. Also, the discussions within English Council about the test and related issues provide insight into how the faculty came to articulate and develop what would later be called “learning outcomes” for composition.

With compromise came a new opportunity for English Council. Designing the English Equivalency Exam (EEE)—which came to be known as the “Triple E”—gave the group the chance to work collectively toward a specific, common cause, and to develop their knowledge of writing assessment. As White recalled in a March 2007 interview:

. . . that whole conflict led to the energizing of English Council; by then we were not only English department chairs, but we had also grown to English department chairs plus composition coordinators and then later on we added graduate coordinators Some campuses sent three people, most in fact did. So we had those three different groups meeting sometimes separately, but mostly together trying to solve some of the problems that we faced as Cal State faculty. (Personal Interview)

So, the EEE had to meet the needs and expectations these three groups of faculty (department chairs and graduate coordinators —both of whom were literature specialists—and composition coordinators) had for their students. He noted that in those days very few compositionists knew what kinds of assessment would be most appropriate for the students, so the committee had much work to do in order to design the exam (Personal Interview). In fact, White speculated that the reason he was chosen to chair the test-development committee was that, unlike his peers whose research interests were confined largely to literature, White had published a book pertaining to the teaching of writing, *The Writer’s Control of Tone*. However, neither White nor any of his colleagues on the test-development committee had any assessment experience at that time.

In 1972 there was little relevant writing assessment research published. “What struck me,” recalled White, “was that nobody in the field of English knew anything about testing and I couldn’t really believe it” (Personal Interview). White heard from colleagues that assessment research was being conducted, but some third party was always doing it. And no matter how many suggestions or tips he pursued, he always found himself at a dead end, with no such research completed or, sometimes, even underway:

I asked everybody from the secretary of the NCTE to people involved with the MLA and people involved in the College English Association and I tried to decide who in our field knew anything about the testing in writing and nobody claimed to know anything, but several people claimed to know someone who did know something. So I would track down names, “so-and-so at the University of Virginia” and I’d call up so-and-so and they would say, “Where did you hear that? I don’t know anything about that stuff.” It was just amazing. (Personal Interview)

Any related information available was either for a different age group (mostly elementary) or was far too “mechanical and surface oriented” (White, Personal Interview). This was clearly not the kind of test White and the committee wanted.

From White’s perspective, “Public and meaningful assessment beyond the classroom inevitably defines the meaning and importance of what we do in the classroom; as always, a test is not merely a test, but also a statement of what is valued” (“Opening” 309). The test-development committee’s first step in determining the kind of test that would be appropriate for Cal State students was to poll the English Studies faculty of each of the nineteen Cal State campuses in the summer of 1972 in order to learn what goals they shared regarding composition

courses. A document outlining these goals was drafted by English Council members and endorsed by all nineteen Cal State English departments. Then the test-development committee presented and received approval for the document from the systemwide academic senate as well.

With this goals statement in hand, the committee, led by White, began designing the test. They decided on a two-part examination that would reflect the shared goals they had outlined. As Carolyn Shrodes, Chair of English at Cal State San Francisco, suggested in a 1972 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, English Council wanted a test that was aligned with the goals of composition instruction in the CSU (Trombley, “Tests”). The CLEP and the EEE would share certain elements. In the list of goals for first-year writing that English Council had developed before designing the EEE, the faculty emphasized the need for students to understand and interpret literature. So, like the College Level English Program (CLEP) test, the English Equivalency Exam (EEE) would include a section that focused on literary knowledge; but unlike the CLEP, which featured a multiple-choice test focused on the ability to memorize literary terms, the EEE would have a written exam that tested a student’s understanding of literary concepts. According to White, the exam would require students to “. . . write two forty-five minute essays, the first informal and personal, the second a comparison and contrast response to two literary passages, and to take the *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* examination” which was developed and administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (“Mass Testing”²⁰).

While the test-development committee opted not to give students a choice of questions, they decided to ask students to write two different essays in the exam in order to provide them with the opportunity to showcase their writing in two different genres. Because the essay portion of the EEE was something new to the Cal State system, the English Studies faculty resolved to

work as a group to develop their essay prompts. The faculty would share with one another the questions they developed and then pre-test them with composition students in order to identify and address any potential pitfalls or confusion regarding the prompts that might arise for students. After the pre-test phase, the faculty would rephrase the questions and then use them for the EEE.

As with other tests, the details of the EEE reflect values. They were the values of the composition faculty, as well as those of the literature faculty and the ETS representatives. According to the NCTE-WPA White Paper on Writing Assessment, a goal of writing assessment is that it “should articulate and communicate clearly its values and expectations to all stakeholders . . .” (NCTE-WPA). With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy enough to critique the EPT. From the vantage point of 2012, it is clear to see that English Council fell into a similar if not the very testing trap it was trying to escape when it spoke out against allowing students to test out of composition by taking the CLEP. Edward White has written at length about the trust he and his colleague had in ETS and how the company partnered with faculty to develop, what at that time was a leading edge placement tool (see “Holisticism”, “The Uneasy Compromise”, “Opening of the Modern Era”).

English Council did not have the prescience in the 1970s to know that essentially the same test they designed would continue to be in use in 2012 when many better placement measures are now available. As Dan Melzer, Writing Across the Curriculum director at CSU Sacramento noted in an e-mail in May of 2011, “I want to emphasize that I have much respect for the folks who originally created the EPT, because it was a far better option than the multiple choice test the psychometricians at ETS were offering, and 40 years ago it was the current best practice” (“Re: Response the Chancellor’s Office FAQ Document”).

The process of designing the EEE together was vital for English Council. Instead of settling for a generic test (the CLEP), they chose to work together from the beliefs they shared about writing to design a test that could be administered by ETS, a company the chancellor and administrators felt they could respect, in spite of the concerns about the SAT. In our interview in 2007, White was careful to inform me that the individuals he was working with at ETS were those who collaborated with the CSU and were interested in partnering on designing a test that both parties could endorse and support (Personal Interview). It was a collaboration that helped build unity within English Council, as will be discussed at the end of the chapter. The next step, then, was to focus on how the test would be scored.

Assessing the EEE

Incorporating essay writing in an equivalency exam was new to the CSU; therefore a new kind of scoring was necessary as well. In April of 1973, the EEE was administered systemwide for the first time. In June of that year, the first large-scale holistic scoring session took place in California. Sixty faculty members from across the Cal State system were paid to attend this first scoring of the EEE. The assessment procedure chosen for the exam followed the only large-scale testing program at the time: the Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board, administered by ETS. While this kind of scoring had been conducted on a national scale, it was a new idea for a university system to develop a scoring rubric aligned to the expectations the faculty held for their specific courses. White, who had scored AP exams and participated in holistic scoring, convinced the test development committee to adopt the procedures ETS had developed for AP as a model for scoring the EEE. A six-point scale would be used for scoring the essays, and as part of the norming process, the faculty members were given guidance in scoring, such as, “The student should be rewarded for what he does well in his response to the

assignment. Papers should be scored for their *overall* quality.” Responses considered to be “extremely well written” were to be given a score one point higher “than [they] would on the basis of content alone” while responses considered to be “poorly written” would receive a one-point lower score. In contrast to the error-counting methods that prevailed in essay scoring at the time, scorers were advised that, “Errors in spelling and punctuation which occur in writing a draft under examination conditions should not ordinarily be counted against the [student]” (“Mass Testing” 21). The intent of this type of scoring was to focus on students’ strengths instead of their weaknesses. White has reflected that

Holisticism says that the human spirit and its most significant form of expression (writing) must be seen and understood not in parts, but as a whole, face to face as it were, almost sacramentally, Even the meanest bit of halted prose, even the most down-trodden of our fellow creatures, deserves to be taken as a living and vital unit of meaning, an artistic and human whole, not merely a collection of scraps and parts. (“Holisticism” 409)

This is a carefully considered view of student writing; it is rare, even today, to hear people speak of reading student writing “sacramentally.” Readers would need to be prepared in order to assess student writing holistically.

Readers were given instructions on how to respond to topics about which they might not be accustomed to reading. For example, in the instructions for scoring an essay about an experience that changed the writer’s life for better or worse, readers were given the following advice:

Answers should therefore not be penalized simply because the writer may regard even his most important experience as relatively insignificant, because he seeks to

provide philosophical perspective, or because he views the experience in a humorous or satirical fashion. Imaginative responses should be recognized and rewarded, as distinct from “cop-outs.” (“Mass Testing” 21)

Advice like this was an attempt to further norm readers and avoid idiosyncratic responses to student essays. To further increase the validity and consistency of scoring, two readers independently scored each essay.

However, holistic scoring was a relatively new assessment method in 1973. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, White wrote that, “In the early 1970s, hardly anyone had heard of holistic scoring, and the term had a faddish ring to it, akin to holistic health or holistic physics” (273). Skepticism among some senior English Studies faculty from a small number of CSU campuses made it less likely for the junior faculty from those campuses to participate in holistic scoring (White, Personal Interview). But despite faculty resistance, White felt that holistic scoring conducted by CSU faculty was particularly appropriate given that they had designed both the test and the scoring rubric collaboratively to respond to the writing of Cal State students. This process allowed readers to evaluate the exams more thoroughly and with greater insight, since they were reading responses to prompts they themselves had offered. White contrasted this method with what happened when most universities around the country needed an equivalency exam. Referring to exams like the CLEP, White observed that “most of these exams are not our exams; they are their [the testing companies’] exams.” White saw the holistic scoring of the EEE as “the great welding force of making [the EEE] our exam...welded them to the concept which they didn’t find really controversial” (Personal Interview). The test-development committee ensured that part of the evaluation of the exams would be the process of norming faculty to the scoring rubric. White reports that the norming process went smoothly. He believes this is due to

the fact that because the rubric was based on the criteria the faculty had established in the goals statement that English Council had approved and sent to the Chancellor, there was little resistance to the rubric or the holistic scoring process associated with it.

White believed that if the faculty accepted the validity of the exam, they would endorse the EEE and award credit for it on their campuses. White said, “This was not a low-level operation. We wanted buy-in from the people that were in charge on each campus because we needed to have strong English department support” (Personal Interview). Moreover, by giving the EEE its stamp of approval, English Council was presenting a united front. The group was showing the Chancellor that they could—as scholars and practitioners in the field of English Studies—work together to design and implement a pedagogically sound alternative to the CLEP exam the Chancellor had intended to impose upon them.

The assessment process helped draw the group closer together. The experience of norming and scoring the essays “socialized English Council to accept their own exam for credit and it became a force to weld English Council together. Because [when] you get together for a long weekend of essay reading, you get to be pals with people from other campuses. And so it was a great unifying force for English Council itself” (White, Personal Interview). In addition to the personal and collegial conversations, these meetings also allowed faculty to develop as teachers of writing. White noted that “[d]iscussions about scores became discussions about what one valued about writing, which, in turn, became discussions of teaching writing” (White, *Teaching and Assessing* 281-282). The unity that English Council enjoyed as a result of this process enabled them to come together and “envision” what good writing really was. They were then able to design and implement a means of evaluating writing according to those criteria. English Council’s growing unity and success mobilized them to pursue further activism,

including lobbying the Chancellor and then the state legislature for the right to offer remedial writing courses to Cal State students.

Results of the EEE

By 1975, White and the test-development committee had strong data in support of the exam itself. An important criterion of the EEE was that the test needed to be rigorous enough to ensure that those students entering the University who were already proficient at the curriculum being taught in FYC would be the only ones able to pass the exam. Since few first-year students had exhibited this level of proficiency, the administrators of the EEE, unlike the administrators of most tests, were comfortable with a relatively low pass-rate. This was, in fact, the result.

However, the results of this first test also brought a problem to light. Of the students who completed first-year writing and subsequently completed the EEE, only the top half of students receiving A's in their composition courses (earning final grades between 100% and 95%) passed the exam. All other students, even the lower half of those receiving A's (earning final grades between 95% and 90%), failed the EEE. This suggested, in the context of the faculty's experience with first-year students, that the EEE was indeed a better indicator than the CLEP. Nonetheless, the results also were disappointing. Cal State English Studies faculty had always known that students were not achieving the goals that the faculty had for them in FYC. But the process of reading so many student essays and seeing the relatively poor results of the EEE for those students who had already completed FYC confirmed for the faculty that the current structure of FYC was not enabling the students to achieve these goals.

According to White, in 1975 and 1976, English Council had a number of discussions about how the California State Colleges might change the teaching of first-year writing. After analyzing the results of the EEE, White went to English Council: "I gave them the data and I

said, ‘There’s a disconnect. We have two choices: we can either lower the standards of the exam to the standards of our courses or we can raise the standards of our courses to the standards of the exam’” (Personal Interview). In response, English Council decided to use the goals for writing they had established for the EEE to raise the level of complexity of their composition courses instead of changing the EEE in order for more students to be able to receive credit for it. However, this decision would require further effort not only by the faculty but also by English Council.

By the mid-seventies, English Council was a strong organization that had proven to the Chancellor and to themselves that they could work together to accomplish a large-scale goal. This success prepared them to take on the challenge of changing first-year composition in the CSU.

One Test Spawns Another

Alignment: Curriculum, Students and the Test

At English Council meetings in 1975 and 1976, the topic of how to bring the standards of CSU composition courses closer to the standards Council members had developed for the EEE dominated conversations. White saw these conversations as “historic.” In animated tones, White told me, “that has never happened anywhere in the world that a group of faculty would say ‘the test has higher standards than our courses; we’re [going to] raise the standards of our courses to meet the standards of the exam’” (Personal Interview). English Council was excited about the prospects of making changes to their courses. They were propelled forward to change by the success of their “historic conversations” about student writing. This success is important to my study of English Council and remediation in the CSU because had the Council not been able to

agree on standards for good writing and raised their expectations for FYC, it seems unlikely they would have fought so hard to bring remedial courses to the CSU.

After much discussion, the conclusion of English Council was that weaker students should receive specialized instruction in remedial writing courses. The faculty knew that within the CC and UC structures, programs were available to help students who did not start college at levels allowing success in FYC (or enabling them to pass the EEE). But, in the Cal State system, “there was no place for basic writing . . . a student at a place like the UC had the Subject A with its more qualified student body and we did not. That was a real contradiction” (White, Personal Interview). For this reason English Council wrote a formal resolution and an appeal to the Chancellor to bring remedial writing programs to Cal State system. Indeed, English Council would need to convince the State Legislature to make an exception to the *Master Plan* in order to provide funding for remedial writing courses for Cal State students.

These discussions of the mid-1970s were happening within English Council at the same time that the burgeoning field of composition studies was grappling with the concept of basic writing. One person actively engaged in that research on the national level was Mina Shaughnessy, at City University of New York—a university with demographics and material circumstances quite similar to those in the Cal State system. In fact, at White’s invitation, Shaughnessy attended a small conference at his campus which several English Council members attended. Shaughnessy was one of the first compositionists to realize that, “For the basic writer academic writing is a trap, not a way of saying something to someone. . . writing is but a line that moves haltingly across the page, exposing as it goes all that the writer doesn’t know, then passing into the hands of a stranger who reads it with a lawyer’s eyes, searching for flaws” (7). Shaughnessy’s initial audience for her landmark book *Errors and Expectations* was her

colleagues at City University of New York, who were apprehensive about working with open admissions students. According to Patricia Laurence, a colleague of Shaughnessy at CUNY, faculty were “stunned” in the early days of open admissions by the level and quantity of error they found in the papers they were reading (25). One of Shaughnessy’s greatest contributions to the field was helping faculty find ways to minimize the importance of focusing on students’ errors and instead engage with developing writers and recognize what they do know in order to build upon that foundation. Although Shaughnessy’s work was not accepted wholeheartedly across the country, some embraced it enthusiastically.¹¹

Shaughnessy’s response to the challenges she and her students were facing at CUNY makes an interesting parallel to what was happening in California at the time. In fact, when she spoke at the CSU San Bernardino conference shortly before her death, many English Council members were eager to learn about her work and the resulting new approaches taking root in New York, in part because they realized that their difficulties were similar to the situation Shaughnessy was addressing. Soon, English Council, too, began to de-emphasize their students’ weaknesses as writers and focused, instead, on improving the quality of student writing. To this end, the Council drafted a proposal to develop, as White put it, “basic writing programs, not courses” (Personal Interview). These were large-scale changes; it was felt that student writing would not be improved by just adding a course or two. White explained that “we already had a lot of bootleg programs; they were not funded. We didn’t admit that we had these programs because that would have brought the ire of the legislature. But, we proposed independent study

¹¹ Shaughnessy died just a few months before the book was published and thus never knew how her work was received.

programs, learning centers, writing centers . . .” (Personal Interview). These basic writing programs and writing centers would allow the campuses to offer more help to developing writers than courses alone would be able to provide. Once the proposal was drafted, English Council opted not to send it directly to the Chancellor. As White wryly put it, “we were smarter than that.” After securing the support for the proposal from the statewide Academic Senate, English Council made sure that every English department in the California State College system endorsed it, and with this united front, they sent the proposal to the Chancellor (Personal Interview).

Developing the EPT

In 1976, the Chancellor responded to the proposal by convening a task force to study how students would enter Cal State writing programs. White was chosen by the CSU faculty to chair the task force that was charged primarily with designing a test, which came to be called the English Placement Test (EPT). This would be a distinctly different test from the English Equivalency Exam (EEE) that English Council had developed in the previous decade. The EPT was designed, and used, to indicate for all incoming first-year students whether the most appropriate programming to suit their needs was a remedial writing course or FYC. The EEE, by contrast, had been administered to those students who wanted to test out of FYC.

As White remembers it, progress toward the EPT was slow at first. “It took almost two years before that call for a test led to the creation of a test-development committee” (Personal Interview). Once the task force was formed in the fall of 1976, they were under a great deal of pressure from the Chancellor’s Office to design a test that was to be a requirement for all incoming first-year students the following fall.

There were several important features of the EPT which, together, distinguished it from other tests of its time. One was that the test “. . . was explicitly separated from the admissions process (only admitted students could take it) and directly connected to a basic writing program with special funding” (White, “Importance of Placement” 77). This focus on placement as opposed to admissions was a means of recognizing the real abilities of the regularly admitted students to the Cal State system, without threatening to expel them. With the EPT and remedial writing programs, students could receive the kinds of instruction that would best meet their needs.

Another key feature of the EPT that enabled the Cal State system to more accurately measure student proficiency was an expansion of the test design they had first implemented in the EEE. Like the EEE, “[t]he EPT include[d] a forty-five minute essay portion,” wrote White. But he drew a distinction between the EPT and any other kind of placement test. With the EPT “[t]he committee was able to discard the usage and error-hunting orientation of traditional ‘objective’ English tests for multiple choice portions on reading, sentence construction, and logic and organization which view the student as a writer rather than an editor” (“Testing and Evaluation” 7). A sample English Placement Test can be found in Appendix B. There was also far less focus in the EPT on literature than there was in the EEE. This change in focus was important to the faculty because it represented what they valued in a placement test for composition coursework. The faculty members were confident that the EPT would test the kinds of knowledge students would need to succeed in Cal State composition courses. White has stressed that the task force was working toward, “. . . a new kind of writing measure for students, one that would in fact use the knowledge about linguistics, dialectology, etc., that should inform modern English testing and normally does not . . .” (“Uneasy Compromise” 7). English Council

strove to make the test a helpful and appreciated tool, rather than an annoying obstacle that teachers and students would dread. White recalled that "...we tried quite consciously to bring teachers and testers together in the most constructive way" (7). The events of the decade that began in 1968 with the birth of the EEE and ended in 1978 with the birth of the EPT changed the face of English Studies in California.

Convincing the Skeptics

As promising as the EPT was to members of English Council, it did not go over well with the representative of ETS who were awarded the contract to administer the objective (multiple choice) portion of the test and who would need to work with the holistic scores given by the faculty readers. At the time this was not the practice of choice for ETS. For example, the issue surrounding the recording of a separate score for the essay led to a storied row between task force (and San Francisco State faculty) member Bill Robinson and usually unflappable ETS representative Evans Alloway. As White recalled, during a heated debate about holistic scoring, Alloway threatened, "We will only report a separate essay score over my dead body." Robinson looked him in the eye and said, "[P]repare to die" (Personal Interview). Despite his hard line position, Alloway eventually relented and agreed to average the scores.

On August 6, 1977 the EPT was administered and, as the EPT Task Force had predicted, student performance was quite weak. While the exam results were not what the faculty might have hoped to see, they were not altogether unexpected. The test was rigorous and had been deliberately designed to indicate any areas in which students were not prepared for college level composition coursework. To the extent that students were not prepared, the EPT provided evidence that remedial writing programs were a necessity. The task force took their plans—and

the results of the test—to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and, finally, to the California Legislature.

White and others appeared before the Legislature at a highly inopportune moment in California history. The Cal State system was requesting approximately one million dollars in funding for remedial writing programs in the same year in which the voters approved the monumentally consequential Proposition 13 (the “People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation,” which limits the property tax liability of each California homeowner to no more than 1% of the purchase price of the home per year, plus a small annual inflation adjustment). Convincing the legislature of the importance of the program was a matter of educating the senators about the situation faced by the Cal State system.

White recalled being asked at one point, “Professor White, why, when we have already paid for this once in high school, should we pay for it again in college?” (Personal Interview). White was ready for the question and took it very seriously. “[W]hen you think about it,” he reasoned, “up in the legislature they have nothing to do with education, and for them this is a very rational question.” With this perspective in mind, White told them, “Given our admissions standards, we are required to admit the top third of high school graduates. We have the students on our campuses right now and they need extra help if they are to succeed” (Personal

Interview).¹² White explained that since these students were already being enrolled in the CSU, the issue at hand was how to go about helping them, not why they were there. “If they get some help, they can succeed, and we are asking you to provide us with the funds to get them the necessary help” (Personal Interview). The legislature was convinced enough to grant the initial million dollars of funding.

Unfortunately, the Legislature, Board of Trustees, and even the general public would need to be convinced again and again over the next thirty years that remedial writing programs should continue to be offered by the CSU. Trustee Pesqueira’s claim in 1995 about the CSU not being “in the remediation business” was not so different from the critiques White heard of the EPT and remedial writing courses when they were first introduced. However, in the 1970s the call to serve the students who had been admitted to the University, along with the EPT results, went a long way to convince the legislature that the Cal State system should be allowed to offer the services.

Still, funding was delayed from the very start; problems with the California budget led to budget cuts for the CSU. Mark Forester reported for the Los Angeles Times that the CSU budget shortage came about because Governor Brown vetoed “\$500,000 for remedial English in 1977-78.” Forester observed that campuses were under obligation to administer the EPT to all

¹² White did not, in the course of our interview, go into the reasons that students who were in need of remedial help would fall into the top third of their high school classes. However, elsewhere White noted that the 1970’s marked a time that California began to see demographic and linguistic changes; the changes brought less prepared students to the CSU and these students tended to perform poorly in traditional composition courses (White, “Opening”).

incoming students, and English departments scrutinizing the results could “...identify a substantial amount of need...but won’t be able to serve all the students” (“English Test”). In an op-ed column for the Los Angeles Times, Forester referred to an interview he had done with Anthony Moye, the Dean of Academic Programs for the Cal State system, who claimed that the budget cutbacks would make “the remedial English program ‘impossible to implement’ ” (“College Freshmen”). The funding for the programs has continued to be a problem right up to the present crisis. Executive Order 665 likely became a guiding policy for the CSUs because it has always been so difficult to fund remedial writing programs.

Implications of a Decade that Changed the Cal State System

The debate in English Council and throughout composition studies, circa 2010, is focused on whether any kind of testing can accurately predict a student’s potential for success in composition, and whether remedial courses are the best way to teach composition to underprepared students. Yet, large-scale testing in the CSU came about in 1968 in order to help students receive the best education possible within the Cal State system. In a 1979 article, White summed it up this way:

To gain direct control over testing and the data it produces is to gain substantial new power, available for use in many ways. The implications of this power for staffing and funding of writing programs are just becoming clear. (“Testing and Evaluation” 10)

English Council acquired this power for the Cal State faculty. Without English Council, it is unlikely that the faculty would have found an effective way in which to oppose the Chancellor and his staff during the controversy over the CLEP. Although current research suggests that large-scale testing is not the best approach for evaluating student writing ability, at the time there did not appear to be a more attractive option. Furthermore, the design of, advocacy for, and

implementation and evaluation of the EEE and the EPT resulted in a shift of authority over student performance and evaluation away from the Chancellor and the Trustees and into the hands of those most qualified to evaluate student writing—the faculty. Had English Council refused to engage in negotiations with the Chancellor and the testing companies, accommodations like remedial writing and adapted curricula might never have been provided for at-risk students in the Cal State system. Indeed, faculty might never have been given a voice in how to address all CSU students' academic needs in English Studies.

As of 1979, White and the others on the task force believed that “[s]ystem-wide administration of the test has tried to refrain from intruding into matters individual campuses can do best, i.e., counseling students into appropriate curricula, developing courses and programs, etc. . . .” (“Testing and Evaluation” 6-7). The individual campuses designed their own programs and identified how best to fund the programs in the context of their own budgets. White noted that “. . . system officials have been moderately successful . . . at resisting pressure to take such misguided actions as establishing a statewide cut score” (“Testing and Evaluation” 6-7).

At the times the EEE and the EPT were designed and first implemented, the two tests allowed English Council greater levels of autonomy and control over the testing of writing. According to White, “. . . what you assess is what you value” (Teaching and Assessing 293). So, by adapting the assessment to match the values of the faculty, the experts in the field sent a new and powerful message to all parties involved—the Chancellor and Trustees, ETS, and even the students could now see that what was being taught in the classrooms actually mattered and would be assessed. For the field of English Studies, the shift from fill-in-the-blank testing scored with a Scantron machine to holistic scoring conducted by the same faculty that taught the courses

was revolutionary. As White sees it, “The triumph of holistic scoring, then, had principally to do with the enemies it faced.” He goes on to explain:

To the atomization of education, it brought a sense of connection, unity, wholeness; to the bureaucratic machinery of fill-in-the-bubble testing, it brought human writers and human readers; to a true-false world of memorized answers to simplified questions, it brought the possibility of complexity; to socially biased correctness, it brought critical thinking. (Teaching and Assessing 281)

But this is only the beginning of the story. The EPT continues to be required for all incoming first-year students. If a campus chooses to use an alternate method for placement, it must apply for special permission from the Chancellor. The information the EPT Task Force was seeking in 1977, information about students’ levels of preparation to take and succeed in composition courses, are the very data that put students at risk of disenrollment thirty years later under Executive Order 665.

CHAPTER 3

THIRTY YEARS OF THE EPT AND REMEDIATION

An Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter addresses the years between the introduction of the English Placement Test (EPT) in 1975 and the introduction of EO 665 in 2007, the period of time which can be recognized as between the beginning and the dismantling of the remediation enterprise in the California State University (CSU). Over this span of time, the term “remediation” has come to take on certain significance for those in positions of power such as the state legislatures, governors, and the various Chancellors of the CSU and their boards and advisors. However, the way that these individuals regard the concept of remediation has varied greatly from the way that many in the field of composition studies and in the CSU English Council have regarded the term and its concept. Presenting these varied meanings, and in so doing problematizing the notion of remediation, will be the focus of the first section of the chapter. An understanding of the evolution of these terms is important to this study because the reconceptualization of remediation clearly reflects the points of connection and disagreement that exist between English Council and the Chancellor’s Office. After considering these meanings, the chapter will go on to explore English Council’s roles in both making and resisting changes to the EPT, and the chapter will close with a discussion of how English Council worked to develop and then support standards for the working conditions of composition faculty within the CSU.

The EPT and the debates surrounding it reveal a great deal about how English Council has expended its energies as an organization from its inception in the 1970s through the 1990s when EO 665 was introduced. Fully half of this chapter concerns the changes to the EPT and the challenges that have arisen within the CSU regarding the establishment and administration of

remedial writing programs on the twenty-three campuses in the system. As the latter half of the chapter will stress, the decisions surrounding such issues as the establishment of a uniform cut score for the entire CSU and disallowing course-credit for remedial writing have had tremendous bearing on current CSU students. Details of the EPT are important because of the direct link between it and the Executive Order 665 (EO 665) policy. Indeed, it is EPT scores alone that determine whether or not a student will be required to take remedial courses and fall under the mandate of EO 665. Other challenges faced by English Council regarding remedial programs such as class size and who should teach these courses, which will be discussed at the end of the chapter, are also issues English Council continues to face today. This chapter reveals how the decisions made by English Council over the last thirty years in response to these challenges have shaped our current struggles around remediation in the CSU and established a pattern for how English Council makes many of its decisions and supports its members.

As described in the Methods section of Chapter 1, this chapter relies heavily upon Gale Larson's collection of written records (five heavy-weight, four-inch binders and seven manila file folders all filled to capacity). Larson evidently saved every hand out, agenda, letter and set of meeting minutes that he received or sent during his nineteen years as an English Council member during some of which (1985-1988) he served as president. Larson's files show that, in addition to composition, English Council has been involved in every aspect of English Studies studied at a Cal State. These include English Education, the teaching of literature and linguistics, graduate programs, assessment, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In studying these materials from the early 1980s through the early 2000s, it becomes clear that the business of remediation in the CSU has been on shaky ground since its inception. However, the

issues of assessing the proficiency of incoming students and the educating of at-risk students have been a central task of English Council.

Problematizing Remediation

Before moving into a discussion of changes to the EPT and the development of remedial writing programs in the CSU, I will define how the term “remedial” has been regarded and used both by bureaucratic, administrative stakeholders such as Chancellors and Boards of Trustees and by those in the field of composition studies over the last thirty years. Such defining of terms is vital to my study because the way various stakeholders define remediation reveals a great deal about their understandings of the students whose writing is being remediated and about the enterprise of teaching those students. Indeed, these differences in understanding lead to the difference between regarding remediation as a crisis and regarding it as a legitimate part of the process of education.

Manufacturing a Crisis

According to one popular definition of remediation, students are “underprepared” or lack the “fundamental skills” to succeed at college-level work. A report that was released in the 1980s is an excellent example of how the term “remedial” is often applied to students and their writing. In 1983, the California Post-Secondary Education Commission (CPEC), a group made up of a variety of stakeholders from around the state, submitted a report to all three branches of California higher education on the topic of remediation.

CPEC introduced their report by stating: “Whether one calls it ‘remediation,’ ‘basic skills instruction,’ ‘learning assistance,’ ‘developmental education,’ or ‘compensatory education,’ the topic of overcoming student underpreparation for college has attracted the concern of educators and the public throughout the country” (IX). In a section entitled “The Difficulty of Definitions”

the authors lament, “Although it shares its root with remedy, remediation is a neologism, a newly coined word that is almost exclusively used by educators” (1).¹³

The report warns that “[c]onfusion may arise, then, by virtue of the word’s very newness and skepticism because of its affiliation with a profession known for its patois” (1).¹⁴ The authors further observe, “The term remediation has become so emotionally charged that many writers prefer to use what they consider less offensive terms . . . developmental, basic skills, and the like” (2). The CPEC committee did not indicate the differences in meaning among the terms “developmental” and “basic” and the term “remedial;” they regarded the first two as just weaker, gentler versions of “remedial.” Thus, the committee opted to go with the most direct and clear term: “remedial.”

The task force recognized that some writers “view developmental education as a more positive descriptor than remedial education because everyone can profit from developmental

¹³ The committee appears to be concerned about the shifting and varying definitions for “remediation.” However, at that time the term had been in use in the CSU for nineteen years. In 1964, the Trustees established the first CSU policy on remediation (“CSU Plan to Reduce Remediation” 1).

¹⁴ That education is a “profession known for its patois” is a debatable point, but here the implication seems to be that English Studies faculty repeatedly evade understanding by retreating to arcane language. However, as has been noted, the term “remediation” was in wide use at the time of the panel’s evident concern that “confusion may arise” because of skepticism about educators or the “newness” of the term appears to have been misplaced. Asserting confusion about a term’s definition offers to opportunity to designate one particular meaning for the term.

education whereas remedial seems to point to individual weaknesses” (“Promises to Keep” 3). Another reason the authors opted to use the term “remedial” throughout their report was that the CPEC study targeted a specific group of students and was not geared toward the entire student population of the CSU.

CPEC was explicit about their understandings of the difference between prerequisites and remedial courses. According to CPEC, the term “remedial” is reserved for “courses and support services needed to overcome student deficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics to a level at which students have a reasonable chance of succeeding in regular college courses . . .” and not having such “deficiencies” is “essential to successful participation in any academic program” (“Promises to Keep” 23). According to CPEC’s definition, a prerequisite is “a course designed to help students who are lacking a background in specific academic areas other than the basic skills in computation, communication, and reading.” They define prerequisites as “program specific” or unique to a specific course of study. For example, introductory courses in French or art history would not be considered to be remedial as they are specific to a major or course of study. To establish consistency, faculty who completed a survey regarding the remedial courses they were teaching—the results of which were used in the report—were warned that information about courses CPEC considered to be “prerequisite” (as opposed to “remedial”) “should not be included in responding to this survey” (underlining included in the original).

The CPEC Task Force’s definition of the term “remedial” served as a catalyst for the perceived “remediation crisis” in the CSU. The fact that CPEC Task Force allocated nine pages of their report to defining and justifying the use of the term “remedial” is an indication of how contentious the term is. By opting to use the term “remedial” instead of “developmental” (or prerequisite) to refer to the composition courses, the CPEC committee strengthened the argument

that the courses were not worthy of credit toward graduation. The label of “remedial,” indicating that the courses surveyed were those in which students were “deficient” or “underprepared” in a particular subject area, colored what data was collected and, consequently, the results of the survey. Had the committee opted to use the term “developmental,” there would be no implication that beginning level composition courses were subject to particular requirements that did not exist for beginning courses in, say, history or psychology. Moreover, had the campuses included data on all prerequisite courses in completing the survey, then the study may have found multiple levels of competence in college level writing, as they would in all subject areas, but no indication of a “remediation crisis” in California higher education—a claim the commission makes several times throughout the report, even titling one section, “Crisis to Opportunity” (99). (It seems unlikely they would have uncovered a “prerequisite crisis” or a “developmental crisis.”) In order to perpetuate the idea that there was a crisis, it was vital that the committee choose “remedial,” define it very carefully, and make that definition palatable to its diverse audience.

Remedial, Developmental or Basic?

From as early as the 1980s, many in the field of composition studies have been uncomfortable with the connotations of the term remedial as it is used in the CPEC report. In “The Language of Exclusion,” a 1985 article written as remedial programs were being instituted in the CSU, famed literacy scholar and advocate Mike Rose argues, “Furthermore, the notion of remediation, carrying with it as it does the etymological wisps and traces of disease, serves to exclude from the academic community those who are so labeled. They sit in scholastic quarantine until their disease can be diagnosed and remedied” (559). Compositionists have worked to distance themselves and their courses from the connotation of disease. Attempting to define students and their writing in terms that focus on students’ potential instead of their

deficits, compositionists have searched for less problematic terms. For many, terms like “basic writing” send a less problematic message. Indeed, according to compositionist Lynn Z. Bloom,

The term *basic writing* sent a humane political message not just to the profession but to a world which even in the mid-1970s had to be convinced that these students were not to be seen as *remedial*; they were not retarded or sick; they should not be disciplined or punished or medicated or flushed out of the system. (emphasis in original, 9)

In *Writing in an Alien World* Deborah Mutnick notes that “basic writing” has “evolved into a course that provides genuine support to students outside the mainstream, just as affirmative action, equal opportunity, and other entitlement programs have done, and consciously analyzes the marginality of both students and teachers” (45-46).

The difference between the terms “remedial” and “basic writing” can be observed in each term’s history of use, beginning with each term’s introduction, in the field. Mutnick, like others in the field, links the use of the term “basic writing” to the era of open admissions.¹⁵ She differentiates the term “remedial” from “basic” when describing the open admissions origins of the program in which she teaches at Long Island University:

Variants of writing remediation had been part of the college curriculum long before the advent of basic writing; what distinguished basic writing from other forms of remedial instruction was its specific orientation to students previously

¹⁵ See Fox, *Defending Access: a Critique of Standards in Higher Education*; Soliday, “From the Margins to the Mainstream: Reconceiving Remediation;” and Greene and McAlexander, *Basic Writing in America*.

excluded from higher education, mainly poor and working-class whites, blacks, and Latinos (8).

According to McAlexander and Greene, who authored a book on several basic writing programs across the country, “basic writing” is “link[ed] to the civil rights ideas and to the goal of desegregation,” and therefore, they see it as “more than simply a continuation of past remediation” (5). These links to open admissions and the civil rights movement made the term “basic writing” more appealing to Mutnick, McAlexander and Greene.

Terminology within English Council

Like the field of composition studies at large, English Council discussed how to define students and their writing. They have never agreed on which term to use to refer to their writing programs. What, in some places is referred to as “developmental” or “basic” writing, in others is called “remedial.” Ultimately, the debate over terminology boils to issues of gatekeeping, whether students are conceptualized as somehow deficient and in need of instruction before they may enter the general population of university students or whether they are ready for college work.

One example of English Council grappling over how to define their programs appears in a letter dated May 10, 1986 from English Council member Mary Kay Tirrell, of CSU Fullerton. The letter is addressed to English Council President Gale Larson. In it, Tirrell shared and reflected upon an opinion piece from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about whether or not tenured literature professors should be required to teach developmental writing courses (an issue that will be explored later in this chapter). However, Tirrell also took the opportunity to discuss the use of the term “remedial” by English Council. She wrote,

My other comment regards our use of the term “remedial writing.” Even when euphemized as “developmental writing” [sic]. In composition literature the term used is “basic writing,” one I wish English Council would adopt. . . . Remedial is a loaded term, one that Mina Shaughnessy avoided in her book *Errors and Expectations* for good reason.

While Tirrell did not explicitly acknowledge the negative connotations the word “remedial” carries, her concerns are similar to those expressed by Rose. There is no record that any action was taken on the use of the terms “remedial” or “developmental” in English Council minutes from this time period, but Tirrell’s letter is an indication that the issue of terminology regarding students was a matter of concern to at least one English Council member.

More than twenty years after Mary Tirrell expressed her reasons that English Council should eschew the term “remedial,” this topic was taken up by members of the Council. In the early 2000s a good deal of time was spent at English Council meetings discussing the need to convince those in the Chancellor’s Office that the term “remedial” does not apply to composition programs in the CSU (English Council Notes). Nevertheless, an official request for the Chancellor and administration to refrain from using the term “remedial” to refer to the CSU basic writing programs has never appeared in any English Council resolutions.

Even now, thirty years after the EPT and “remedial” programs were instituted in the CSU, the term “remedial” has fallen out of favor with most compositionists, English Education faculty and those who serve as department chairs, but not all on English Council members have moved away from using this term. An example of a debate about the term is found in a July 2009 e-mail exchange; an infrequent poster to English Council listserv stated, “I hate to be the bad guy here, but I believe that remedial English courses do not belong at a university” (Cox). This writer

went on to state that in a time when there is a very limited budget in the department and credit-bearing courses are being cut, it makes no sense to continue offering classes that do not count toward graduation credit to large numbers of students. This view was atypical in the discussion, as can be interpreted from the author's referring to herself as "the bad guy." There were at least ten other posts on this topic and none of those responding after Cox supported her position. In fact several listserv posters explained to Cox why they felt their courses should not be regarded as "remedial." For example, Mark Thompson of CSU Stanislaus, wrote,

As we noted, we take a different view of the work students do in our classes; we consider it worthy of baccalaureate credit. That makes sense to us since, for example, the writing they do to earn part of their grade in history or sociology or geography classes during the same term results in earning baccalaureate credit.

(Thompson)

The difference between Cox's view of basic writing and Thompson's highlights the different definitions of the term "remedial" and different attitudes toward remediation that exist even within English Council. Cox evidently regards the term the same way that the CPEC committee did over thirty years ago. She sees basic writing as outside the curriculum of composition studies. From her perspective, students should enter the University knowing everything taught in a basic writing course. Thompson, and the other participants to this discussion on the listserv, do not regard the work done in most CSU composition programs to be remedial. Thompson regards the curriculum of basic writing to be college-level, credit-worthy work.

Alternatives to the Term "Remedial"

For many compositionists and for most within English Council, accurately characterizing the entry level work of students requires not only avoiding use of the term "remedial," but also

abandoning the term “basic writing,” which they see as being just as constraining as “remedial.” Bloom, for example, worries that the term “basic writing” has taken on the characteristics of the term “remedial,” as it “became the normative term in the field” (12). Mutnick makes a similar point when she notes that even though “basic writing is obviously not synonymous with racial and class subordination, it arises from the same structural and historical inequalities” (45). And she goes on to lament that, “its position in the academy reproduces the same hierarchical arrangements of insider/outsider, marginal and mainstream status” (45). Tom Fox admits that there is no good term to describe these writers and this kind of writing. He explains that the term “‘Developmental’ suggests that these writers are young and immature. And ‘basic,’ the term I reluctantly use, implies that these writers are simple or stuck on some rudimentary level” (47). So, while among compositionists there is a clear shift away from “remedial,” there does not seem to be a good alternative term to use.

The differing notions of “remedial” indicate how fluid and unstable the term itself is. There is no clear agreement in the field of composition studies as to whether or not the term should be used to describe pedagogically sound programs. The evidence indicates, however, that “remedial” is a highly contentious term, and a term to which many in the field are likely to attach negative connotations. The lack of an accepted alternative term may be the reason that as recently as August of 2009, Mike Rose wrote a piece for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled, “Colleges Need to Re-mediate (sic) Remediation” in which he returns to using the term remedial in order to reclaim it. In the article, Rose reflects on the ways that remedial programs can be altered from those based in “limiting assumptions about language” and focusing on basic readings, in addition to workbook and grammar/usage exercises (1). Of these programs, Rose muses, “no wonder these programs have a bad rap” (1). These are the programs about which

legislators complain that taxpayers are “paying twice” (3) since they feel students should have already mastered the material in high school. What Rose would like to see is “remediation done well,” where the material that students encounter is “in a new context, with a new curriculum and a new pedagogy” (3). He admits, “Remediation may be an unfortunate term for all this as it carries with it the sense of error or disease, of a medical intervention.” However, he argues that “when done well, remediation becomes a key mechanism in a democratic model of human development” (3). In this way, Rose is calling for a more complex definition of the term “remedial” in order to detach it from notions of simply rehashing high school material.

A Model and a Myth: of Deficits and Transience

Two notions are especially helpful in this discussion of the complexity of the use of the term of remediation in the field of composition: “deficit models” and the “myth of transience.” This subsection will look briefly at what happens when remediation is regarded as part of a deficit theory as opposed to a model of student ability. The other notion I will review in this section is the myth of transience—the idea that remediation (of both students and the University) can be a fast, short-term way to address student preparation for college. These constructs prove to be useful in examining and understanding the positions taken by many stakeholders in my study—members of the state legislature, CSU chancellors, and their representatives, and even some members of English Council.

One key element of a deficit model is that whatever skill is lacking on the part of students can be made up quickly. This argument is often made by CSU administrators and the Board of Trustees who declare that “remedial” students come to college lacking knowledge they should have in order to succeed in first-year composition and that it is the job of remedial composition programs to get them up to speed quickly. According to Glynda Hull et al., this deficit model of

composition has shaped basic writing for the past two centuries. Hull and her co-authors have mixed feelings about basic writing programs. They praise basic writing programs as “entry points to the academy, safe grounds where students” can work on their writing “without censure” (315). At the same time, they fear that these programs retain “deeply held, unarticulated assumptions about remediation and remedial students, deficit assumptions that have been part of educational thought for a long time” (315- 316).

At the 1988 NCTE annual meeting, in a session entitled “The Reemergence of Deficit Theories,” Geneva Smitherman and Jacqueline Jones Royster presented papers on how deficit theories “tend to go underground and then resurface in new forms” (51). According to Tom Fox, who writes about the session in *Defending Access* when analyzing remediation in the specific context of CSU Chico, Smitherman and Jones Royster pointed out that the power of deficit theories of composition lies not only in the ways they define students, but also in the restrictions and boundaries they place on the ways we teach these students. And Fox claims that deficit theories “tend to reduce writing to a set of discrete skills to be learned” (52). He observes that this approach superficially appears to be a series of tasks that can be addressed in “workbooks” and at “work stations,” and therefore writing becomes something that can be taught quickly and cheaply.

The “myth of transience” is a phrase coined by Mike Rose, in “Language of Exclusion.” Rose contends that the “myth of transience” leads those who believe it to look for quick fixes to compensate for some high school gaps or deficiencies; he feels that this myth has contributed to making the teaching of basic writing programs such an uncertain and tenuous enterprise. Rose argues that “[t]he myth’s liability is that it limits the faculty’s ability to consider the writing problems of their students in dynamic and historical terms” (566). As implied by the word

“transience,” and inherent to the logic of this deficit model and the term “remedial,” is the belief that any factors contributing to student unpreparedness need not persist, that there is some kind of remedy or inoculation that will keep future generations from suffering from this illness. In other words, this writing illness is a temporary condition—not just temporary for the students, but temporary for the University as well. Compositionist Gail Stygall, in “Resisting Privilege,” asserts that “The basic writing ‘problem’ ... is not temporary and our responses should not be based on its alleged momentary appearance” (339). Another problem with this limited view is that it leads to decontextualized skill and drill teaching. Rose writes, “Each academic generation considers standards and assesses the preparation of its students but seems to do so in ways that do not call the nature of the curriculum of the time into question. The problem ultimately lies outside the academy” (566). And from Rose’s perspective, considering standards and preparation, but not the underlying causes for that lack of preparation, perpetuates a myth of transience.

As Sugie Goen found in her dissertation about a CSU developmental writing program: “It is this intended temporariness, or so it would seem, that justifies and obscures the permanence of basic writing and relegates it to the margins of the university” (295). This, then, is the rhetoric of remediation: using terms that describe students in light of their deficiencies (deficit models of composition) leading to understandings of these students as “lacking,” and it is the role of the University to give them what they lack quickly. According to this line of thinking, the state of being a remedial student is transitory and can be changed with quick fixes like a high school proficiency test followed up by a few weeks of summer instruction or a couple of sessions working with a peer tutor in the writing center. At worst, students might spend a semester in a remedial writing class, but if that doesn’t clear up the problem then the student is at fault. It

might come as a surprise to someone subscribing to the myth of transience that the number of students testing into remedial writing courses has continuously risen since the initiation of the English Placement Test (EPT), leading those in control of higher education budgets to regard remediation as a crisis in need of attention.

A 2009 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article illustrates well the pervasiveness of the myth of transience and its link to the deficit model. In it, the author laments the current state of remediation in the United States and praises programs that reduce remediation by helping students get ready for college faster. The article cites a community college president in Texas who has found “Sometimes students only need a few hours of refresher lessons to test into college-level work—not an entire semester” (Killough 2). The author of the article praises summer programs and strategies such as workshops and a few visits with a writing center tutor for allowing students to move out of basic writing quickly. Articles such as this one illustrate how easily quick-fix remediation programs are embraced by the public. There is little doubt that summer programs and writing center tutoring can be of great help to students, but as Rose argues above, these kinds of programs should not be branded successes without looking at the underlying factors that led students to test into them. It is important to consider whether or not these hyper-accelerated programs actually improve students’ writing rather than simply enabling them to pass standardized exams in writing.

The “myth of transience” appears to have affected the last thirty years of remediation in the CSU. The myth is evinced in the ways administrators have regarded the programs they consider remedial. The idea that college writing can be “disposed of” quickly—or altogether—was behind the conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s over equivalency testing and the development of remedial programs. The myth resurfaced in the 1990s and 2000s with EO 665. Time and again

the CSU Trustees perpetuate the myth of transience by undervaluing the curriculum of these courses and the faculty who teach them, by applying constant scrutiny to the courses and by often hiring the least prepared faculty and failing to meet their material needs. English Council, however, alternates between defining remediation on the administration's terms and resisting the myth.¹⁶ This resistance comes in the form of working to redefine what the administration sees as remedial, deficit-based and transient to be developmental, basic, and the work of the CSU. In Chapter 4, as I focus on the ways the various CSU campuses have responded to EO 665's mandate to eliminate remediation, the resistance to the myth of transience will become clearer.

For the remainder of my study, the term "remedial" carries this complex aggregation of meanings, overtones, and implications. Lacking a better term, then, I will continue to use the terms basic writing/writers (as do most of the compositionists I cite) when describing the programs and students I am studying. However, I will faithfully quote the words remedial and remediation when used by others, with the knowledge that these are highly evocative and problematic terms. The use of these terms becomes tricky when referring to programs that English Council and CSU faculty consider to be basic writing programs or students, but the administration designates as "remedial." In those cases I will place quotation marks around the

¹⁶ The reasons behind English Council acquiescence to the Trustees are unclear. At times it appears that enough English Council members define remediation according to the Trustees' terms that others are willing to accept it. At others times the reason seems closer to the position Rose seems to be taking in his 2009 *Chronicle* article. They may think it is better to hold onto the "remedial" designation and fund their programs than risk losing funding by discontinuing the use of the designation.

term remedial, as in the previous sentence. While many in English Council (just as in composition studies) have abandoned the term “remedial” entirely, some remain comfortable with its implications of deficit and continue to use the term, and still others, as Rose intimates in the title, “Remediating Remediation,” hope that the term can be rehabilitated. Yet, by using this title, Rose makes it clear he knows that it is problematic for many readers. I will apply this complex understanding of remediation to significant moments and events in the history of English Council over the last thirty years. First to be considered will be a series of changes that moved the English Placement Test (EPT) from the role of a placement instrument to a high-stakes test will serve as the first of these moments, and then I will enumerate the strategies English Council used to protect its composition programs.

Changes to the EPT

In the thirty years that basic writing courses have been taught in the CSU system, the general structure of the English Placement Test (EPT) has not changed from the design upon which English Council and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) agreed in 1977, but the administration and use of the test have gone through several changes. It continues to be a two-part test comprising two essays and an objective portion. The essay questions are still developed and holistically scored by CSU English Studies faculty while the objective portion of the test continues to be administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). However, over the years, substantial changes have taken place with regard to the administration and control of the exam. This section will focus primarily on the establishment of a systemwide cut score for the EPT and the conflict surrounding it, but the section will also cover changes to the way that the exam is scored. Cut scores—the range of scores used to determine placement in one course or another—are commonly used tools in placement testing. Michael Zieky and Marianne Perie explain them

in an article published by the Educational Testing Service (ETS): “Cut scores are selected points on the score scale of a test. The points are used to determine whether a particular test score is sufficient for some purpose” (2). Zieky and Perie note, “For example, student performance on a test may be classified into one of several categories such as basic, proficient, or advanced on the basis of cut scores” (2). While these changes to the EPT are of interest to those who want to chart the history of assessment, the discussions surrounding the changes, and the ways that decisions were made by the Chancellor’s office to make changes to the administration and scoring of the test, illustrate the role of English Council in negotiating with the administrators of the University.

A Systemwide Cut Score for the EPT

In order to understand how English Council and English Studies faculty lost control of both the administration and use of the EPT, it is helpful to review the test’s history and the changes in the way that test is used since its introduction. One of the most important transitions in the use of the EPT has been the development of a systemwide cut score. In the case of the EPT, students are classified into one of the first two categories—either in need of remedial coursework or ready to enter first-year composition. The purpose of the English Equivalency Examination (EEE), discussed at length in the previous chapter, had been to determine if students should be allowed to forgo composition courses entirely. The EEE is no longer the primary method for determining equivalency credit for FYC, and currently most campuses use Advanced Placement Exam scores for this purpose.

The CSU designers of the EPT (Edward White and other English Council members) believed in the need for campuses and faculty who knew their students to use the placement tool as they saw fit. Therefore, they foresaw each campus setting its own cut score for the EPT. As White put it in *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*:

Early on, all of us involved in the program had decided that a systemwide cut score on the placement test made no sense, since we were dealing with nineteen campuses of widely varying purposes and quality. A student with writing ability that cried out for improvement on a small liberal arts campus might have quite acceptable literacy for an agriculture program at a Polytech. We would not report scores as passing or failing apart from campus programs, and we would not report scores in a way that might lead to misuse of what we saw as a descriptive profile.

(193)

However, this latitude for each campus to set its own cut score only existed from 1978 to 1985. In 1985, the desire to secure more special funding for students taking remedial courses led the CSU to move to a uniform cut score for all campuses.

Establishing a uniform cut score has had a dramatic impact on the funding of remedial programs in the CSU. After the EPT had been offered for several years, a committee was formed to evaluate its effectiveness. The EPT Committee is made up of CSU English Studies faculty (almost always English Council Members—over the years these have been literature, English Education, or composition specialists), representatives from the Educational Testing Service, and at least one member of the Chancellor's staff. In 1985, the EPT Evaluation Committee recommended that the EPT cut score be set at a "range of 146 to 151 ... as the minimum score necessary for placement in baccalaureate English composition courses" (Academic Senate). According to *Focus on English*, a booklet the Chancellor's Office distributed to all students preparing to take the EPT, the range of possible scores on the EPT range from 120-180. The booklet also notes that "Students scoring below 151 may experience some problems in regular college work; those scoring 145 or below are likely to have such problems. Scores lower than

140 indicate the probability of real difficulty for the student unless considerable help is made available” (33). ILE programs vary widely from campus to campus, but most include from one to three sequenced, not-for-credit, basic writing courses as well as writing centers, summer bridge programs, and other kinds of learning assistance programs. From 1985 to the present, campuses have been allotted special funding to support what came to be known as Intensive Learning Experiences (ILE) for those students with particularly low scores (below 151 on the EPT) and therefore most need of writing assistance.

Attempts at Lowering the Cut Score

Since the time the uniform cut score was set by the Chancellor’s Office, some English Council members have worked to allow campuses to make independent decisions as to whether they would use the score. The first call for either lowering the cut score or allowing campuses more latitude in setting their own cut scores came relatively soon after the uniform cut score was established. In 1987, a proposal for lowering the score to 146 was presented to English Council by the EPT Committee and was approved at English Council. One example the EPT Committee cited to make their case for lowering the cut score involved a practice at the Chico campus. At Chico, instead of relying on the 151 cut-score, at Chico they were adjusting scores according to the strength of a student’s essays. If the scorers regarded an essay as “high” or very successful, but the multiple-choice portion of the test was “low” or weaker, then they were willing to place that student in first-year composition instead of a remedial course. English Council approved of the latitude the Chico campus was taking with the EPT and wanted all campuses to be able to weigh scores in that manner, and wrote a resolution to this effect.

To the surprise of English Council, however, faculty from CSU Chico sent a letter to Kenneth Simms, Assistant Dean of Academic Programs, in opposition to English Council’s

resolution. They justified their policy by explaining, "... we do not accept [scores of] 149 or below if the essay score is low. We would endorse CSU policy that used such a weighted scale" as the one described above. "It makes programmatic sense: students with higher writing ability have a better chance to succeed in Freshman Composition than those whose writing ability is low." They wrote, "We oppose lowering cut-scores as proposed. It is true the 146 cut score would reflect current practice here and there in the system, but by admission of personnel from several campuses, their institutions lowered the cut-score arbitrarily on the basis of funding level and not student performance (Stairs)." They claim that their campus had been "misrepresented in the data" in the EPT Committee proposal. The Chico faculty further justified their position in stating that they "fear[ed] that a CSU policy endorsing a 146 cut-score as proposed would imply CSU endorsement for the lower score and make it impossible for an individual campus to hold the line for a cut score above that minimum" (Stairs). Unfortunately, there are no records of any communication between English Council and the Chico faculty regarding the resolution.

With the EPT Committee proposal to lower the cut score and the plea from CSU Chico to leave it alone, the Chancellor and his representatives received two different messages regarding the faculty's attitudes toward the cut score. There is no record of a reply from the Chancellor's Office in response to the EPT Committee's proposal, and the cut score remains at 151 as of 2010. However, since the implementation of EO 665, campuses have been given more latitude as to what kinds of supplemental instruction can be given to students who score in the 146-151 range. As stated in the CSU's guide to students preparing to take the EPT, "there might be some slight variation in the way campuses use scores to establish preparedness for college-level work. You can find out what the campus of your choice does by consulting the campus catalog or course schedule" (Harrington 24). The inclusion of this statement about variation between

campuses is very important to English Studies faculty as it makes room for departments to make adaptations like directed self-placement or stretch composition courses (which I will describe in detail in the next chapter), once these programs are approved by the individual campus.

Even though the cut score remains at 151, the difficulty of the test has increased over the years. In 1989, the EPT Committee shortened the test and removed questions that dealt with issues that were no longer covered in CSU composition courses. In 2002, the essay prompts were altered from single question prompts to ones with a reading and some incorporation of that reading in the essays. Concerns were periodically raised within English Council about how the changes to the test should have been accompanied by a change to the cut score, but the score remained at 151.

In 2005, as the pressure of EO 665 was mounting and it was clear that the supplemental funding that had come along with low cut scores was evaporating, Amy Heckathorn of CSU Sacramento gave a presentation at the fall English Council meeting. Heckathorn presented data revealing that when these various changes were made to the test in 1989 and 2002, the EPT Committee requested the cut score be lowered to better align with the demands of the test, but the score was never lowered. Heckathorn and others urged English Council to add their voices to the call for a lowered cut score.

In an e-mail he sent to the Council following the meeting, then-president of the Council John Edlund of Cal Poly Pomona wrote, "Taking a larger view, the Sacramento data indicate that lowering the cutoff would 'reduce the need for remediation' without substantially diminishing the literacy of our freshmen. This would be politically advantageous to the CSU and clearly a plus for the affected students" (Executive Summary). In this e-mail, Edlund also noted that English Council would work on a resolution calling for the lowering of cut scores at the spring

2006 English Council meeting. However, when the time came to write the resolution, there were enough people opposed to lowering the cut score that the resolution was tabled (CSU English Council, Minutes). The reasons for this opposition were similar to those given by the faculty at CSU Chico. Members opposed to the resolution did not want the Council to be seen as encouraging the lowering of standards for writing in the CSU (Personal Notes, Spring 2006). Hence, the cut score has never been lowered and campuses have never been given official permission to set their own cut scores.

Implications of the Uniform Cut Score

The decision, in 1985, to establish a uniform cut score for the EPT across the CSU provided much-needed funding to CSU campuses for developmental composition programs. However, some compositionists and department chairs within English Council resisted it because a standardized cut score took local control over placement away from the individual campuses and made placement uniform across the CSU. In reflecting on the fate of the EPT over the years, White commented that, “the test scores have gotten into the funding system and money came to the campuses for programs by way of the EPT test scores” (Personal Interview). For this reason, White notes that it would be unlikely for CSU campuses to be able to move away from using the EPT for placement. Similarly, in 2008, Mary Boland and Kim Costino, composition faculty members at CSU San Bernardino posited:

The CSU’s current literacy and remediation crises came to be when a *placement* test, a voluntary test unattached to admissions and designed to put students in writing courses that would most appropriately meet their needs, became, with no changes to its basic design, a mandatory “competency test” that students either

pass or fail and that thus determines their “college readiness.” (emphasis in original, 3)

White, Boland, and Costino connect the use of a mandatory cut score to the transformation of the EPT from a test used to determine which composition class a student should take into the kind of test a student could fail.

English Council has had a difficult time over the years clarifying what they see as the purpose of the EPT. White and the others on the EPT Committee worked to make it very clear that the “P” in EPT stands for “placement.” White wrote of an occasion on which he tried to explain to a member of the legislature that characterizing EPT results to “passing” or “failing” the exam is simply not a valid way to apply them. He noted that one does not “pass” a placement test but, rather, that students who take the exam are placed into a course that best meets their needs as learners (White, *Developing*, 193-195). In this example the legislator was frustrated that White would not just tell him how many students failed the test.

Viewing placement data in “pass/fail” terms is also evident in a 1983 report from a Task Force on Remediation. (This group and the report that led to its existence will be discussed at length later in this chapter). In their recommendations, the task force stated that “students who score 150 on the EPT will be required to pass a CSU campus or campus-approved remedial course,” again dividing students into just two groups: those who “pass” and those who “fail.” They further recommend that if students are unable to pass the class, they must “retake the EPT at their own expense until they pass it.” And their final directive can now be seen as a precursor to EO 665 with regard to placing time limits on students for completing remedial courses. “Students will be academically disqualified,” they wrote, “if they have not demonstrated competence on the EPT . . . by the end of their second semester or third quarter in attendance”

(“CSU Plan the Reduce Remedial Activity” 27). The use of the terms “pass” and “demonstrate competence” with regard to the EPT reflects a fundamental misuse of the concept of a placement exam.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, English Council worked hard to create two different tests with distinct purposes: the EPT was to be used to determine placement for all entering students and the EEE was designed to be taken only by those students hoping to bypass first-year composition. By requiring students to “pass” or “retake the EPT at their own expense until they pass it,” the task force recommended using a tool, the EPT, for a purpose it was not designed to serve. They proposed using the placement test as an entrance examination.

This history reveals that the uniform cut score began a process that shifted the EPT from a placement test used as desired by local composition programs to its current use as a high-stakes test. It was no longer a benign assessment tool used to place students into composition courses. The stakes became considerably higher when the implementation of EO 665 dictated that students whose scores on the EPT place them into remedial courses could be disenrolled from the University if they did not complete the courses within one year.

Cut scores not only determine placement for students, but they are also used to determine the funding of remedial programs. According to Michael Zieky, an assessment specialist, a 1999 study conducted by the National Education Goals Panel found that before 1989, the purpose of cut scores was to set academic standards and determine “minimally acceptable levels of performance.” The study found that in the ten-year period between 1989 and 1999, “the nation witnessed an unprecedented level of effort at the national, state, and local levels to set more rigorous academic standards and design more challenging assessments” (3 qtd. in Zieky, 26). Attitudes toward cut scores among English Council members have changed over the years. When

a cut score was first established in the CSU in the mid 1980s, many in the CSU English Council looked favorably on the standardized cut score because it served as a means to funding in tight budget times. But, as Sugie Goen observes in her study of remedial writing in California universities, from its inception, “[B]asic writing was charged with the mandate to keep academic standards high, not to ‘dumb down’ the college curriculum to accommodate these students. At stake were whether these students were teachable and whether the faculty could rise to the profound pedagogical challenge that faced them” (Goen 11). Standardizing a cut score for the EPT caused the test to appear suitably rigorous to possible detractors of remedial writing. At the same time, the uniform score across the CSU made the task of determining the amount of funding campuses would receive for their remedial programs easier. Yet, while standardizing the cut score served the purpose of making the process for allocating ILE funds appear to be equitable across the CSU system, it also took control over placement from faculty on individual campuses who knew the courses and the students, and gave it to the testers and to administrators with their hands on the purse strings.

Executive Order 514: A Point of Agreement

Not all the changes to the EPT have been controversial ones. For example, English Council welcomed the decision by the Chancellor’s Office to mandate at what point students should take the EPT and, potentially, developmental writing. This decision is seen by English Council members such as Kim Flachmann (a current, long-time English Council member from CSU Bakersfield who has frequently served as an officer of the council) as one of the more recent examples of how English Council and the Chancellor’s Office can work together positively (Personal Interview).

Even though the designers of the EPT intended it to be used as a placement test that newly admitted students would take before registering for any classes, many students delayed taking the exam as long as possible, sometimes waiting to take it until their junior or senior year. These students were not learning about the help available to them at a time when it could do the most good, but instead this delay meant that some of the students who tested into remedial writing courses were taking them after they had already completed most of the courses required for their degrees. When the EPT Committee took this concern to the Chancellor in 1987, the result was an executive order known as EO 514 that required all first-year students to take the EPT immediately upon acceptance to a CSU. EO 514 established the EPT as a “prerequisite to enrollment in a baccalaureate English course” and in so doing required all students who did not “demonstrate requisite competence” to enroll in remedial courses in order “to correct deficiencies before undertaking baccalaureate English courses” (Office of the Chancellor “Executive Order 514”). The request for and implementation of EO 514 is an example of how the Chancellor’s Office and English Council agreed, and collaborated, on an issue relating to basic writing. But there were few issues surrounding the EPT and remedial writing courses on which there was this level of agreement.

The Switch to On-Line Scoring

A current example of a change to the EPT that will be discussed at length here is indicative of how far the EPT has come from a homegrown placement test designed by CSU English Studies faculty for use with CSU students to its current status as another standardized test controlled by the ETS. This example also illustrates how, over the past thirty years, the pattern of the relationships between English Council and the successive CSU Chancellors and their boards has been to move through periods of agreement and periods of strain.

Early in 2008, ETS convinced the EPT Committee (made up of representatives from the Chancellor's Office, Analytical Studies, ETS and CSU faculty) to alter the scoring of the placement essays in significant, cost-saving ways. Henceforth, only one reader, instead of two, would score each essay and all scoring would be done on-line. According to a letter written by Allison Jones, the Senior Director of Access and Retention working in the Chancellor's Office, these changes were appealing to the Chancellor, the Trustees, and ETS. A study conducted by ETS found that the University and ETS could save a great deal of money by making it unnecessary for faculty to travel in order to score the exams. Moreover, the switch to on-line scoring would also significantly reduce the time needed to conduct scoring ("RE: A Letter on the EPT").¹⁷

When Jonathan Price of CSU Sacramento, then president of English Council, received the news about the changes to the EPT, he immediately shared it with English Council Executive Board and wrote a sternly worded letter to Mr. Allison Jones. In this letter, Price expressed the frustration that had built up over the years within English Council regarding its loss of control over the EPT. Price expressed particular concern over three aspects of this decision regarding the EPT. First, the decision to move to only one scorer; second, the move from in-person scoring of the EPT to on-line scoring; and, third, the fact that English Council was not included in the decision-making process.

¹⁷ As of this writing, the UC system is in the process of implementing a similar shift from in-person to on-line scoring of its composition placement exam. That decision was made in light of similar circumstances (Gadda).

Price's letter to Jones began with the notification that the Executive Board of English Council had "serious doubts about the on-line grading strategy and especially about the loss of the joint sessions involving systemwide groups of faculty" ("Letter to Allison Jones"). English Council had long considered in-person, holistic scoring of the EPT one of the most positive aspects of the test. Switching to on-line scoring was regarded as a move in the wrong direction by many in English Council. When scoring takes place on-line, Price argued, "collegial exchange of information and standards between CSU composition lecturers, CSU tenure-track faculty engaged in placement and composition [and] local high school teachers" is lost. Price urged Jones and his colleagues in the Chancellor's Office to recommend that "in-person grading" of EPT essays should continue to be held on individual CSU campuses. While these changes to the test may prove to be cost effective for ETS, Price pointed out that "[d]etermining a single student's EPT score is not the only purpose or result of the previous EPT process" ("Letter to Allison Jones").

The need for in-person norming has been discussed in detail in both composition and assessment literature. According to Russel Durst, Marjorie Roemer and Lucille Schultz in an article included in *New Directions in Portfolio Assessment*, norming is not just about scoring essays. They argue that the negotiations that take place during norming not only "serve as important means of faculty development," but also "provide a forum for faculty and administrators to rethink the goals of a freshman English program" (287). Similarly, Pat Belanoff and Peter Elbow argue that even within composition programs where the concept "communities of discourse" are presumed to exist already, it takes the "time and turmoil" of norming to create such community (21). If the "time and turmoil" of norming are essential elements for creating a discourse community within a program on an individual campus, how much more necessary is

the process of norming across the twenty plus campuses of the CSU if all campuses are to be invested in the EPT?

Additionally, according to Joanne Addison and Rick VanDeWeghe, writing for the publication *English Education*, norming for portfolio scoring—and by extension I argue, norming for an exam like the EPT—impacts teaching. Reporting on a 1999 survey of composition faculty (tenured, lecturer, and TA) conducted at the University of Colorado, the authors found that “almost half of the respondents commented that the norming session raised their awareness of issues related to writing that they will be certain to discuss with their students and emphasize through the process of writing” (28-29). While some might argue that it is not the function of the English Placement Test to serve as faculty development, but instead to hold incoming students accountable to a systemwide standard of written communication.

To that argument, Belanoff and Elbow note that unless faculty who teach writing have the opportunity to discuss the standards they apply to student writing, then a “disparity of standards is locked inside solitary heads. . .” (21). However, they see team norming and scoring as “an antidote to teacher isolation” which “brings teachers together to work as colleagues” (20). Belanoff and Elbow further argue that this process helps the program move “toward some commonality of standards—but only over a period of semesters and years” (21). After three years of online norming and scoring, the impact of the change is unclear. No comparisons have yet been conducted. One can only hope that the kind of faculty development and opportunities to work out standards that took place in person have continued in the online setting. But an issue that concerned Price and other English Council members—those with the most knowledge of and experience with large scale testing of this kind in the state, if not the country—was that they were not given the chance to assess the viability and validity of online scoring for the EPT.

In his letter to Jones, Price wrote that the Executive Board was “distressed” to learn that the changes to the scoring of EPT essays “had become a *fait accompli* without the kinds of consultation” English Council had in the past provided and had asked, in previous correspondence, to continue. Price’s letter lays out an argument, on behalf of English Council, that also reappears throughout my study. Price stressed that “there are CSU faculty experts in EPT and remediation; we feel those of us on the CSU English Council are among these experts and should be consulted before significant changes in EPT policy [are implemented].” Price laments that, instead of being “consulted” about these matters in advance, he received a letter to “inform” English Council of a decision that had already been made (“Letter to Allison Jones”).

In his letter, Price cited statements made by White and others that the gains made by English Council in the 1980s had been lost. These gains included English Council’s former negotiating position with ETS over the inclusion of holistically-scored essays. When the decision to move to on-line scoring was made, English Council’s collective expertise was not used or even acknowledged.

While I no longer have access to any possible responses to Price’s March 2008 e-mail, English Council, as a whole took up the issue of the changes to EPT essay scoring at their spring 2008 meeting. On April 17, 2008, at the Wednesday night composition meeting of English Council, members were eager to discuss the changes to the EPT at length (Personal Notes). One member of the EPT Committee told the group that she was “stunned” that the committee was not informed of this decision until after it was made. Another member commented that the EPT was becoming “narrower and narrower” in scope and that it was no longer the test English Council has designed. John Edlund, president of English Council from 2003 to 2007, summed up the concerns of many English Council members when he said, near the end of the evening’s

discussion, “This change to a single rater now eliminates many of the positive things about the test...” (Personal Notes). Price wrote in a reflection following the meeting, “[T]here was a spirited and frank exchange of views (as they say in diplomatic circles)” (“Two or Three”) such that a new member of English Council for whom this was the first meeting claimed that he “had no idea that there was such a healthy sense of debate” surrounding EPT scoring. I have been unable to find any response to Price’s e-mail but, by 2007, as Edlund’s comment above reveals, the EPT has become less and less appealing to the members of English Council. This shift in control of the EPT from English Council hands to ETS and the Chancellor’s Office is indicative of what has been happening with the entire remediation enterprise over the past 30 years.

Restricting Basic Writing

The primary composition-related areas of concern for English Council from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s were gaining permission to offer developmental courses to their students and using the best methods possible to place students in those classes. By the mid-1980s, however, those courses were under attack, and English Council found itself working to protect the programs in the face of restrictions and pressures coming from the Chancellor’s Office and the public. The remainder of this chapter will examine, first, the conflict around assigning credit for developmental, what some termed “remedial,” composition classes. Then I will consider the issues relating to the teaching of basic writing, including who would teach the courses and the conditions in which they would be taught.

From their inceptions, the status of the CSU basic writing programs has been very tenuous. Their funding has never been certain, and credit for the courses was never assured. Chapter 4 will address the issue of credit for basic writing courses in greater detail. But it is important to note that, from their introduction, CSU faculty have rallied for credit for remedial

courses. However, graduation credit for remedial courses has always been a contentious issue between English Council and those in the Chancellor's Office. According to White, it was always his intention and hope that the remedial courses offered in the CSU would be given course credit (Personal Interview). However, members of the state legislature and some CSU officials feared that by offering credit for "remedial" courses the CSU would be lowering its standards. Chancellor Glenn Dumke and the Trustees determined that while campuses could charge students standard fees for these courses (which helped students qualify for financial aid), remedial writing courses could only be offered at CSUs as long as those courses not be allowed credit toward graduation. This became official CSU policy in 1980 when the Trustees adopted Executive Order 338 (Title 5 of the California Administrative Code). EO 338 states that remedial composition courses are to be considered pre-baccalaureate because they entail coursework students "should have learned" before coming to the CSU ("Promises to Keep" 2).

After all his effort to establish basic writing programs in the CSU, White found the decision not to grant credit for these courses highly problematic. He recalls "argu[ing] right from the start that [students] should get credit" for remedial courses. In one heated conversation with an academic senator, White fought against the perspective that the University should not "give credit for high school work in college because then you are diminishing [students'] college education." White's response to that argument was to ask, "What about ART 111: Arts and Crafts on the Beach? How about Introductory French and Introductory German? How about the macramé course in the Art Department and the exercise courses in the PE Department? Are those more worthy of credit than somebody learning how to write?" (Personal Interview). While White's argument may appear logical to those who regard writing as a craft to be developed throughout one's education, it did not convince those with the power to grant

credit. Because these new courses were branded “remedial” and pre-baccalaureate, they would not be granted course credit.

The lack of graduation credit for basic writing courses has repercussions for both the students taking the courses and the faculty teaching those students. Bill Bolin, in his description of basic writing for *Keywords in Composition*, claims that a course that does not carry graduation credit is by nature a less important class to most students. He also points out that students tend to have different attitudes about basic writing than they do about courses labeled as “introductory.” Bolin notes that students in basic writing courses, “unlike students who enroll in technical or creative writing [who] tend toward identification as technical or creative writers . . . begin with identification classes as basic writers and work to distance themselves from it” (28). This tendency to value these courses less highly not only occurs among students, but also for university administrators. Indeed, Sugie Goen, in her dissertation on basic writing in the CSU, connects the loss of credit for basic writing to the myth of transience. She writes that “To the extent that the Trustees of the California State University construe basic writing as temporary and marginal, it carries no credit toward the four-year college degree—it is not ‘real’ college work” (296). English Council has worked to secure credit for basic writing courses, but credit has been unattainable while these courses continue to carry with them the remedial designation. Thirty years after the introduction of remedial composition in the CSU, the battle over credit for the courses continues. Chapter Five will address the issue of credit for basic writing courses in greater detail.

Basic Writing Programs under Scrutiny

The second half of this chapter is focused on charting the activities of English Council around protecting basic writing programs and attempting to secure credit for basic writing

courses. Struggles over basic writing programs span from the early 1980s until the present. But, a good vantage point from which to observe their beginnings can be found in 1983 with the release of a very influential report. The next several sections relate to the extensive 153-page report called “Promises to Keep” that was released in 1983. The purpose of the report was to address the effectiveness of remediation in California’s tripartite higher education system—the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CC). Less than ten years into remedial writing’s history in the CSU system, criticisms were raised about its high cost. The authors of “Promises to Keep” were the California Post-Secondary Education Commission (CPEC), which included fifteen members, nine of whom the committee claimed “represented the general public, with three each appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Governor.” The remaining six members were chosen to “represent the major educational systems of the State” (“Promises to Keep” unnumbered page). In preparing the report which called upon each branch of the system to develop a five-year plan to address remediation, the authors strove to be thorough in justifying and defining the terms they used to define the programs they were evaluating.

With the 1983 report came the first of many calls for remediation to be reduced. In this case, the call was that it be reduced “to a level consonant with the principles of both quality and access as determined by each segment” (102). This call left the logistics of the reduction up to the institutions, but mandated that they take place. The methods the CSU implemented to achieve this reduction were similar to those mandated twelve years later in EO 665. Among other suggestions, the report advised improving high school instruction by assisting California high schools in “defining standards for college-preparatory courses and in providing staff development,” and if students were still “unprepared” for college work, they were to be sent to

the California Community Colleges to take remedial courses (103). The committee also recommended that the institutions develop “diagnostic testing and assessment” (109). CPEC encouraged “all three segments” to work to develop “appropriate diagnostic tests so that high school students can be assured of consistent expectations between high schools and colleges and thus be encouraged to obtain the necessary skills before entering college” (109). These strategies are also found in EO 665, and English Council is responding to these kinds of prescriptions at this writing.

The CSU, as an institution, was charged with responding to the report and worked to form a committee for that purpose. But English Council did not wait for the CSU committee to present its plans for reducing remediation within its composition programs. Instead, the Council submitted three resolutions to Chancellor Dumke regarding the recommendations made in “Promises to Keep.” The first resolution expresses English Council’s concern that students were being encouraged to attend community colleges to complete their “remedial” coursework. As Thomas Klammer, then English Council president, wrote in his cover letter for the resolutions, sending students to community colleges “would write off long standing campus investments, waste the talent and effectiveness of large numbers of faculty ... and result in the loss of important support services for the minority and ESL students when (sic) the CSU is actively recruiting.” The second resolution calls for consultation with CSU “faculty and faculty organizations before any plan to reduce remedial instruction is implemented” (Klammer). The third resolution requests that the means the University uses to bring about the reductions in remediation, whatever they be, should not alter the programs that the CSUs already had in place to serve currently admitted students (Klammer). These resolutions were an attempt by English

Council to remind the Chancellor and the Trustees of the quality of their programs and counter the impact of “Promises to Keep.”

In the spring of 1985 English Council was contacted by Linda Bunnell Jones, the liaison in the Chancellor’s Office with whom English Council president communicated in the 1980s and 1990s. Jones predicted that “eventually remediation would be reduced because [of] increased improvement in student performance” due to the improved preparation at the high school level. She also noted that “[t]he Chancellor’s Office has assured the Council that no reduction will take place if student preparation is not improved” (CSU English Council, Minutes, 1985). Jones ended her letter by noting that, “[T]he Chancellor’s Office will keep English Council informed of the progress in reaching the goals of remedial reduction” (CSU English Council, Minutes, 1985). While this was not an overtly negative response to the resolutions, it was not the kind of support the Council had received in the 1970s during the CLEP test incident.

White, who was an active member of English Council during both of these events, observes that Jones’ response is typical of those English Council received during the period. According to White and two other members of English Council Kim Flachmann of Bakersfield, and Mary Kaye Harrington of San Luis Obispo, the 1980s and 1990s was a time of reduced power for English Council (White, Personal Interview; Flachmann, Personal Interview; Harrington, Personal Interview). White pointed out a key difference between this period (mid-to-late 1980s) and what took place during his term as president (late 1970s—mid 1980s). As discussed at length in Chapter 2, in the 1970s, when Gerhardt Friedrich was the Chancellor’s Office liaison to English Council during the council’s conflict with the Chancellor over credit by exam taking the place of first-year composition, Friedrich risked losing his job by informing English Council about Chancellor Dumke’s plan to adopt the CLEP exams. This stands in

contrast to the dispute caused when funding for remedial writing programs was being threatened in the 1980s; then-liaison Linda Bunnell Jones took a much less helpful position toward English Council. While Jones' response to English Council was not openly adversarial, the assurance that they would be kept "informed of the progress in reaching the goals of remedial reduction" was a far cry from the insider knowledge Friedrich shared with the group.

White believes that having people like Jones (and her successors) in the role of liaison has been a major factor in moving English Council from a position of compelling influence and power to one of weakness when negotiating with the Chancellor. According to Flachmann and Harrington, and as supported by English Council minutes from around the time of the "Promises to Keep" Report and into the 1990s, English Council sent off many resolutions, made statements on issues they considered to be important, and took part in committees on matters relating to the teaching of writing (Flachmann, Personal Interview; Harrington, Personal Interview). However, the organization was not able to act with the effectiveness and power that they held in the time leading up to the development of the EEE and the EPT and that they would regain in the late 1990s. One reason for the difference was the lack of allies in the Chancellor's Office. Lacking such support or belief that their expertise would be sought with regard to the administration of writing programs, the Council used the method of communication still at their disposal; they wrote. From the year 1983 to 1994 English Council sent an average of seven resolutions per year to the Chancellor's Office on a broad range of topics that fell within the purview of English

Council.¹⁸ In the next section I will discuss some of the issues pertaining to my study around which English Council mobilized in the 1980s and 1990s.

Protecting Basic Writing

As evidenced by the remedial designation and the recommendations found in “Promises to Keep,” basic writing in the CSU has been under scrutiny from its inception. The remainder of this chapter will focus on some of the ways that English Council and its members have grappled with the challenges of directing large basic writing programs that often lacked the status and recognition of other programs within the University. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s (when EO 665 was introduced), English Council became engaged in several struggles regarding the teaching of writing (many of which are listed above). In addition to the resolution topics I will explore below, English Council passed resolutions on several other consequential topics during this time, including the teaching of English as a Second Language, the institution of an assessment of student writing at the junior level, and the issues of how best to prepare future high school teachers of English. Two issues in particular were revisited often: the use of contingent labor to staff the programs and struggles over class size. Examining these debated topics, both of which directly impact the teaching of basic writing in the CSU, is key to understanding how a policy like EO 665 emerged. These points of contention, by no means unique to the CSU programs, contributed to perpetuating basic writing’s marginalized status in the academy.

¹⁸ In order to come to this number, I read the minutes and all associated meeting notes from 1983 and each successive meeting through 1994 and arrived at an average number of resolutions.

Who Should Teach Basic Writing?

This section explores the complexity of English Council, as an organization made up of faculty from the range of English Studies, taking definitive positions on issues of labor—especially when it comes to deciding who should teach basic writing. From the late 1970s forward, English Council minutes and correspondence between English Council and the Board of Trustees reveal much debate over who should teach basic writing in the CSU. Some have argued that only those with specialized training in composition and or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) should teach the courses. Others have believed that all English Studies faculty can teach basic composition regardless of training. Finally, some took the position that these programs should be staffed by those whose services come at the lowest cost to the University (contingent labor in the form of part-time faculty or graduate students). The debate within English Council over who should teach basic writing reflects the larger debate in the field of English Studies and particularly within composition.

Echoing Rose when discussing the myth of transience, so Goen argues about the CSU: “To the extent that basic writing is marginal and temporary, so too is the faculty who are largely untenured part-time lecturers and graduate students who hear a clear, albeit mixed, message about their status in the university” (Goen, dissertation, 296). Furthermore, in her “Resisting Privilege” article cited above, Stygall asks, “Who needs a tenure-line, permanent position for instructing basic writers when the problem will evaporate as soon as the current crisis is over?” She argues that “[t]he vulnerability of graduate students and part-time instructors to institutional forces makes them the groups most likely to construct basic writers as the institution demands” (339). An indication of how this debate was taking shape came in a letter from an English Council member to English Council president.

Mary Kay Tirrell shared clippings with Gale Larson from the October 15, 1986, *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The first was an opinion column about whether or not tenured literature professors should have to teach developmental writing courses. Also included were five letters written in response to the opinion piece. The author of the article, R.C. Reynolds, lamented being “forced” to teach basic writing. He believed that his credentials as a tenured professor of American literature made him either “under-or-over-qualified to teach remedial English” (Reynolds). Reynolds claimed that, while his students were “well-intentioned and hard working,” they were simply not “college material” and would never “get a sheepskin from this or any other university.” Reynolds’ piece received some strong responses from the readers of the *Chronicle*. Readers critiqued Reynolds’ attitude toward his students and most agreed that his doctorate in American literature did not qualify him to teach basic writing. One participant went so far as to suggest that if Reynolds was not interested in teaching basic writing, then “his salary could be divided among two dedicated, not-so-priestly Master-degreed instructors who would go prepared and challenged” to the classroom (Garvin). Tirrell believed the initial article and the responses paralleled the situation that existed in the CSU since there was an ongoing debate within English Council, among the strands of English Studies, and in individual departments over whether tenured literature faculty should be teaching basic writing.

Tirrell explained that she sent these materials to Larson because the article “beautifully illustrates” the problem of requiring tenured English faculty to teach basic writing. She wrote, as a tenured professor of literature, “I would like full professors to teach the course only because it would give basic writing the value it lacks when tenured faculty are kept from it. I hate to see developmental writing something fit for only part-timers or graduate students. . . .” There is no record of English Council addressing Tirrell’s concern at the time she wrote the letter. However,

eleven years after sharing her concern that tenured faculty should be encouraged to teach composition, the EPT Committee (on which several English Council members served, and in 1986 most of those serving would have been literature specialists) expressed a similar concern in a list of recommendations they submitted to the Chancellor's Office. They suggested that "Full-time and tenure-track faculty be strongly encouraged to participate in writing skills instruction and, that department presidents, when appropriate, take steps to ensure the participation of a core of such faculty in their writing skills programs" (5). To clarify, from the context of Tirrell's argument it can be interpreted that when she refers to "full professors" and "tenured faculty" she is referring to those with specializations in areas other than composition studies. Tirrell's call was not necessarily to hire faculty with credentials in composition. Also, note that in this context "writing skills instruction" has a particular: it refers not only to first-year composition, but also to basic writing.

The response from the Chancellor's Office regarding the recommendation was something of a mixed bag. The Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for the CSU responded positively to this recommendation but noted that it was up to individual campus departments "to examine programs and make efforts" to include full-time faculty "where appropriate" (Kerschner 4). In other words, the Chancellor's Office was going to leave this decision up to individual departments and would not mandate a change in hiring practices. This choice of taking a hands-off approach resulted in very little change for developmental writing on the campus level. This is one more example of how English Council, if in some cases behind the scenes, worked to lobby those in positions of power on behalf of CSU students and faculty. The debate over who should teach basic writing, and the kinds of preparation these teachers should have, is ongoing and extend far beyond the CSU. Stygall is certainly not alone in her critique of universities leaving

the teaching of writing to vulnerable “graduate students and part-time instructors.” A key factor in deciding who should be teaching basic writing, or composition overall needs to be the preparation that faculty need. As Ann Del Principe, a full-time lecturer in the CUNY system, argues, “The iconic image of the basic writing teacher as a rugged individual whose teaching is based on lore and field experience is counter-productive to our work as a field” (79). She goes on to lament that so many composition courses are taught by those who are “unfamiliar with basic writing scholarship” and urges that it is the responsibility of individual departments to “take steps to open dialog among faculty with differing beliefs about teaching writing in order to build better community and improve our collective practice” (79). However, Marjorie Roemer, Lucille Schultz and Russel Durst, who each served as Director of Composition at the University of Cincinnati in the 1990s, warn in their co-authored article that “while TAs and adjuncts enjoy less support than full-time faculty, we believe it is a mistake to equate that difference with the level of skill these teachers possess” (386). So, preparation to teach basic writing is essential, but it is wrong to assume that part-time and/or lecturer faculty do not possess that preparation. English Council has always provided opportunities for faculty to build community, and it has also enabled faculty in more stable positions to advocate on behalf of adjunct and contingent faculty. The next section chronicles English Council’s efforts to that end.

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students and part-time instructors.” A key factor in deciding who should be teaching basic writing, or composition overall, is the preparation faculty receive before entering the classroom. As Ann Del Principe, a full-time lecturer in the CUNY system, argues, “[t]he iconic image of the basic writing teacher as a rugged individual whose teaching is based on lore and field experience is counter-productive to our work as a field” (79). She goes on to lament that so many composition courses are taught by those who are “unfamiliar with basic writing scholarship” and urges that it is the responsibility of individual departments to “take steps to open dialog among faculty with differing beliefs about teaching writing in order to build better community and improve our collective practice” (79). However, Marjorie Roemer, Lucille Schultz and Russel Durst, who each served as Director of Composition at the University of Cincinnati in the 1990s, warn in their co-authored article that “while TAs and adjuncts enjoy less support than full-time faculty, we believe it is a mistake to equate that difference with the level of skill these teachers possess” (386). So, while preparation to teach basic writing is essential, it would be a mistake to assume that part-time and/or lecturer faculty do not possess that preparation. English Council has always provided opportunities for faculty to build community, and it has also enabled faculty in more stable positions to advocate on behalf of adjunct and contingent faculty. The next section chronicles English Council’s efforts to that end.

Contingent Faculty

It is noteworthy that Tirrell’s letter came only a few months after the now-famous 1986 Wyoming Conference on Composition and Literature. At that conference a resolution was passed by those in attendance that addresses “the generally low professional status of composition scholars and the economic exploitation of many writing teachers.” What came to be known as the “Wyoming resolution” encouraged the board of College Composition and Communication

(CCC) to develop standards for the teaching of writing (Bedford Bibliography). The CCC Board agreed to do so and at its 1987 conference it began the process of developing a set of standards for the post-secondary teaching of writing. These standards were adopted in 1989.

The resulting “CCC Statement of Principles and Standards for Post Secondary Teaching of Writing” has been an extremely important document for the CSU English Council. The statement addressed challenges often faced by composition faculty in seeking recognition in the University. It also addressed teaching load by calling on universities to consider how teaching load relates to quality education. “Higher education traditionally assures this quality by providing reasonable teaching loads, research support, and eventual tenure for those who meet rigorous professional standards. Such standards are applied and such support is extended to virtually all faculties in higher education—but rarely to those who teach writing” (329). The statement highlights the legitimacy of composition as a field of research and study when it notes, “The teaching, research, and service contributions of tenure-line composition are often misunderstood or undervalued.” The authors also lament that composition faculty are an “academic underclass.” They elaborate by stating, “These teachers work without job security, often without benefits, and for wages far below what their full-time colleagues are paid per course” (329). After describing the poor working conditions that those teaching composition part-time often face, the statement then lays out a strategy for remedying the situation.

The CCC’s “Statement” reminds universities of the ways composition programs help them live up to their commitment to provide quality education by “helping students develop their critical power as readers and writers” (330). The “Statement” suggests that one way to ensure that quality instruction is maintained in the field of composition would be to treat compositionists as real academics. This status is ensured in every other area of study within the

academy through tenure-line positions for specialists in those areas. This, the statement suggests, should be the case for the teachers of writing, too.

The CCC's "Statement" not only provides a list of rights for composition faculty (who tended to be lecturers), but also indicted universities for their poor track record with regard to the treatment of those teaching composition. The authors point out that they are offering these guidelines "[b]ecause assumptions to the contrary have become well entrenched in institutions of higher learning during the past fifteen years" (330). While the authors hope that the conversion from part-time positions to full-time and tenure-track positions will be brief, during the transition, they call on departments to "offer long-term contracts to part-time faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching" (330). In a section on part-time faculty, the authors recognize two legitimate reasons for offering less than full-time positions. First, "[T]o teach specialized courses for which no regular faculty are available and which require special practical knowledge . . . ;" and second, "[T]o meet an unexpected increase in enrollment" (332-333). In situations other than these, however, the statement clearly delineates that full-time faculty should be hired.

English Council saw the value of the CCC's "Statement" but wanted to add more specificity to better serve the needs in the CSU. According to the introduction to English Council document, "Principles Regarding the Teaching of College Writing," published in *College Composition and Communication* in 1991, in order to create what eventually became the "Principles" document, a sub-committee of the Composition Directors group developed a questionnaire and attitude survey which they distributed to all CSU campuses. The subcommittee opted to include issues in the CSU "Principles" document that received "67% or greater favorable response" on the survey (365). The resulting document went through several revisions

and was approved by English Council as a whole before being distributed to the Chancellor's Office, the Presidents, and Deans of the CSU.

For one thing, "Principles Regarding the Teaching of College Writing" addresses the fact that there has been some discrepancy between CSU administrators and CSU English Studies faculty about what constitutes adequate training to teach basic writing in the CSU. On some campuses that has meant enrollment in the English Studies Master degree program on the campus where one is teaching basic writing, while at others it has meant possessing a special credential in TESOL or basic writing at the point when one is hired. To that end, "Principles" asserts that, "Prior to being hired, prospective part-time faculty and lecturers should demonstrate knowledge of composition theory and pedagogy, superior writing ability, and successful experience in the composition classroom" (366). In fact, English Council passed a resolution that states if anyone is brought from another department to teach composition, she or he needed to attend "seminars in writing theory and pedagogy before being allowed to teach a writing course" and be approved to teach by the English department or writing program administrator (Minutes—Spring 1993).

English Council's position is more specific than the CCC's "Statement" with regard to the compensation and workload part-time faculty should be awarded and the reasons that they warrant:

Because part-time faculty and lecturers are colleagues who teach demanding, college-level courses, they should be treated equally with their full-time colleagues. They should receive the same per-course compensation as their full-time colleagues with comparable duties, experience, and credentials. They should never be given a course load which requires more than three preparations. (366)

Furthermore, English Council statement is specific about the kinds of resources and opportunities part-time faculty deserve. “They should be given mailboxes, office space, clerical support, and telephones as well as equal access to scholarly literature. They should have a voice in formulating policies regarding writing programs in which they teach” (366-367). This statement articulates a goal toward which faculty enjoin administration to move in negotiations.

It is clear from English Council minutes and Gale Larson’s correspondence from the 1970s and 1980s that, in addition to writing and distributing “Principles Regarding the Teaching of College Writing,” English Council frequently discussed the preparation, qualifications, and compensation of those teaching basic writing. However, it was also a topic about which English Council members did not always have consensus; therefore, while resolutions have been written on this issue, they tended to stress the importance of leaving the decisions about who should be teaching composition to the individual campus departments of English Studies.

In order to help faculty from the various campuses lobby their administrations for funding for their composition programs, English Council conducted surveys every few years to keep track of who is teaching composition. Linda Palmer of CSU Sacramento initiated the first of these surveys, which is recorded in Larson’s binder in 1987. Palmer received responses from fifteen out of the nineteen CSU campuses, and shared a synopsis of her findings with all of the campuses as well as the Chancellor and Trustees. She found that while on average most campuses had more than 40 percent part-time faculty teaching freshman composition and remedial courses in some places the percentage was much higher. “On several campuses,” Palmer reports, “90 percent of composition courses are taught by part time faculty” (Palmer).

Despite these statistics, the situation for the faculty teaching basic writing in the CSU is not any worse than it is for others across the US. In fact, because of collective bargaining

through the California Faculty Association, the lecturers in the CSU have more rights than most basic writing faculty. For example, after teaching full time for six years at a CSU campus, faculty members are eligible for renewable three-year contracts. All full-time, and on many campuses part-time, lecturers are eligible for health benefits (Nalchik). But these rights have been hard-won through initiatives like those that English Council has supported over the years.

Nevertheless, if it is true that lecturers in the CSU have better working conditions than many lecturers around the county, it is also true that they remain in a tenuous position. According to a 2008 study conducted by the American Federation of Teachers, over seventy percent of those teaching in American higher education are considered contingent faculty who teach 49 percent of undergraduate courses (i). Even though English Council may not always have taken a unified position on supporting contingent faculty, they have worked to shore up the campuses of the CSU to administer basic writing programs staffed by qualified faculty.

Class Size

Another issue on which English Council has been vigilant over the last thirty years has been in fighting to keep class size as small as possible. This has been an issue that has impacted not only basic writing, but also all English Studies courses. In English Council's "Principles" statement, smaller class sizes for composition classes are championed because "writing instruction requires continuous reading of student writing as well as many extensive conferences with students" (367). Similar to the call to limit class size in the CCC's "Statement," English Council CSU's "Principles" calls for enrollment caps of twenty students per class, although the authors believe that fifteen would be "a more acceptable limit," whereas developmental classes "should be limited to a maximum of fifteen students" ("Principles . . ." 367). Because basic writing/remedial programs are expensive and vulnerable on many campuses, English Studies

departments have often been under pressure from their administrations to save money by increasing class size in all composition classes. While systemwide, in the CSU, class size is limited to fifteen students for courses designated as “remedial,” and despite the recommendations made in the “Principles” document, other composition courses enroll from 25-30 students depending on the course designation (Course Classification System).

Kim Flachmann has been very active in gathering data on class size in composition classes in the CSU, using that information to advocate on behalf of various campuses that the ratios of student-to-teacher be reduced. Flachmann told me in an interview that she feels this kind of action is one of the strengths of English Council (Personal Interview). She recalls being told by her dean in the mid-1980s that her campus would be increasing class size on her campus; she resolved to take action by investigating what class sizes were on the campuses of her fellow English Council members. Flachmann recalls that she “went around and got everybody’s numbers and presented them on a chart [designating the numbers for] remedial, freshman comp, upper division” (Personal Interview). When she showed the chart to her dean, Flachmann recalls feeling a bit worried about how it would influence him. She remembers that he paid special attention to the campuses with larger sized classes than they had at Bakersfield, but in the end he and his peers “hung their heads” and refrained from raising the class size (Personal Interview). In Larson’s notes, I found several of Flachmann’s charts on which she recorded her findings about class sizes around the CSU. The first such chart found among the minutes of English Council meetings was from 1986; while the average class size on this chart is 26, some campuses had composition classes of 30 students (Flachmann, “Spring”). What started as a strategy to negotiate with Flachmann’s dean became a regular practice for English Council.

The kind of polling of members that Flachmann initiated has been repeated frequently over the years. Even now, every few years an English Council member—often Flachmann herself—will request class size information from across the CSU. In fact, these charts have been expanded into a survey that asks questions about staffing and support of departments. Some of the other questions on the survey have pertained to other material issues such as part-time versus full-time/tenured faculty, writing center staffing and funding, and clerical support.

In addition to conducting the survey, English Council passed a resolution on the issue of class size. In the May 1986 cover letter, to the Vice Presidents and Deans of the Schools of Humanities in the CSU, that accompanies a series of resolutions, Gale Larson, then-president informs the recipients of the letter that one of the resolutions “represents English Council’s serious attempt to have the CSU system recognize pedagogically the importance of instruction in written composition and acknowledge its budgetary commitment of improving students’ writing competence” (Larson, “Spring”). He cites the recommendations from both the Association of Departments of English and of NCTE and says that, accordingly, class size should not exceed 25 students—although he was compromising somewhat with the NCTE’s limit of twenty students per class. He ends the letter by stating, “The hope of the E[nglish] C[ouncil] is that its concerns become your concerns, and that recognition of these issues is but a beginning to resolving them” (Larson, “Spring”). This may explain why, in 1991, Carol Burr, then-president of English Council, sent a letter to the chair of the CSU Academic Senate requesting that since it had been five years since English Council had submitted their resolution on class size to the Chancellor and they had no response, the organization requested the academic senate to “consider a special classification for writing courses” that would allow for a reduction in class size (Burr). According to Larson’s notes and those I interviewed, that request was never granted.

While there was no move on the part of the University to limit class size to 25 in all composition courses, there is some indication that English Council's efforts in this regard were helpful. In fact, another of Flachmann's surveys from the mid-1990s reveals that class sizes in composition courses remained around 25 for composition and literature courses and 15 for basic writing courses (CSU Writing Skills). Flachmann also notes that English Council has been able to advocate for smaller-sized classes on behalf of some of the community colleges. Flachmann believes that gathering the data and writing a resolution on class size helped both CSU and CC faculty in order to "give them ammunition and mostly it would solve their problems" (Flachmann, Personal Interview).

According to Sterling Warner, former president of English Council of California Two-Year Colleges (ECCTYC) the partnership between ECCTYC and the CSU English Council on the issues of class size and labor grew out of the "Statement" the Council wrote in response to the Wyoming resolution mentioned above. In 1997, Lynn Fauth, then ECCTYC president, sent a letter accompanied by English Council's resolution on class size and course load for faculty based on the survey results. Fauth sent her letter to the campus presidents and deans of all of the CCs in order to clarify how the articulation agreements between CSUs and CCs would be compromised if the CCs "did not heed the Wyoming Resolution NCTE statement on best teaching and learning practices as they applied to class size and loading" ("Re: An English Council Dissertation"). Warner noted that the resolution about class-size has come in handy over the years, As ECCTYC president from 2000 through 2005, Warner recalls that at least once, in his tenure as president, sending out the 1997 resolution to "community college presidents (many of them new) in hopes of lowering class size for all" ("Re: An English Council").

Warner also told me that he saw the resolution as only having limited success in the end, because, “[s]adly, the resolution had no real teeth in it.” He went on to note that,

In fact, the CSU was reluctant to get too heavy into the class-size issue. Why?

Well, at the CSU, class size differed from institution to institution. Some CSU capped composition classes at 18, others at 21, others at 24, and even others at 27 (the extreme). Rightfully so, no CSU wanted to lose its reasonable class size by comparing numbers. Nonetheless, it did serve as one of the references for faculty association negotiators of class size. (“Re: An English Council”)

While somewhat bleak, Warner’s last point comes back to the focus of this section which is on the ways in which English Council sought to support English Studies faculty and stand up for best practices for the teaching of writing. Warner makes clear that while Council statements, positions and resolutions do not always succeed in bringing about transformation, they help members call for change.

Outsourcing

In addition to the advocacy regarding class size and selection, preparation, and retention of faculty, English Council rallied its support for faculty at some campuses where they were contending with a proposal to outsource the teaching of composition. One of the proposals made by the CSU Task Force on Remediation in their “Plan to Reduce Remedial Activity by 1984-1990” was that community colleges (CCs) might assign some of their faculty to teach remedial

composition courses on CSU campuses.¹⁹ The idea of outsourcing composition courses to the CCs was appealing to some administrators because the CCs were already offering composition courses to their own students, and they expected that the CSU students could be integrated into these courses cheaply and efficiently. English Council opposed sending CSU students to area community colleges to take composition courses, not because of a lack of trust in the ability of community college faculty to teach composition to CSU students, but rather because of the faith the faculty have in their own programs and the misgivings that students sent to a CC from a CSU often do not return. English Studies faculty from San Jose State University (SJSU) wrote a detailed letter to English Council responding to the recommendations made by the task force as the SJSU faculty understood them. Among other things, the task force called for “California’s high schools [to] further upgrade their graduation requirements, catching the remedial problem at its alleged source, and that CSU campuses might bring in community college instructors to offer remedial courses until the high schools effect their transformation” (“San Jose Comp”). At San Jose, the administration went so far as to consider a plan to bring CC faculty to the campus to teach basic writing courses using the CC curriculum. But, the Composition Committee at San Jose had taken issue with the task force’s suggestion because they considered theirs to be a very successful basic writing program, due in large part to its integration into their first-year writing program.

¹⁹ CPEC required each system to develop strategies for addressing the concerns raised in “Promises to Keep.” The CSU charged the Remediation Taskforce with writing this report in order to present the CSU’s plan.

They describe the teachers of basic writing as “. . . people who command the respect of their students as faculty fully identified with the university.” They argued that bringing in teachers from the community colleges would send the wrong message to their students. By replacing the teachers, they claimed, “We will be saying that our faculty does not care to dirty their fingers on such offerings, seriously impairing the credibility of the courses” (4). The letter from the San Jose faculty also points out the importance of proving to the specially admitted “minority students” in their basic writing courses

. . . that their educational needs have the same dignity and are worthy of the same consideration as those of other students. We do not send them such a message by withholding regular university faculty and relegating their instruction to what in effect would be academic stoop laborers brought in from the outside. Either we have admitted them to our university and they are students here, or we have not.

(4)

San Jose was not the only campus threatened with the possibility of basic writing being outsourced to community colleges. At Long Beach it actually happened. In English Council Newsletter from spring of 1985, alongside another version of the San Jose letter quoted above, there is a description of how the teaching of basic writing for CSU Long Beach was outsourced to Long Beach City College. According to the CSU Long Beach Composition Committee, “this is not truly a team effort between our two campuses.” In fact, at both campuses the reactions of faculty to the arrangement had “run the gamut from puzzlement to chagrin” (CSULB Composition Committee). The Long Beach committee informed English Council that they had not been consulted about this program and had not been given any say in who might teach in the program or how any new faculty might be trained. As a result, they worried that, ironically, the

community college curriculum might not prepare students to succeed in composition courses in the CSU.

In response to this trend toward outsourcing, English Council wrote a resolution protesting it, as did English Council of California Two Year Colleges (ECCTYC). The CSU English Council resolution on outsourcing makes three main points: that these are admitted students whom the University needs to serve; that CSU faculty have the expertise to offer the appropriate instruction; and that the CSU courses are “carefully articulated with [CSU] baccalaureate courses. For these reasons the CSU should retain these courses” (Resolution #6). Similarly, the ECCTYC resolution reveals that outsourcing of CSU students to their campuses was unwelcome. ECCTYC wrote that they were “concerned that the current trend will identify community colleges as the sole providers of collegiate remediation” (Resolution). They conclude the resolution by stating that they “question the principle of community college faculty teaching remedial courses in other segments and object to the arbitrary manner in which community colleges districts have entered into agreements with CSU and UC campuses” (Resolution). There is no record of responses from the Chancellor’s Office to either of these resolutions.

Like the fight for tenure-track/full time positions for compositionists and the fight to set caps on class size, English Council’s resistance to outsourcing has been ongoing and has been a difficult position to advocate in difficult economic times. The “Promises to Keep” report, in many ways, provided the template for what would be codified in EO 665. Just as outsourcing basic writing was a recommended strategy for addressing the “remediation crisis” in the “Promises to Keep” report, so too was it considered as one of the approved strategies for complying with Executive Order 665. With this approbation, in 2009, the administration at San Jose has once again raised the idea of outsourcing composition—this time for both its remedial

and credit-bearing composition programs. And outsourcing is taking place at San Diego. CC instructors are paid by the CC institution to come to the CSU campus to teach the courses designed by CSU faculty. The students are considered to be enrolled at both the CSU and the CC simultaneously. According to the minutes from English Council meeting at which this program was discussed, a faculty member from a CC in another part of the state “deplored the process as exploitative” (“English Council Minutes” Spring 2004). At the time of this writing, English Council is working to determine how they can best support the San Jose faculty in resisting outsourcing composition.

In this chapter, I have endeavored to identify the issues around which the CSU English Council has rallied and the positions the group taken to address those issues. In depicting three issues around which English Council has rallied (who should teach basic writing at the University, class size, and outsourcing) it has not only been my intention in this section to recount some of what English Council has been doing for the last thirty years, but also to make clear that the organization has been rallying around student access. The story of English Council, then, is the story of how faculty came together and changed the way English Studies is taught in the California State University system, but it also is the story of how these faculty members have resisted external pressures and powers that made demands on them to teach writing in ways the faculty know to be less than pedagogically sound. English Council worked to build alliances among faculty, provide a venue for faculty to learn about how to function in spite of what many of them regarded as the unduly harsh policies thrust upon them and their students, and provide insight that is occasionally heard and heeded by those in positions of power.

Thirty Years in Review

In many ways, the pressures put on English Studies faculty by the authors of EO 665, to which we will return in the next chapter, are extensions of the pressures described here in this chapter. These pressures include the loss of control of the EPT and the defining of developmental writing programs as “remedial” with all that term entails. These pressures led to a perceived need for greater scrutiny—the need to solve a crisis where no crisis existed (see Appendix A for a timeline of these events). This scrutiny in turn led to recommendations that English Council knew to be detrimental to their programs as they threatened to result in large classes often taught by underprepared and undercompensated teachers, and even in sending regularly admitted students to community colleges to take their courses. In Chapter 4, I will consider the ways that English Council members from some CSU campuses, with the help of the others on the Council, were able to manipulate and adapt the EO 665 policy to make changes to their programs that complied with the letter of the order, but that, at the same time, subverted some of the policy’s exclusionary intentions.

CHAPTER 4

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 665

Limiting Remediation à la Executive Order 665

As discussed at length in Chapter 1, Executive Order (EO) 665, issued by the Chancellor's Office, limits the number of students in need of remediation who are allowed to be admitted to the California State University (CSU) by establishing a cap of ten percent or fewer of total admission. This mandate affects some campuses more than others; while at most campuses the percentage of admitted students testing into remedial courses is around 40, as of fall 2007 over 80 percent of first-year admits at the Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Dominguez Hills campuses tested into remedial writing courses ("Fall 2007"). Chapter 2 establishes why the students most impacted by the mandate tend to be students of color with lower socioeconomic status ("Statistical Reports"). The issue of access for students became a center of protest against EO 665, culminating with student groups organizing and the Statewide Academic Senate and English Council writing resolutions in opposition to the policy.

Chapter 2 also discusses the protests against EO 665 in detail. In addition to English Council, stakeholders such as the Statewide Academic Senate, the CCs and student groups all argued that EO 665 violated the CSU *Master Plan for Higher Education in California*. As you may recall from Chapter 1, the Master Plan dictates education policy for all three branches of higher education in the state (the California Community Colleges [CC], the University of California [UC] and the Cal State [CSU] systems). The *Master Plan* specifically states that CSU must to accept the top 1/3 (or 33.3%) of the students who graduate from California high schools (California State Department of Education 4) and the mission statement of the CSU includes the specific language that the system "seeks out individuals with collegiate promise who face

cultural, geographical, physical, educational, financial, or personal barriers to assist them in advancing to the highest educational levels they can reach” (CSU Mission). Cal State Northridge student leader Marc Levine was cited in that student paper as saying of the executive order, “The plan is in direct contradiction to the CSU’s main mission of preserving access for California’s citizens to a higher education” (3).

These protests emboldened faculty, staff, and students and led them to forge important alliances between organizations that led towards further activism (which I will discuss in the Conclusion). However, the protests did not lead to changes in the policy. What follows is a discussion of how individual composition programs altered their courses in order to better align them with EO 665. I also explore the role English Council took in helping faculty make these momentous changes.

Community College Implications

A dictate of EO 665 that particularly affected community colleges (CCs) was the stipulation that students who were unable to complete remedial work within one year of admission to the CSU would need to leave the campus to which they were admitted and could instead complete that work by attending a CC. In a letter to the editor in *The Sacramento Bee* in October 1995, Leslie Smith, Vice President of the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, warns that, “CSU is making a grave mistake by not fully acknowledging the impact its decision will have on community colleges.” Smith goes on to note that, “Instead of working collaboratively with colleges and high schools to develop a plan to meet the needs of these students, CSU wishes to make the community colleges its dumping ground for what it considers undesirable students . . .” by simply determining that CSU students would be able to take remedial courses at these already over-enrolled campuses. In developing EO 665, the trustees of

the CSU did not consult their administrative peers at the CCs, or consider logistical concerns such as where the additional staffing for these courses would come from to teach these courses or which students would have priority to register for these courses. Smith concludes her letter to the editor by noting that the CSUs and CCs can best serve at-risk students “by jointly planning for the future, not closing the classroom doors” (FO 5).

The CC faculty and English Council were not alone in disagreeing with EO 665. In a San Jose *Mercury News* article published in 2009, reporter Lisa Krieger found that “opponents say that sending remedial students off-campus to repeat coursework will only add to their struggles.” Similarly, CSU San Jose TESOL Professor and English Council member Stephan Frazier was interviewed for the article, and he spoke out against such outsourcing of composition. Krieger cites Frazier who “understands the university needs to make cuts, but he argued that rebuffing students who need to repeat coursework ‘goes against an age-old, honorable legacy that we can be proud of at the CSUs: access.’” From my experience in attending English Council meetings and reading English Council listserv, it has become clear to me that most English Council compositionists agree that outsourcing remediation—whether by sending CSU students back to the CCs or by having CC instructors teach these students on CSU campuses—is one of the least effective ways of meeting the EO 665 mandate that requires students to complete remedial coursework within their first year of college.

The attempt to send students to community colleges to complete remediation before returning to the CSUs has been a failure, as many of those students are not returning. According

to the agenda for a 2007 Committee on Education Policy²⁰ meeting of which the CSU's remediation policies was the subject, the committee claims that even though "redirecting CSU students to community colleges has produced disheartening results, community colleges nevertheless can—and should—take an active role in the remediation of these otherwise admissible students" (12).

The 2007 Committee report cited above praises a scheme co-developed by San Diego State and nearby CCs. "For the past five years," they note, "community college instructors have taught the vast majority of San Diego State's remedial courses in English and mathematics on the university's main campus" (12-13). This policy allows students "to continue their remedial education while maintaining their 'identity' as San Diego State students. Such an arrangement helps these students to remain engaged, not only physically but psychologically, with the university in particular and with their education more generally" (13). This approach is appealing to some because students designated as in need of remedial work are not being exported to the community colleges, yet it is still a form of outsourcing. As discussed at length in the previous chapter, one wonders why it is necessary to bring in CC instructors to remediate the students on the CSU campus. Many English Council members oppose this practice, not because of the qualifications of the CC instructors, but because the administration at San Diego State failed to offer work to qualified composition faculty members on their own campus. This practice sends a dangerous message about how the administration values the teaching of composition.

²⁰ The Committee on Education Policy is primarily made up of Trustees and Chancellor's Office representatives. Faculty and community representatives are invited to present at the meetings on occasion.

EO 665: “A Double-Edged Sword”

As with many executive orders from the Chancellor’s desk, EO 665 brings not only change, but opportunity. Elizabeth Cruz (pseudonym), a CSU faculty member from a large, ethnically diverse campus, told me that there have been two ways of approaching EO 665. She is willing to concede that there is some “validity” to the mandate, in “that perhaps we could be better or more purposefully serving these students.” If, in fact, EO 665 does cause faculty to recognize that “remedial” students could be better served, this recognition could lead campuses to alter their current remedial programs. Writing more generally about attitudes among faculty toward innovation in their article, “Remediation as a Social Construct,” Hull et al. note, “Because deficit notions of abilities are so deeply engrained in most of us, it seems very unlikely that most teachers, pressed as they are by constraints of time and curricula, will discover serendipitously more productive ways to view students’ abilities” (317). This attitude seems to be true of most CSU composition directors/English departments since few of them changed their programs until pressed to do so. As Cruz puts it: “Part of EO 665 was good because it gave campuses motivation for thinking more creatively about how to address a specific population of students.” She refers to EO 665 as a “kind of a double-edged sword.” As a result, she explains that EO 665 “forced programs to reconsider the sort of lockstep programming, the sort of long, protracted ways of giving students extra coursework or skills. In that way, it caused programs to be a little more creative” (Personal Interview).

Cruz goes on to note that the other blade of the sword “is less cooperative,” with faculty giving “a little push back against the administration saying, you’re defining certain students in unproductive ways; you’re mandating curricular changes in somewhat unproductive ways.” According to Cruz, “[EO 665] was pretending that California has a much more homogenous

population that it has, that high schools are all preparing students equally, pretending that just because students are in the top third of their class that they're well prepared to enter college life all at the same level" (Personal Interview). Cruz presents the problem and responses to EO 665 well: EO 665 gave campuses the opportunity to rethink the teaching of basic writing and it mandated change, but it did so under the old, tired label of "remedial" with all of its underlying assumptions. In contrast to this tendency, the final two sections of this chapter will address both these new models of teaching that adhere to EO 665 as well as how these new models resist the remedial label.

The following section of the chapter will deal with the issue of high school preparation to which Cruz refers and examine how the attempt on the part of some members of English Council to assist the Chancellor's Office in improving high school preparation led to a division within English Council.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

The Master Plan designates the CSU as the primary higher education institution for preparing California's K-12 teachers. Therefore, English Council's connections to English Education and teacher preparation could be a lengthy study in itself. The scope of my study does not allow me to cover all of English Council's work on behalf of English Education; the following story highlights the intersection between English Council, remedial programs and the Chancellor's Office.

When presented with concerns about the Master Plan and about what would happen to students disenrolled from the CSU because of failure to complete coursework within one year, Ralph Pesqueira, the trustee most invested in EO 665, "argue[d] that something must be done to force high schools to fix English and math preparation" (Richardson B1). One means Pesqueira

saw for bringing about such a “fix” was “testing 11th graders in English and math, and then offering remedial help in summer school or 12th grade” (B1). However, when presented with the news that an eleventh grade test of math and English would immediately need to be put in place, high school administrators “made it clear that CSU’s proposal [would] not work without [the CSU’s] help” (B1). Similarly, CSU Sacramento President Donald Gerth, who presented the proposal to the high school administrators, recognized the need for a “partnership” between the high schools and the CSU if the idea of an eleventh grade test was to become a reality. Gerth concluded, “We are dealing with a problem that has common ownership” (B1).

English Council members joined the conversation about CSU partnerships with high schools by focusing on the students coming to the CSU instead of blaming high schools for students in need of help. In a letter to English Council from as early as 1985, San Jose State University faculty noted that California’s high school graduates are not “*under* educated, but that they are *unevenly* educated” (emphasis in original, 2). They further suggest, “The problem is perhaps not that the high schools are failing to do their job, but that the high schools have found themselves trying to do a much larger job Perhaps we can legislate high schools into new levels of effectiveness, but until this happens, we must deal in good faith with our students as we find them” (2). While in 1985, the idea of “legislat[ing] the high schools into new levels of effectiveness” may have been suggested somewhat ironically, just such attempts were made in the late 1990s and early 2000s through standards-based curriculum in the state of California and through the federal policy No Child Left Behind on the national level. The CSU also sought to better prepare students for what they would face when they reach the CSU with two programs: one, the Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiative (CAPI) and the other, the Early Access Program (EAP). Both are discussed below.

Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiative

The Chancellor's Office instituted the CAPI in 1999. This program provided for high school and college faculty to meet and discuss ways to help our students learn; tutors went into the schools; ties were built between the faculty at the high school and college levels who began to work together to try to meet the needs of students. This program was implemented at "19 CSU campuses to assist those high schools with the highest numbers of students needing remediation upon entry to the CSU" ("Collaborative"). The program came to include what Goen-Salter refers to as a "mock" English Placement Test (EPT) for eleventh graders.²¹ Students were given scores on exams based on the rubrics used with the EPT, and Saturday workshops run by high school, CSU, and even UC faculty were offered to students who scored poorly ("Critiquing" 82). When run as a true collaboration between the high schools and CSUs, CAPI was a useful partnership in a bleak situation. As Mary Kaye Harrington, who retired from CSU San Luis Obispo in 2009, sees it, "CAPI provided money to campuses that began outreach to high schools and community colleges. Up to this point, the CSU bounced around inside of a bubble, pointing fingers at all of those who were not preparing students adequately. The bridge-building to high schools changed a great deal of attitudes" (Personal Interview). In CAPI, the CSU and its feeder high schools finally had a program that would allow both high school and college faculty to regard one another as colleagues working on behalf of students.

²¹ The eleventh grade test referred to above is one of the California Standards Tests (CSTs). In partnership with the Educational Testing Service—the same organization that administers the EPT—CSU faculty identified items on the test that they hoped would help them assess students' likelihood of succeeding in the CSU at the current level of preparedness ("Testing and Results").

However, David Spence, then-CSU Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, noted, “Proficiency has improved significantly but is not reaching the benchmarks set by the CSU trustees” (qtd. in Student). According to a CSU “Admission and Enrollment Update” from 2004, “The proficiency rates for first time freshmen entering the CSU in fall 2003 are far from a mid-point goal set by the CSU Trustees for 2004 calling for math proficiency of 74 percent and English proficiency of 78 percent” (Student Academic Support). A result of this report was that the Chancellor’s Office changed their strategy toward the high schools and opted to eliminate this popular program. Spence and others in the Chancellor’s Office decided that a different kind of “outreach” to the high schools was in order. In her dissertation about the remedial composition program on a CSU campus, Goen, a faculty member at CSU San Francisco, writes the following about the University’s administration: “The belief persists that if they only set their standards high enough, and articulate them clearly to high schools, the result will be more better prepared and fewer underprepared students seeking admission, and eventually, complete elimination of the need for the remedial course” (178). When such a quick fix could not be achieved with CAPI, the Chancellor’s Office returned to a model that they had used many times in the past: another test. The eleventh grade test (referred to in the introduction to this chapter) would be taken by students who planned to attend the CSU.

The elimination of CAPI came as a swift and painful blow to the high school teachers and students and to those of us in the CSU who had taken part in the program.²² Speculating on the reason CAPI was discontinued, Mary Kay Harrington speculated that the Chancellor’s Office

²² While completing my Master’s degree at CSU Los Angeles, I worked with the CAPI program in preparing CSU students to tutor in area high schools.

was unwilling for the CSU to become “embroiled in” remediation. Instead they wanted keep the CSU from being regarded as “the place for remediation” (Personal Interview). To high school teachers who had worked with the CSU faculty regarded the dismantling of the program as one more example of a “partner” coming into the schools and promising a lasting collaboration but then disappearing within a few years once the grant money ran out (English Council Notes). English Council members expressed great frustration at the elimination of the program and sought ways to maintain the relationships they developed with high school faculty. In 2003, the Chancellor’s Office gathered a group of influential faculty from high schools along with some CSU and some CC English Studies faculty members and presented them with the Early Access Program (EAP) test in the hopes that these individuals would help “sell” it to high school and English Education faculty at their home institutions. What resulted from these meetings was not only a successful twelfth grade English course that incorporated rhetoric and reading, but a powerful collaboration between high school, CSU, and CC faculty preparing novice writers to take on academic writing.

The Course Compromise

John Edlund, currently at CSU Pomona, recalls that he and his CSU colleagues told the Chancellor’s Office representatives that they would consult on such a test if they could offer some recourse to the students who failed it. The Chancellor’s Office representatives agreed to sponsor a joint project between the CSU and high school faculty to design a course to be taken by twelfth grade students whose scores on the EAP warranted an intervention. However, any twelfth grader would be eligible to take the course. According to David Spence, “The goal of the EAP program is to bridge the gap between high school standards and college expectation in

order to decrease the number of incoming college students who require remediation in English and/or mathematics” (qtd. in “Student”).

Edlund told me at the time, in 2004, that he was excited about the project and saw it as a way to retain the connections between participating high schools and the CSU established with the CAPI program in the 1990s. Edlund noted that the experience of partnering with the high school faculty to develop curriculum was enlightening in that it revealed the differences in approach between high school English and college composition courses. In addition to Edlund, another member of the initial committee that designed the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC), Kim Flachmann of CSU Bakersfield, told me in 2006 that she continued to be “very excited” about [ERWC] and believed that the partnership and course were “changing education in California” (Personal Interview).

Edlund and Flachmann presented the idea of the course to English Council and asked for help designing modules. However, English Council’s response to the ERWC was not as positive as Edlund, Flachmann and the rest of the ERWC planning committee might have hoped. Flachmann reported that English Council did not respond well when they were informed about the program (Personal Interview). I also recall from attending the meetings that some members were worried that the high school faculty would be reluctant to become involved in a CSU-designed program after the funding for CAPI was cut off (Personal Notes, Fall 2004). Others regarded the ERWC as a misguided compromise with the Chancellor’s Office because it perpetuated the notion that the students coming to the CSU were deficient writers. (I will develop this view below in the “Rift” section.) While the committee was hoping to gain support from English Council, they opted to forge ahead with the program lacking unanimous support from English Council both because the CSU had committed the funds to the project and because of the

desire to continue developing the connections they had made among the CSU, CCs and high schools.

What had seemed like a fairly straightforward task—designing a twelfth grade course to help prepare students for college writing—was, in fact, a challenging undertaking. Edlund and the other designers of the course quickly realized that the materials students were reading and about which they were writing in high school English courses (primarily literature and literary concepts) differed greatly from the curriculum of most CSU composition courses (non-fiction readings and analytical means of responding to these readings). In order to best meet the needs expressed by the CSU, CC, and high school faculty planning ERWC, they came to design a course that, as the “Overview” describes it, “emphasize[s] the in-depth study of expository, analytical, and argumentative reading and writing” (“Course Materials”).

Of particular concern to the high schools was that in order for the ERWC to receive approval, it would need to align directly with the state standards (“CSU Remediation Standards” 5). After the painstaking work of aligning the course to the standards was completed, the course included 14 modules. Integrating reading and writing is a key feature of the ERWC; therefore each module begins “with pre-reading activities, mov[es] into reading and post-reading activities, and continu[es] through informal and formal writing assignments.” The course helps students “learn to make predictions about their reading, analyze content and rhetorical structures, and properly use materials from the texts they read to support their own written arguments” (“Course Materials”). Two of the modules include:

- Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page: What are ethos, pathos, and logos, and how can we use these concepts to persuade others?

- Bring a Text to Class: How can students learn by helping us read texts that they like? (“Course Materials”).

Once the curriculum for the course was in place, the CSU committed to providing professional development and stipends for the high school teachers across the state who would be teaching the course. The CSU also paid for all of the ERWC materials and provided space for the sessions to take place—often on CSU campuses. The high schools were only responsible for covering the cost of substitutes for the teachers who attended the workshops. The workshops took place over four days, but they were spread out throughout the school year to allow teachers time to plan, implement and then reflect on the effectiveness of the modules with the facilitators (“Professional Development”).

The Education Policy Committee was convinced that the huge undertaking of teaching thousands of high school teachers to implement this new curriculum was worthwhile because they believed “that the CSU’s commitment of resources to partner with California’s public high schools in both curriculum alignment and intervention efforts is likely to reduce the number of admissible students who have not yet achieved proficiency (“CSU Remediation Standards” 15). Additionally, a 2010 report for *Strategic Ed Solutions*, an on-line publication for the Business Higher Education Forum, noted that since its introduction in 2004, “[a]n estimated 2,200 teachers have been trained to teach the modules across the state” (“Introduction to the ERWC”). As early as three years after the course was first piloted, the Chancellor’s Office regarded it as a success. A study conducted by CSU researchers (Hafner and Joseph) documented that students taking the course improved their performance when retested (comparing the scores on the EAP to their scores on the California High school exit exam). And, according to a report submitted to the Chancellor’s office in 2007, “Ninety-seven percent (97%) of respondents indicated positive

impacts of the professional development on their students' achievement, including the fact that more of their students are now ready for college classes" ("Program Evaluation" 2).

In addition to these studies, high school, CC and CSU faculty have reported that the program has helped them collaborate in more meaningful ways than they had before ERWC was introduced. At the fall 2010 English Council meeting, a panel made up of ERWC faculty from all three sectors presented on "Cross Sector Collaboration." In the written description of their session, the panel claimed that the ERWC "has emerged as one of the most effective and comprehensive college readiness initiatives in California." Calling the ERWC a "hub" for teachers and students across the state, the presenters wrote, "More than just a curriculum or its parent assessment (the Early Assessment Program), the ERWC has become a movement that supports transfer of learning and educational partnerships across institutional and disciplinary boundaries, while affirming the value of professional communities during difficult times" (Edlund et al.).

Allison Jones, the Chancellor's Office representative to English Council from 1988 to 2010, reported at the spring 2006 English Council meeting that the "EAP (Early Assessment Program) has received national visibility. . . . A number of states [are] interested in the EAP" curriculum (English Council Minutes 2). Jones was particularly impressed that the CSU, high school and CC partners have aligned the course to the California teaching standards and Jones made certain to remind English Council that the EAP was attracting "national visibility and that several states are considering setting up similar programs" (2). Indeed, both Edlund and Flachmann have been invited to several national conferences and to talk with Boards of Education in other states to present scholarship and practical knowledge regarding the ERWC as an integral part of the EAP. Also, a report submitted by the Program Evaluation and Research

Collaborative in 2007 recommended expanding the ERWC professional development program to more schools in order to offer more professional development to teachers (3).

However, in spite of the value of the ERWC as a course for high school seniors, the opportunities it provides for professional development for faculty, and the recommendation that it should be expanded—the EAP and ERWC have not been able to impact the CSU’s remediation rate significantly. The Education Policy Committee, which reports to the Board of Trustees, acknowledged the importance of a continued partnership between the CSU and the high schools, but was doubtful that ERWC would be successful enough to meet the 90% reduction goal, going so far as to ask that the 90% goal “be reassessed, and revised as appropriate” (Ed. Policy, “CSU” 15). One reason for this inability to reach the goal is proposed in an editorial in the *San Jose Mercury News* from August of 2009; after a description of the EAP program and the positive results it produces, the author concludes, “The problem is that not enough schools are offering it.”

A Rift within English Council

The tension within English Council over the ERWC is part of the larger misgivings several members of English Council have about what they think is too much cooperation between English Council and the Chancellor’s Office. Many members of English Council (particularly senior members with a long history with the Council) agree with Edlund, Harrington and Flachmann that ERWC is an essential program, if not as a means for addressing the EO 665 mandate, at least as a means of developing a meaningful curriculum for high school students who are required to take the EAP English exam. However, less favorable views of the program are held by several English Council members.

During a discussion of the EAP/ERWC program, Michael Thorpe (pseudonym), an English Council member from a large, urban campus, expressed a view shared by three of the six English Council members I interviewed for this study: English Council's involvement in this program is an example of a reason some members perceive English Council as more complicit than it might be with regard to Chancellor's Office mandates. Thorpe notes that when he began attending English Council in the early 2000s, he was hoping to work with other CSU English faculty to bring about changes in the way remediation and the English Placement test have been used in the CSU and, instead, he found "a group that was kind of still affecting the status quo even if it was reluctantly sometimes...they weren't necessarily challenging the Chancellor" (Personal Interview). In her *Journal of Basic Writing* article, "Critiquing the Need to Eliminate Remediation: Lessons from San Francisco State," Goen-Salter also notes,

In implementing this expensive EAP initiative, the CSU is operating from a persistent but flawed belief that if it only sets its standards high enough, and articulates them clearly to the secondary schools, the result will be fewer under-prepared students seeking admission, and eventually the complete elimination of the need for remedial courses at the college level. (96)

As stated above, the percentage of students in need of remediation has not decreased, but instead it has remained steady over the last twenty years.

Linda Adler-Kassner and Susanmarie Harrington make an argument similar to those made by Goen-Salter and Thorpe in their article for the *Journal of Basic Writing* which critiques the ways that public policy are applied to basic writing. They cite, in particular, the large-scale reports that came from Bush-era Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, saying that "despite

the call for improved college preparation in high school, these reports rather paradoxically lay the foundation for a massive shifting of college *into* high school” (36). They stress that

The juxtaposition of the allegations that high schools are graduating under-prepared students and the call to move college experiences into high schools is striking, particularly when the reports offer few concrete suggestions for supporting that movement. Even those who accept the proposition that first-year college experiences should be off-loaded to high schools would be rightfully concerned that the factors creating the ‘under-prepared’ graduates must be addressed before college experiences can be successfully offered by high schools. (33-34)

From this perspective, adopting college-level curriculum at the high school level, as ERWC does, is not a solution to the problems. Perhaps it is the high school curriculum that needs to be revised. And the ERWC brings another problem within English Council to light. Some of the Council members with whom I have spoken casually over the past ten years have mentioned that the Chancellor’s Office seems to select representatives for committees who will be most likely to be open to their policies as opposed to choosing those most knowledgeable about the subject area for the committee.

It is not only the curriculum of EAP that rankles some English Council members, however. In our March 2007 interview, Goen-Salter, who teaches at a large, diverse urban CSU campus, told me that she wished the process for choosing who would work on the EAP sub-committee could be clearer to her.

I felt like English Council should be selecting its [committee] representatives.

And in my experience that was never an open process. All of a sudden so and so

was working on the EAP It's how English Council works with the Chancellor's Office at the level of subcommittees putting these things into practice. I don't know what that process is, but I've had serious questions about it. . . . I think the views of the Council as a whole need to be represented by who's on the ground doing that work. . . . (Personal Interview)

Ana Donahue (pseudonym), also from a large, diverse campus, had a similar response to the issue of the EAP committee. She noted that “it felt to me like there was this elite insider group within English Council that was deciding what from the Chancellor's office was worth carrying out, what would be brought back to the chancellor's office” (Ana Donahue, Personal Interview). Chapter Five will address in much more detail council member perspectives regarding how the Council deliberates and makes decisions such as committee membership, but it is important to note here that a vocal minority of English Council members were opposed to English Council's involvement in ERWC.

Therefore, from the perspectives of Thorpe and Goen-Salter, English Council is playing into deficit thinking when it encourages the CSU to dictate standards for California high schools. Norman and others are also concerned about how EAP consultants are chosen. Within English Council, these members are not alone in their displeasure with certain aspects of EAP, but theirs is not the majority perspective either—thus a rift exists within the Council over the issue of high school interventions. As can be seen throughout my study, disagreements have existed throughout the history of the Council, but EO 665 and its pressures for change accentuate tensions within English Council.

Mainstreaming as an Alternative to Remediation

The focus of this chapter is the revisions of programs and courses, and other changes CSU campuses have made to comply with EO 665. So far I have discussed the programs involving stakeholders outside the CSU—first the community colleges and then the high schools. The remainder of the chapter will focus on changes made to programs at CSU campuses. The programs I will be addressing here—stretch composition and directed self-placement (DSP)—will be defined and then described at length below. Stretch and DSP fit well in a section together because, while the programs differ, they share two important characteristics: both are considered to be mainstreaming, in that students at a variety of levels of proficiency attend the same classes, and both models are designed to offer students credit for composition. While the first attribute—mainstreaming—can be considered the most important on an intellectual, theoretical level, it is this second attribute—credit for the courses—that makes stretch and DSP appealing to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees, mainly because they help campuses reduce the number of students enrolled in remedial courses. Before going on to describe these programs in detail, I want to expand on and clarify how I am defining the terms “mainstreaming” and “credit bearing” courses. First, we will consider mainstreaming.

Defining Terms

Mainstreaming vs. Gatekeeping

According to Daniel Royer and Roger Gilles of Grand Valley State University in Michigan, who co-edited the first book of essays on directed self-placement (DSP), “Mainstreaming seeks to place students side by side in a given curriculum, and then to give the necessary support to students who need it” (Royer and Gilles 5). Many within English Council regard mainstreaming as an ideal way to comply with EO 665 because it is an alternative to

deficit models of composition (such as remediation) and resists the construction of composition as a gatekeeper for the institution.

As discussed in Chapter 3's "Problematizing Remediation" section, one of the concerns with composition programs that are designated as remedial is that they are often regarded not only as separate from, but also "less than" the curriculum of the rest of the University. First-year composition is generally regarded as a "gatekeeper," but remedial courses allow the gate to inch open less often. As a faculty member at CSU Chico but writing about composition in general, Tom Fox explains that "[b]asic writers have been institutionally positioned even more precariously than first-year writers." He refers to remedial students (and the courses they take) as existing in a sort of "academic limbo" (Fox 51). Fox posits that, "[i]t is clear that at the very least, we need to eliminate basic writing structures that delay entrance into the academy . . . we need to work to ameliorate the punitive and gatekeeping functions of writing courses" (70). This is the goal of mainstreaming: to "ameliorate the punitive and gatekeeping functions" for which composition is known. Goen argues that "as long as basic writing is cast in the role of gatekeeper to higher education . . . then arguably it matters little where students encounter the gate. It is finally not enough to rethink what we are doing inside classrooms, regardless of where those classrooms are located" (Dissertation 306). From Goen's perspective, compositionists have responsibilities that exist beyond their classrooms; we need to rethink our programs.

Such rethinking, especially in the CSU in light of the restrictions of EO 665, involves considering the relationship between standardized testing and curriculum. Judith Rodby, writing about the mainstreaming programs that she, Fox and their colleagues at CSU Chico put in place in the 1990s, notes that doing away with the remedial designation of their composition courses allowed them "to repudiate the structural slot of basic writing" and, in so doing, recognize that

the remedial courses at Chico had “worked primarily to promote other institutional functions, such as placement testing” (108). Rodby (as well as the other CSU compositionists I cite for the remainder of the chapter) refuses to see her campus’ composition program as subservient to a test—in this case the English Placement Test (EPT). Likewise, in a *CCC* article, Mary Soliday (now at CSU San Francisco) explains that she sees mainstreaming as “. . . a way to continue the progressive practices begun by scholars who over twenty years ago saw that their writing programs were not adequately responsive either to their students or to current scholarship in language and literacy learning” (“From the Margins” 98). Soliday urges us to “define mainstreaming as more than bypassing test scores and instead attend to the broad dimensions of an alternative program”; such a program would include a strong “theoretical framework . . . supports for classroom teaching such as tutoring, course sequencing, [and] methods of evaluation.” Only then will we “support the goal of open admissions by challenging conservative beliefs about who will succeed in a college writing course” (98).

Mainstreaming, then, is not simply a means of complying EO 665 by forcing all students to “sink or swim.” Rather, these programs call compositionists to take up the challenge of working with students of varying abilities within the same class. Soliday pledges, “In this way mainstreaming does not become an educational short-cut but instead promises to provide a genuinely progressive alternative to traditional education” (98). The mainstreaming programs that I will discuss meet the criteria Soliday presents for the following reasons: they have “strong theoretical frameworks,” “offer support to students,” “sequence curriculum,” and “use alternate assessment methods.” Let’s first look at a mainstreaming approach to placement that serves as an alternative to the English Placement Test: directed self-placement.

Directed Self-Placement (DSP)

According to Royer and Gilles, directed self-placement (DSP) “can be any placement method that both offers students information and advice about their placement options (that’s the ‘directed’ part) yet places the ultimate placement decision in the students’ hands (that’s the self-placement part)” (2). Royer and Gilles further explain that

Even though DSP is clearly a form of placement, it probably has more in common with mainstreaming than it does with other forms of placement. The connection lies in our shared eagerness to get all students into the curriculum—to give them a chance to get started, to begin the process of learning about and becoming a part of the university discourse community they have joined. (5)

In the Foreword to Royer and Gilles’ book, Edward White works to allay the fears that many compositionists have about DSP by noting that “[a]t heart, DSP is a conservative proposal, one that maintains the first-year writing requirements as an essential introduction to college-level writing, thinking and problem solving.” And he adds, “At the same time, DSP proposes a radical solution to the persistent problems of over-testing, negative labeling, and student alienation from required coursework” (VIII). Study participant Goen-Salter is working toward implementing DSP on her own large, urban CSU campus. She finds DSP to be a particularly good placement model for the CSU because it gives the University a means of breaking away from the English Placement Test. To Norman, self-placement has become a “viable, tested alternative and that to me has shifted the balance of whatever expedience the EPT offered us that might be in our students’ best interests” (Personal Interview).

What DSP does, argues Peter Elbow, is move the “crunch point” of a composition course from before it even begins—by removing test scores from the placement process—and putting it

at the end of the course. In this model the “crunch” comes in the form of a grade for the course, and the success of the placement method is determined by students’ performance. In other words, the student is in the right course if she is able to pass it (15). Royer and Gilles argue a similar point when they state, “The purpose of placement should be about determining how ready a student is to enter a given curriculum given a student’s readiness factors such as writing skill, motivation, grade expectations for the course, the difficulty of the course, and the student’s attitude toward the work” (“Directed Self–Placement in Relation to Assessment” 8). For Royer and Gilles, the simplest means of determining students’ abilities to place themselves in the correct class is whether or not a student passes the course. They write, “[I]f students pass the regular class, and if they do so happily, confidently, and without trauma, then they did not need a basic writing course.” They then address the issue of grades,

Now if they pass the course but still can’t write well, then we don’t have a *placement* problem, we have a *curriculum* or *teaching* or *grading* problem. It is precisely the strength of DSP that it points us toward these real problems and keeps us from making our students shoulder what are really our problems as faculty and administrators. (emphasis in the original. Royer & Gilles 11)

In Elbow’s terms, these “problems” can be regarded as “crunch points.” But, Elbow, Royer, and Gilles all argue that there is more to be considered than placement when it comes to student success at first-year composition.

In many cases, campuses that have implemented DSP have done away with remedial courses altogether. As of spring 2012, CSU Channel Islands, CSU Fullerton, Humboldt State, CSU Northridge, CSU San Bernardino, and San Francisco State are all using DSP on their campuses, and Northridge is currently considering this method of placement. Students on these

campuses are still required to take the EPT, but at most those results are only part of the placement picture—in fact, at CSU Channel Islands (CI), the faculty members are so suspicious of the EPT’s ability to gauge student performance in composition classes that students are discouraged from considering their EPT score when considering which class to take (“Directed Self-placement”). When the CI composition program was still in its planning stages, before the doors opened on the campus, Jacqueline Kilpatrick, then-chair of the English Program, requested and was granted permission from the Chancellor’s Office to allow CI to use DSP as its sole form of placement (and not the EPT) from its first year of existence. CI has now amassed several years of data, and according to a Chancellor’s Office report on CSU remediation policies, the campus “has systematically evaluated the program and consistently found promising results,” finding that “students make appropriate choices about which writing courses to take, and that mainstreaming all students in baccalaureate writing classes works” (“California State University Remediation Policies” 11- 12).

According to a study conducted by Bob Mayberry of CI in 2004, students have been successful in choosing which courses to take without the help of a placement test. Mayberry found that between two-thirds and three-fourths of students chose to take the stretch composition course (discussed at length below), and that nearly ten percent more students opted to take stretch in 2004 than did in 2003. This increase is attributed to more in-depth advisement from the faculty about the program. Mayberry notes that there may well have been changes to the orientation sessions, but “the fact remains that a large majority of students saw themselves as needing or wanting a year-long course” (1).

Stretch Composition

While it is not required that DSP programs link to "stretch" composition classes, all of the CSU campuses that offer DSP also offer stretch composition. Stretch composition is defined as a way to “serve basic writers by allowing them to complete a typical introductory standard composition course over two semesters instead of one” (Lalicker). The placement options for the CSU Channel Islands campus, for example, allow students to choose either a two semester stretch course, in which they are given more time to work on their writing with the same instructor and classmates, or a one semester course in which the focus is on research writing. In the stretch course, students explore a variety of genres and ease into academic research-based writing instead of starting with it. According to the CSU Remediation Policies webpage, “In addition to offering a one-semester, 3-unit ‘accelerated’ option and a two-semester, 6-unit ‘stretch’ option, CSU Fresno has a 9-unit option that provides students who are multilingual speakers with an extra semester to work on their English before taking composition classes” (California State University Remediation Policies” 11).

College-Level Curriculum

Recently, I was having lunch with two friends who also teach composition—one at a UC campus and the other at a CSU that is starting a stretch program. My fellow CSU friend was telling us about the new stretch program when the UC friend asked if this was really just a name change for the program (from “remedial” to “stretch”) in order to allow the students to earn credit and fulfill EO 665. Or was there more to it? Is there something different about the curriculum? Would this change be enough to please the Chancellor’s Office? The answers to her questions are more complicated than a simple “yes” or “no.”

Many compositionists have argued for a long time that a name change is overdue. For example, as early as 1988, at the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) conference, Patricia Bizzell argued that the curriculum within basic writing programs has been evolving over the previous thirty years:

[W]e are now teaching fairly much the same way whether we are teaching in a basic writing classroom, a freshman English classroom, or a senior writing seminar; students are writing, and we are talking about their writing. The *levels* of performance may differ but the *types* of performance demanded are quite similar. (emphasis in original, qtd. in Adams 24)

So, for Bizzell, college writing classes are worthy of credit. After quoting Bizzell, Peter Dow Adams argues, “If we no longer have basic writers work through pages of drill and practice, if we no longer require basic writers to write mechanical five-paragraph essays, then we may have much less reason that we did in the past for employing what amounts to a tracking system” (24). Bizzell and Adams argue here for a name change (away from the term “remedial”), not for the sake of fashion or to avoid stigma, but because the curriculum has changed. In the case of the CSU, the impetus for such a change, as Cruz acknowledged above, is EO 665. If I had been told that the draconian mandate of EO 665 would have resulted in DSP and stretch programs that would prove helpful to students and mollify the Chancellor, I would certainly not have believed it when the policy was introduced in the late 1990s. Yet, since EO 665, there has been an added incentive to make the curriculum rigorous enough to merit credit, while at the same time offering the scaffolding and support necessary to allow at-risk students to succeed.

In the CSU, one of the first mainstreamed stretch-programs to gain approval from its campus’ curriculum committee was the Integrated Reading and Writing Program at San

Francisco State. In 2005, Goen-Salter and her colleague Helen Gillotte-Tropp presented their new course to English Council at the spring meeting near San Francisco.

San Francisco State's Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) program is centered on a stretch course that allows students to complete in a single one-year course the coursework that in the past took three semesters (and five separate courses) to complete. This way the students meet "not only the CSU remediation requirement, but also the first-year college composition requirement" (Goen-Salter "Critiquing" 85). According to Goen-Salter, the purpose of the IRW program was not to dismantle the existing basic writing and reading courses at San Francisco State "but to re-design the curriculum so that what students learned about reading would function as an explicit scaffold for learning about writing, and vice versa" (87). This new integrated reading/writing curriculum allows students to complete a year-long stretch version of first-year composition, where the previous model required students to take two semesters of remedial (credit-free) composition and reading courses before taking the first year composition course. In order to determine the effectiveness of the IRW stretch course, Goen-Salter and her colleagues conducted a study in which they compared the performance of students taking the IRW course with students enrolled in the existing separate basic writing and reading courses (88). They found that for the first three years the IRW program was in place, the students who took the stretch IRW course passed at higher rates than the other students "in the traditional two-semester sequence of remediation. These higher pass rates have significant consequences in the context of the CSU's one-year limit on remediation" (89). Goen-Salter refers to EO 665 in the conclusion of her *Journal of Basic Writing* article cited earlier, stating:

Taken as a whole, the evidence seems clear. The IRW program allows students deemed most at-risk for not succeeding and/or dropping out, who begin San

Francisco State with a full year of high-stakes remediation as their welcome mat, to enter the academic mainstream during the crucial first year and to move on to more advanced composition courses—in short, to thrive as college students. (94)

In this way, the stretch course allows students to receive the support they need to succeed with the college-level curriculum while receiving credit for their efforts and, at the same time meeting the EO 665 mandate and retaining their enrollment status.

Credit for Composition

Even though doing so remains the exception rather than the rule, some compositionists understand the appeal of granting credit to all composition courses. In 2006 two Boise State University graduate students, Sabrina Gary and Katie White, surveyed twenty-six individuals from colleges and universities across the United States on the topic of awarding credit for composition. Gary and White found that only 23% of the participants worked at institutions that offered credit for basic writing. The authors also asked participants why they think their campuses hold the policies they do regarding credit. One gave the same reason used in the CSU to reject credit for remedial classes, stating, “Our state governing board does not allow any developmental class to count as graduation credit.” Another said, “I think the rationale about the courses’ credit status is that pre-college work should not count for college graduation” (“Basic Writing Course Credit”). When Gary and White asked the participants if they believed their basic writing courses merited credit, 56% said “yes.” One wrote that the course should only receive partial credit since the course focused on the transition from high school writing to “college-level work” it therefore “deserves college credit” (“Basic Writing Course Credit”).

This kind of hair-splitting is indicative of a problem Goen raises when she asserts that because the work in remedial courses has been designated pre-collegiate and is therefore not

“real” college level work, “it warrants constant scrutiny of the kind that . . . risks miring [students] in a mandatory sequence of composition courses” (Dissertation 296). For example, some participants from Gary and White’s survey said of credit for basic writing, one participant thought “[p]erhaps half the credit would be appropriate” for the courses, “but it depends on a lot of different factors ranging from course content to overall graduation requirements to media/public perception” (“Basic Writing Course Credit”). Another participant said that students might be able to receive “[a]cademic credit equal to other courses that meet the same number of hours, provided that the basic writing course can be said, with at least a modicum of plausibility, to reach college-level work” (“Basic Writing Course Credit”).

These responses point to the reason that it is so important for the CSU—or any university making the move from remedial to mainstreamed programs—to make the case for the academic rigor of their programs. In order for programs to receive credit, they must be teaching college-level academic writing. As Rodby puts it when she writes about the shift from remedial to credit-bearing composition courses at Chico State, students “understood that they were in an economy in which literacy was a (if not the) medium of exchange.” She notes that when students were required to take non-credit courses, they “were being asked to exchange their labor for no credit. They did not attribute some prelapsarian worth to these basic writing courses, and many actively resisted taking and doing work in these courses” (108). Gary and White report similar findings. Faculty reported that the fact that a course bears no credit has been “a source of considerable discontent among students,” leading them to wonder why, if a class is required, it does not also offer them credit (“Basic Writing Course Credit”).

In a 2008 presentation at the Writing Research across Borders conference, Mary Boland²³ described the reasoning she and Kim Costino applied to their proposal to offer credit-bearing courses at CSU San Bernardino before the academic senate.

By making these classes college-level, we would be reducing remediation on our campus as the Chancellor's Office has demanded. And since we've been teaching a college level curriculum for years now in basic writing, assigning college credit would correct an ethical wrong. From our point of view, the new curriculum is a win all the way around. We preserve access to the CSU and provide our students with a pedagogically sound program that recognizes literacy as an ongoing social process rather than a set of static skills. (7)

While this was the argument that carried the most weight with the compositionists on campus, administrators, and even other faculty on campus, were only convinced of the benefits of the move to stretch when they saw that it could save money for the campus.

Goen-Salter notes that when EO665 was first introduced at San Francisco State, administrators came up with two main plans in order to eliminate remediation on the campus: 1) move all remedial courses to their extended education program which receives no state funding, meaning that courses are often double the price of those offered in the English department or; 2) require such courses to be completed elsewhere, which, in practical terms meant the community colleges. However, within a short time, the

²³ Costino and Boland co-wrote the presentation and planned to co-present, but Costino was unable to attend the conference; therefore, I refer to Boland as the speaker and both of them as authors of the talk.

IRW program became fully adopted and was approved as a first-year composition equivalent course, permanently replacing the traditional sequence of separate developmental-level reading and writing courses. As of 2006, all incoming first-time students who score at the remedial level on the English Placement Test (approximately 1,100 each year) enroll in a credit-bearing integrated reading/writing course in a vastly expanded IRW program. (“Critiquing” 97)

While the IRW course at San Francisco State received a lot of statewide attention, it is just one of the successful models of stretch composition within the CSU. As of 2012, seven campuses offer their own stretch programs, five campuses have approved stretch programs in the pilot phase, and four other campuses have submitted proposals for stretch programs to their curriculum committees. In fact, there are only three campuses without any plans to implement stretch programs.

In 2007, the Committee on Education Policy conducted a study on innovative programs that campuses have put in place to meet the EO 665 requirements. The study found that placing students into “explicitly labeled developmental courses often discourages at-risk students and decreases the likelihood of their staying in college and graduating.” They found that, in contrast, “placing students in intensive, credit-bearing baccalaureate-level courses accelerated their sense of competence and eventual success.” In addition to the San Francisco course, the report cites three other campuses (Channel Islands, Humboldt, and San Bernardino) that also offer stretch programs. A faculty member from one of these campuses mentioned that “because these courses do not carry the stigma of remediation, the argument is, students feel as though they belong in college and, therefore, are more likely to persist in their pursuit of the baccalaureate degree” (Committee on Education, 2007). The study did not find anything new from the perspective of

most compositionists—it echoes Bizzell’s point made at the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) almost twenty years ago and cited above. However, this comment was made from within the CSU by those with the power to shape curriculum for all 23 campuses.

A Lack of Consensus: Rocks in the (Main) Stream

While mainstreaming has been a very attractive response to EO 665 and similar restrictions for many composition programs both within the CSU and around the country, not everyone is convinced that mainstreaming should replace basic writing programs. Boland and Costino describe the response from the faculty outside of composition when they introduced their stretch program to the CSU San Bernardino academic senate, “For some faculty, remedial students are essentially deficient. They are persons in need of basic skills, who should not receive college credit for what they should have learned in high school” (7). They also noted that, in the minds of these individuals, “the new program only represents a ‘relabeling’ or ‘masking’ of remediation and an erosion of standards” (7). Boland and Costino informed their colleagues that these students were succeeding in a stretch course the composition program was piloting. The faculty told them that they didn’t think the University should offer such a program. “The argument went: ‘we all know our students can’t write, so if you’re not teaching them these basic skills, then you should be and if you are teaching them these skills, then a) they’re not getting it and b) we shouldn’t give college credit for that’” (Boland and Costino 7). The University president agreed with the critics. His plan was that if students could not pass first-year composition, they should simply repeat that course until they passed it.

When discussing the course design with the curriculum committee at San Bernardino, Costino and Boland recalled that they tried to convince their colleagues of “the social nature of literacy, the recursive nature of literacy acquisition, and so on . . . eyes rolled, people nodded off,

a few smiled politely. But no one listened [. . .]” (8). They had to abandon talking about literacy, but instead “talk on our colleagues’ terms...a graphic PowerPoint presentation that helped make the case in all sorts of ways, the least of which was on disciplinary understandings of writing and literacy” (8). Boland reported that they were able to make the case by sharing “extensive research on ‘successful’ models at other universities, especially those within the CSU” (Boland and Costino 9). It was this latter argument—that such models had succeeded at other CSUs—that won the day. Their stretch program was accepted and has been working well ever since.

Resistance to mainstreaming does not come only from those outside composition. George Otte and Rebecca Mlynarczyk at length discuss the question of mainstreaming versus offering basic writing courses in their book *Basic Writing* and they point to Ira Shor’s article “Our Apartheid” (which was discussed in Chapter 1). Shor charges that, by continuing to require students to take basic writing courses without giving them credit for them, universities “maintain the inequality built over the last century or two, tilting resources to elite students and lush campuses, rewarding those who speak and look like those already in power. This arrangement is undemocratic and immoral” (Shor, “Our Apartheid” 98). While his concern for students’ well-being is apparent, Shor’s position is not shared by many of those who have dedicated their careers to the teaching of basic writing.

Shor’s words intensified a debate in the basic writing community that led to a session at the 1996 Conference on College Composition and Communication. Two participants in the session, Karen Greenberg and Terrance Collins, disputed Shor’s depiction of basic writing courses. Greenberg said that even if Shor’s vision of composition programs freed of gatekeeping were possible, “No one should make the mistake of believing that the current atmosphere of draconian cutbacks would not operate in this way if opponents of basic skills courses are

successful in their goal” (qtd. in Otte & Mlynarczyk 94). Collins similarly argued that Shor’s position would “likely serve simply to distract us from direct action against more pressing forces of exclusionism” (qtd. in Otte & Mlynarczyk 70). Both Greenberg and Collins used their responses to Shor to assert how neither of the writing programs in which they taught was guilty of the hegemonic practices Shor described in “Our Apartheid.” According to Otte and Mlynarczyk, Greenberg accused Shor of “oversimplifying the term [basic writing] and demonizing it. In reality basic writing differs at every school; at each college, administrators, teachers, and students all participate in the process of constructing basic writing and basic writers” (Otte 70).

Mary Soliday articulates another concern about mainstreaming. She warns that the cost of mainstreaming can be high for campuses as “a remedial program often constitutes just one facet of an entire remedial enterprise on a college campus or within a university system” (96). And when compositionists and administrators consider elimination of remedial programs, they need to keep in mind that such dismantling “threatens the identity of . . . [e]qual opportunity programs, tutorial services, financial aid, and advisement” programs that exist to serve marginalized students (96). Soliday warns that “[a] mainstreaming project can disrupt this relationship by categorizing students differently; and thus we have to be acutely aware of our role in the potential struggle over redefining the considerable territory which constitutes remedial education within an institution” (96). This concern over the ways that mainstreaming threatens long-standing programs is exemplified by events that took place within English Council in 2005.

At the spring 2005 English Council meeting, Goen-Salter and Gillotte-Tropp presented their Integrated Reading and Writing Program in one of the Thursday plenary sessions. The Council responded positively to the presentation and passed a resolution asking campus

administrators to consider such a program as one possible answer to meeting the EO 665 mandate on their campuses. Pam Bourgeois reported at the fall English Council meeting of that same year that upon reading the resolution, the administration at CSU Northridge took it as a sign that remedial funds were no longer necessary and so they could “cut back on funding” for those programs. In a letter to English Council summarizing Bourgeois’ experience, then-English Council President John Edlund noted that “we [need] to consider the unintended consequences caused by our resolutions. At present there is considerable variety in the attitudes of campus administrators to developmental writing courses” (“Executive Summary” Edlund). It is clear that these concerns were valid; within four years of Bourgeois’ comment, she and her colleagues at Northridge opted to implement a DSP/stretch program on their campus, at least in part because the funds for basic writing were eliminated. And according to Otte and Mlynarczyk, by 2005, basic writing had been phased out at both Collins and Greenberg’s home institutions—University of Minnesota and CUNY’s Hunter College.

Otte and Mlynarczyk note that the controversy laid out on the pages of the special issue of the *Journal of Basic Writing* in which Collins’ and Greenberg’s articles appear changed the focus of the conversation surrounding basic writing. Otte and Mlynarczyk argue that the “dissensus was evidence of a turning point in the history of basic writing. Controversies had always existed in the field, but in the past they had focused on how best to proceed with BW instruction, not on whether to do so” (170). This dissensus is not only taking place within the field of composition studies at large, but also on CSU campuses and English Council. In large part due to EO 665, the current conversation is not about how best to offer basic writing, but whether to offer it at all.

Many of those I have cited in this chapter argue that the stretch programs are better programs than those they replaced by a variety of measures: *better pedagogically*, as evidenced by San Francisco's IRW program, which provides much-needed scaffolding in its integrated curriculum; *better ethically*, in that students are awarded credit for their work; *better financially*, in that both the University and students save money by not having to pay for remedial courses; and *better politically* in that these programs fulfill the requirements of EO 665.

These are important gains, but they have come at a price to English Council. Just as the rift in the Council over high-school intervention programs like ERWC which came about as a result of EO 665, so too changes to composition programs in the form of DSP and stretch composition have caused rifts among Council members. Even before EO 665 called for the elimination of remedial programs, some campuses saw the efficacy of stretch-composition and DSP programs, so when EO 665 was put in place, they regarded its call to eliminate remedial programs as the impetus for overdue change. Other campuses did not regard their remedial programs as needing an overhaul. Thus, these campuses have been more reluctant about making changes to their programs. Had EO 665 not been a factor in these decisions, such programmatic changes may not have led to disagreement or disputes within the Council; the decisions whether or not to implement stretch or DSP would have been made on a campus by campus basis. But, under EO 665, campuses and their responses to the mandate have been under increased scrutiny. Therefore, when campuses like Channel Islands and Fresno began to get on the stretch composition bandwagon, news travelled quickly to the administrators of other campuses and their WPAs found it necessary to justify retaining longstanding programs.

As the following chapter will continue to illustrate, EO 665 has worn away at some of the unity that had existed within English Council, with the most tension surrounding how the call to

eliminate remediation should be addressed. Council members disagree over how (or whether) to address remediation at the high school level through interventions such as the ERWC and over mainstreaming interventions like stretch and DSP that take place once students reach the University. As Chapter Five's discussion of voting and deliberation within English Council will reveal, it has been difficult for members to support one another while disagreeing with the choices they made on their campuses regarding EO 665.

CHAPTER 5

ON THE HORIZON: REMEDIATION REDUX

In 1996 Executive Order (EO) 665 mandated that remediation in the California State University (CSU) would be reduced from over 50 percent to ten percent by 2007. However, as many English Council members predicted, that deadline came and went with no significant change to the remediation rate. Instead of overhauling or eliminating the English Placement Test (EPT)—and its design that sets the cut score so that nearly half of all students taking the test will always place into remedial courses—the administration used failure to meet the mandate of EO 665 as an opportunity not only to continue the cutbacks on remedial programs, but also to restructure the university as a whole (“CFA White Paper”).

This failure to meet the EO 665 mandate happened to coincide with the largest economic crisis the United States and specifically the state of California has suffered since the Second World War.²⁴ In the 2009-2010 academic year, all CSU employees agreed to take a 9.5 percent pay cut and large campuses laid off thousands of lecturer faculty. In 2012 the budget of the CSU is facing cutbacks that will further impede the University from fulfilling its mission. According to a CSU budget report, “the proposed 18 percent [a \$500 million cut] budget reduction cuts state support to the level the CSU received in 1999, while now serving 70,000 additional students” (“CSU Budget Central”). Competing voices have expressed ideas for keeping the University afloat during these troubled times. According to Robert Zemsky and Joni Finney (whose ideas of “reform” will be discussed at length below), “American higher education today is an expensive

²⁴ According to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, the current economic crisis is the worst on record in any period since World War II (Bivens).

enterprise that frequently lacks both the will and the know-how to do things differently” (1). Despite the many innovations conceived and carried out by the CSU, there is a commonly held view that paves the way for administrators to introduce often harsh changes. For example, Linda Adler-Kassner and Susanmarie Harrington discuss, in a 2006 article entitled, “In the Here and Now: Public Policy and Basic Writing,” the standardized test-driven education reforms presented by former United States Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and other figures at the national level. After a careful review of a report from Spellings, the authors conclude, “Rather than make the case that individual students are transgressing norms, these documents [from Spellings] argue that education, as an institution, has somehow veered from its historically determined path” (30). Adler-Kassner and Harrington note that for Spellings, “The problem, then, is not with the student . . . but with the institution” (31). To some progressives, to hear the United States Secretary of Education admit that educational institutions are in need of reform is welcome news. However, according to Adler-Kassner and Harrington, the kind of reform Spellings and her colleagues advocate would be a move in a dangerous direction. They write that Spellings is calling for “switching from the metaphor of American expansionism to a business model” (31) that stresses efficiency and the bottom line more than the teaching of students.

In difficult economic times, CSU Chancellor Charles Reed showed that he shared Spelling’s perspective. He enthusiastically embraced a business model for university education and consulted business experts. Reed came to believe that he could solve the CSU’s budget woes and its “remediation problem” at the same time. As will become clear when I describe Reed’s Graduation Initiative, Reed took the position that it is the University as a whole that needs to change; in order to bring about such change the Chancellor called in some powerful outside consultants from far afield to help him make his case.

In this chapter I investigate the sweeping changes Chancellor Charles Reed is making to the CSU during unprecedented financial strain on the state of California. First I will explore the powerful, potentially damaging business model of “deliverology” that is driving this change. The concept of deliverology was introduced to the CSU by Michael Barber, a former top advisor to British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Next, I show that within the deliverology framework, the Chancellor developed a new Graduation Initiative which has instituted even more onerous restrictions onto students testing into remedial math and writing courses. As a part of the Graduation Initiative, a new program—mandatory Early Start—will, as of fall of 2012, require students to begin any required remedial work the summer before they begin taking any courses in the CSU. In addition to presenting these new policies, this chapter describes the actions English Council has taken on behalf of students whose access to the University likely would be further restricted by these policies and chart the partnership in the fight between the Council, the Statewide Academic Senate of the CSU and the California Faculty Association.

Deliverology

In February of 2009, United States President Barack Obama introduced the American Graduation Initiative. President Obama’s plan focused on raising graduation rates within ten years, and during that time, studying the persistence of community colleges students in order to determine what, if any, factors interfere with their success as students. CSU Chancellor Charles Reed saw the opportunity to reform the CSU under the banner of a graduation initiative of his own.

Chancellor Reed’s graduation policy (which was introduced in 2010 and will be discussed at length in the coming pages) was greatly influenced by the work Michael Barber. In fact, in 2009, Chancellor Reed invited Barber to speak to CSU administrators. During the two

day workshop, entitled, “Raising Overall Achievement and Closing Gaps: Delivering the Access to Excellence Goals,” Barber presented participants with five questions that he believed would “keep bringing people back to the fundamentals.” These are the following:

1. What is our system trying to do?
2. How are we planning to do it?
3. At any given moment, how will we know whether we are on track?
4. If not, what are we going to do about it?
5. How can the Delivery Unit help? (Barber 4)

According to a University of California campus newspaper article published after the event, “[T]his new system focuses on an apparently simple approach to managing accountability and reaching goals set by education officials in the CSU system.” Barber referred to these officials as the “delivery team” that “seeks to improve education by forcing educators to clarify their goals through identifying problem areas, developing a strategy to improve those areas, and setting up benchmarks in order to monitor their progress (Bakshi). Because of this emphasis on “delivery teams” and “delivering results” Barber and his team in England came to refer to this reform system as “deliverology” (*Instruction to Deliver* 70).

Barber stressed that it is up to the delivery team to ask and answer the five questions listed above. Other stakeholders on the campuses such as faculty and staff are part of Barber’s delivery chain—as represented below in a slide from the workshop. It is worth noting that students are not represented in the slide.

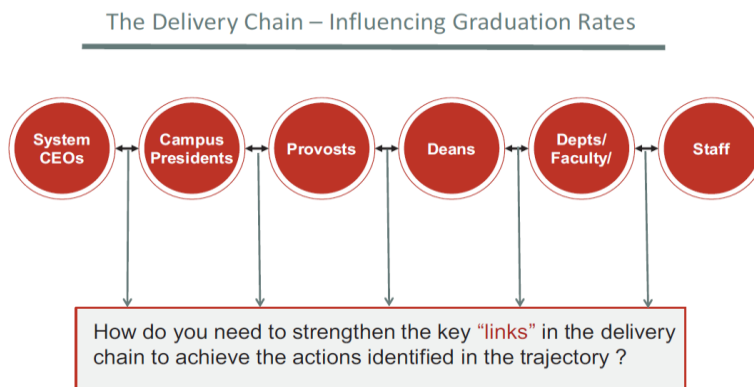


Fig. 1. Links in the Chain (Barber, “Raising” 72).

If Barber subscribes to the notion, as presented above, that faculty and staff “lack the will and know how to reform the system” (Zemsky and Finney), then it is key to Barber that those in the first four segments of the chain have the power to drive change.

In a critical review of Michael Barber’s book *Instruction to Deliver*, Susan Meisenhelder, English Professor Emeritus from CSU San Bernardino, writes that, “By necessity, the process of change is driven from the very top since public servants [faculty and staff] or ‘producers’ (as he calls them) are motivated solely by self-interest and are incapable of change” (19). Meisenhelder holds that, “Deliverology also requires a sharp focus on a very limited set of priorities in order to succeed” (19). It is the administration, or the first four segments in the chain in Figure 1, that “drive this change by developing an even narrower set of numerical targets, by holding those under them [the faculty and staff] accountable for progress and by providing incentives to shape behaviors that will help achieve the targets” (19). From this perspective, the University system is broken, an idea with which many English Council members would agree. However, according to Barber, the ones to direct reform are not faculty or staff—those who work with students—but managers and administrators, or, in other words, those in positions of power who have embraced external change.

Some CSU administrators were quick to jump on the deliverology bandwagon. For example, CSU Stanislaus' President Hamid Shirvani's *Chronicle of Higher Education* wrote an editorial entitled "Will a Culture of Entitlement Bankrupt Higher Education?" in which he embraces the idea of deliverology as a means of repairing the broken University. Shirvani compares the problems that exist in the CSU to those in the auto industry. He writes, "Resistance to change in academe has helped create inflexible, unsustainable organizations" and that universities can become more productive by "revisit[ing] basic assumptions about how we deliver higher education to students" (Shrivani). A few of his suggestions for changes include increasing class size and rethinking the "teacher/scholar model." Shirvani also states that he hopes that "today's harsh economic realities have finally broken the stranglehold of the sense of entitlement about higher education and brought people back down to earth" (Shrivani). Evidently, Shirvani regards the economic decline pursuant to the 2008 recession not only as a hardship to be borne, but also as a great opportunity to restructure the University.

This position—of seeing recession as an opportunity for change—is also held by Robert Zemsky and Joni Finney, who apply Barber's somewhat abstract concept of deliverology to a large university setting. While their article describes how deliverology is taking shape at the University of Pennsylvania, the changes they call for are similar to those being suggested for the CSU. They claim that, "Three decades of adding new programs and more choices to the undergraduate curriculum have yielded colleges and universities that are economically unsustainable and educationally dysfunctional" (4). They argue that "[t]he way out of this box" would be "to re-engineer the curriculum to productively constrain both student and faculty choice" (7) which would lead to students taking "fewer courses overall and thus prove less costly" (Zemsky & Finney 9). These authors note that they are able to "demonstrate statistically

that the curricular structure we have in mind will allow a publicly funded institution to increase enrollment without an increase in state appropriation” (Zemsky & Finney 9). Shrivani, Zemsky and Finney all see restructuring the University as a means to solving budget crises and transforming universities into more efficient operations.

The Chancellor’s Graduation Initiative

Michael Barber was invited by the Chancellor to present his workshop on deliverology as a part of what Reed termed his “Graduation Initiative” which was introduced in January of 2010. As the name suggests, just like President Obama’s plan of the same name, the primary reason for this initiative is to promote faster graduation for CSU students. According to the CSU public affairs website, as of January 2010, “CSU’s overall six-year graduation rate is approximately 46 percent, and the goal of the Graduation Initiative is to bring it up to approximately 54 percent, which is the top quartile of national averages of similar institutions” (“CSU Launches Bold Graduation Initiative”).²⁵ In order to achieve this goal, campuses are required to take part in a “Mandatory Early Start” program (which will be discussed at length below) in order to improve time to degree; and to “reshap[e] general education pathways” (Echeverria 7; “Deliverology 101”). The Chancellor is taking advantage of what he sees as an opportunity not only to cut remedial programs, but also to restructure the entire University.

²⁵ The “top quartile” is determined by College Results Online. The company uses such information as SAT and ACT scores; admission selectivity, using *Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges*; full time equivalency units; percentage of students receiving Pell grants; age; status as a Historically Black College or University; and student enrollment status (College Results Online).

The CSU Graduation Initiative follows Barber's deliverology plan. Barber had noted in his presentation that in order to cut the achievement gap, "the first step . . . will be to set clear goals and performance benchmarks that can be the basis for accountability for achieving these results" (Barber, "Raising" 32). Barber presented three strategies for improving the graduation rate: lowering the cut scores for math and English, developing on-line courses that would be "recognized by all CSUs" and instituting a "common academic calendar and start and end dates for all CSUs" (59).

The first strategy, lowering the cut score for the EPT, is something English Council members have been pursuing since 1987. This strategy has received no criticism from English Council members and little attention from the California Faculty Association. The only group that has expressed concern over lowering the cut score are those who fear that such a change could lead to even more cuts to services like those offered through Equal Opportunity Programs ("CFA White Paper"). I will go into more detail about those protests later in the chapter.

Barber's call for the CSU to offer more on-line courses and a common academic calendar, both of which could be standardized across the system, would enable students to take courses at multiple CSU campuses in order to earn their degrees. These recommendations are similar to suggestions made by Zemsky and Finney, who regard it as a positive development that "in the process of recasting the curriculum it should also be possible to take greater account of the large numbers of students who will earn their undergraduate degrees while attending several, rather than just one, undergraduate institutions" (8). At this point in my study it will come as no surprise that English Council had grave concerns about this kind of standardized and on-line curriculum. These are ideas that may sound good to administrators like Barber, but have material consequences for students. Eliminating courses and/or moving them online are more strategies

that have the largest impact on students with the fewest options about how to complete their education. The second half of the chapter will explore those concerns in detail.

Zemsky and Finney also describe a “fixed curricular pathway” that would allow students no electives (8). They argue that, as Barber and the Chancellor’s Graduation Initiative calls for, the goal of this Spartan proposal is the ability to reduce time to degree. The idea of no electives is severe to begin with, as faculty worry that this would leave little room for faculty autonomy or academic freedom. Yet, Zemsky and Finney go on to claim that such a uniform path “could also award credit for demonstrating competence in [a] subject without having the student sit through a particular course” (8). This claim sounds strikingly similar to the situation described in Chapter 2, when in 1971, then-Chancellor Glenn Dumke tried to mandate equivalency testing that would almost entirely replace the teaching of first-year composition (and math) in the CSU. In that case, the panacea was a series of timed tests. That plan eventually failed, in large part due to public outcries about “instant sophomores” (Greenwood). In 2010, in addition to tests, the “solution” touted both by the Chancellor’s Graduation Initiative and by “deliverologists” like Barber and Zemsky and Finney is technology. Zemsky and Finney write that “In general we believe a re-engineered curriculum could take greater advantage of technology. Both to achieve better learning outcomes and to verify that specific competencies have been mastered” (8).

Again, this logic is similar to the claims made in the 1970s. Because English Council’s criticisms of the Graduation Initiative become more meaningful when considered in the context of the other critiques of the program, I will wait to present them until later in the chapter. Writing in a special section of the *CFA Magazine* on the Graduation Initiative, CSU Los Angeles Professor Ali Modarres builds on claims about the attacks on higher education made by Bill Readings, Sheila Slaughter, and David Downing. Modarres argues that “[c]asting academia as an

‘Ivory Tower’ has legitimized the discourse on its destruction and/or reduction in size” (21). The deliverologists, in Modarres’ view, characterize a bachelor’s degree—including luxuries like a stretch class or electives—as an Ivory Tower luxury that neither the state nor the students can afford. Modarres laments that, in the US, the market has become the ruling force over other concerns such as access or democracy.

Critiques of Deliverology and the Graduation Initiative

There has been resistance to the Graduation Initiative across the CSU. In Chapter 2 I wrote of English Council receiving help from Gerhard Friedrich, a representative of the Chancellor’s Office, in their fight against then-Chancellor Dumke’s plan to allow students to test out of composition and other classes; in the current struggle over the Graduation Initiative, however, no such help is forthcoming. In 2010, English Council members banded together with members of the California Faculty Association (CFA). The first criticism of the policy to appear from the CFA came in the form of a white paper accusing the Chancellor of sidestepping the public in its approach. “In these times of unprecedented cuts, the Chancellor and his administration are clearly not on a mission to confront elected leaders or even to educate the people of California about the costs of political choices made around the California budget...”

(1). Chancellor Reed, in promoting the Graduation Initiative, was enacting the adage that desperate economic times call for desperate measures.

A chief critic of deliverology as it took shape in public education is John Seddon. A few months after Barber’s visit to Long Beach to address administrators, the California Faculty Association paid for Seddon to speak to union members. In his April 2010 talk, Seddon shared his belief that schools

. . . have become training institutions, training students how to pass tests—a world of difference from their true purpose. Teaching to the test takes the value out to learning. . . . We’ve industrialized education through deliverology. Schools have become factories and anyone can enter the market to provide education and those who do will be judged by test results. . . . (Seddon)

In the CSU, what Barber terms “narrowly defined targets” are referred to as “test scores and graduation rates.” In her review of Seddon’s book, *Systems Thinking in the Public Sector*, Susan Meisenhelder, English Professor Emeritus of CSU San Bernardino, notes that “When the quality of service is defined by a few very narrow numerical markers and when everyone is either punished or rewarded based on meeting those targets, the largest public value of that service gets lost and the quality of service suffers” (20). Meisenhelder warns that “we must ensure that attempts to improve graduation rates do not undermine the purpose and public value of the CSU—to provide broad access to a quality education at an affordable price” (20). She further notes that deliverology will not make these improvements if it sacrifices the CSU Master Plan’s mandate “to produce a larger, more diverse, and better educated set of graduates” (20) in order to meet graduation targets. In such a case, the CSU would gain little by improving graduation rates.

Addressing the issue of diversity, Modarres notes that when cuts to higher education are made, campuses like Los Angeles are harder hit because the area is “resource poor.” Therefore, as was the case with EO 665, raising the graduation rates impacts campuses and students unevenly. He contends, “As one of the largest university systems in the world in terms of the number of students served, [the CSU] remained visible to those who needed our services but were apparently invisible to some policymakers. Nonetheless, we remained a consistently

accessible option in California’s educational system” (22). As stressed in this study many times, promoting diversity is a specific charge for the CSU in the Master Plan.

However, Modarres points out that from the beginning, “Universities such as CSLA were not created equally and serve a student population unlike any other. We serve working class communities within a few miles of our campus—communities whose history is imbued with narratives of inequities” (25). As a professor of urban studies and geography, Modarres is careful to point out that CSU Los Angeles is a local, commuter campus which serves its community of lower-income, diverse students; Los Angeles is not a “destination” campus. To that end, Modarres notes that, “It would be cruelly ironic if places made unequal by our past social, political, and economic policies were treated equally when it comes to budget cuts” (25). Yet, that is what happened with EO 665—more students were disenrolled from diverse, urban campuses than from predominantly white suburban campuses—and that is set to happen again with Early Start.

Another critic, Dennis Loo, sociology professor at Pomona, notes the irony of Chancellor Reed claiming that he “wants to *increase* graduation rates and bridge the achievement gap while at the same time he is continuing to slash the budget, reducing faculty ranks, and rais[ing] student fees. . . .” Loo stresses that the Chancellor chose to deliberately “induce this crisis.” He charges:

The present crisis did not come about *just* because of the deep recession. This recession and this crisis in education are the logical outcome of *policies* that privilege those with a lot against those with much less. These policies trump private interests and private goods over public goods and public interests.
(emphasis in original, “The Battle over Higher Education in California”)

While Loo's position on the Graduation Initiative is an extreme one, it is not so far from Seddon's argument that deliverology contributes to the industrialization of education. And, as Modarres has pointed out, all campuses being regarded as equal could lead to unmet targets that will result in cuts on campuses that can bear them least.

Once the criticisms against Barber and CSU-style deliverology began to mount, the administration shied away from the term "deliverology," but the Graduation Initiative has remained a top priority for the Chancellor. The part of the plan that impacts English Council most has been the Early Start Initiative portion.

Early Start

English Council Gets a Preview

The section of the Chancellor's Graduation Initiative that impacts English Council (particularly compositionists) most directly is the Mandatory Early Start program. Jeri Echeverria, who took Allison Jones' place as Executive Vice Chancellor of the CSU, came to the fall 2009 meeting of English Council to introduce the program. In the first two slides of her PowerPoint presentation, Echeverria reviewed the EO 665 mandate stressing the goal that during the time between when EO 665 was introduced in 1996 and the fall of 2007, "the number of regularly admitted new CSU freshmen needing remediation will have been reduced to 10 percent of that group" (3).²⁶ As discussed at length in the previous chapters, this goal of reducing the

²⁶ The PowerPoint I am citing here is available on the CSU website, but dated March of 2010, when her presentation to English Council took place in October 2009. While it is likely that additions and edits were made to the presentation, Echeverria provided the Council with the information I cite from the March document.

remediation rate to 10 percent for the CSU has been destined to failure since it was first introduced. In fact, when the slide appeared on the screen, many in the room shook their heads, rolled their eyes or shrugged their shoulders in a sort of “tell me something I didn’t already know” stance. Echeverria then went on to give some background on the Early Assessment Program (EAP), noting that “466,303 11th graders took CST [California Standards Test] and 369,441 (79%) also took EAP” (4). While this slide makes clear that students are now taking the EAP, it does not make clear what percentage of those students are taking the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) in their senior year. What the slide does make clear is that an eleventh grade test has not solved the problem of remediation in the CSU; at least the eleventh grade test is now taken by almost eighty percent of incoming CSU students. Again, this information came as no surprise to English Council.

Missing from Echeverria’s presentation was any mention of the innovative programs CSU faculty (many of them English Council members) developed to work with students once they actually reach CSU classroom doors—the place over which CSU faculty actually have some say. There was no slide noting the success of directed self-placement, stretch composition, or the integrated reading and writing programs, many of which were designed to respond to EO 665 and which have met EO 665’s call for students to complete remediation within one year. Any references to these programs were made indirectly.

Perhaps referring to the changes made to CSU composition programs, Echeverria noted that, “efforts to help individual students make up deficiencies have been successful, and our faculty have performed admirably, however efforts to reduce the overall demand for “remedial” coursework has not been successful to date” (6). Note that the “demand” for remedial coursework is the concern addressed in the mandatory Early Start policy. The stress here is

“remediating” students *before* they begin their first year at a CSU, not on what composition and math faculty are doing for students once they begin taking classes at a CSU. According to Echeverria, who attended an English Council meeting to present the policy, Herb Carter, the board of trustees representative who pushed Early Start, is not only concerned about the cost of remediation, but also about the psychological stigma students subjected to taking remedial courses suffer (EC Minutes). While this is a laudable concern shared by many compositionists, instead of questioning the reliability of the test (the EPT) that finds these students in need of remediation, Carter’s solution is to “remediate” these students in the summer before their freshman year; a strategy that he argues would protect students from such stigmatization.

According to Echeverria’s PowerPoint, Early Start would not only help out with the “remediation problem,” but also result in some of the other goals of the Graduation Initiative.

Here are the contents of the slide noting the benefits of Early Start:

- Near-proficient students will not take courses that are not required of them
- Faster progress to degree
- Serving more students by increased capacity
- By 2014, the CSU will begin reviewing its progress in a coordinated manner, reporting to the Board on its progress, and reviewing best practices in this field. (sic 13)

In their stress on fewer course offerings, faster time to degree, and increased capacity for the University, these points align directly with those presented by Michael Barber in his deliverology presentation in October of 2009. As noted above, increasing the capacity of the University while decreasing choice for students is a primary goal of the “deliverology team.”

English Council gave Echeverria an impassioned response to her presentation. Members of the Council accused the Chancellor's Office of dictating yet another mandate for faculty to address, just as campuses were beginning to report positive results from the changes they had made to their composition programs in the form of directed self-placement, stretch and integrated courses in order to comply with EO 665. I will go into more detail about English Council's resistance to the mandate later in the chapter, but at the meeting, English Council members raised the concern that requiring the Early Start program to be mandatory for all students who test into remedial courses would not help students, rather, ...it would serve to dismantle the new, innovative programs designed to help students succeed in mainstreamed/stretch first year composition courses regardless of whether their EPT score designated them remedial or not. Echeverria concluded her talk by assuring those present that that she heard our concerns and would take them back to the Chancellor and the trustees.

Early Start Becomes CSU Policy

In June 2010, within a few short months of Echeverria's visit to English Council, Executive Order 1048 made Early Start official CSU policy. As of summer 2012, incoming freshmen who have not demonstrated proficiency in English and/or mathematics upon acceptance to the University "will be required to begin remediation prior to the term for which they have been admitted, e.g., summer prior to fall" and complete it within their first year, per EO 665. The policy goes on to state, "If [incoming freshmen] have not started to address a deficiency in either mathematics and/or English, they will not be permitted to enroll at the CSU campus of their admission unless they have applied for an exception and the requirement has been waived due to extraordinary circumstances" (EO 1048).

The policy specifically mentions EAP, the eleventh grade test that up to this point had been optional for students, and therefore actually codifies the role of the EAP as a fixture of the admissions process for all students who attend public California high schools by stating that “Deficiencies in mathematics and/or English are to be determined by test scores on the Early Assessment Program (EAP) taken at the end of 11th grade in a California public high school, or the Entry Level Mathematics Exam (ELM) and/or the English Placement Test (EPT) taken during the senior year of high school” (Office of the Chancellor). Those students who do not pass the EAP and therefore require a high school intervention, and who are lucky enough to attend a high school that offers the English Reading and Writing Course (ERWC—discussed at length in the previous chapter), can begin their remediation in high school. If they receive a “B” or higher in the course, they can bypass the EPT and go directly into a first-year composition course. Those receiving grades below a “B” would still be required to take the EPT, and, if placed into a remedial course, would need to take a summer course, per EO 1048.

Interestingly, EO 1048 actually mentions English Council as a stakeholder in determining the curriculum for Early Start, yet specifically states that “The Implementation Team will work closely with the faculty of the English and Mathematics Councils, but will retain oversight for the Early Start Program” (Office of the Chancellor). So, the English and Math Councils are participants in the process, but the Implementation Team retains control. This team is made up of thirteen members, of which the Statewide Academic Senate, the Mathematics Council, and English Council were each asked to choose one. Inclusion of English Council in the EO can be regarded as a sign of the group’s increased visibility to the Chancellor, since the Council is not mentioned in any other executive orders. Yet, many within English Council view this inclusion as a dubious honor; Early Start is regarded as bad policy by every English Council member that

has discussed it in a meeting or written about it. (I will expand on these objections later in the chapter.)

While the EAP and ERWC feature most prominently in the EO, the mandate also suggest that campus plans for meeting EO 1048 should include “tutoring, writers’ workshops, or ‘stretch’ courses for students scoring between 147 and 150”—scores which, now that the cut score has been reset to 147, place students into first-year composition as opposed to a remedial course. The EO notes “such support has contributed to the success of students.”

Even though the adjustment to the cut score is a helpful change for some students—as fewer students will place into remedial courses—overall, the change in the cut score sends a mixed message. Students who receive a score of 147 or lower are the ones who must participate in the Early Start summer program. These students are considered, according to the EO, to be “measurably less successful, indicating that they continue to need additional coursework in developmental reading and writing” (Office of the Chancellor) which must be begun the summer before students begin the composition courses. One might wonder what great difference exists between students with a score of 147 and 146. Is the EPT really able to correctly measure the success of these students? Mandatory Early Start potentially undermines DSP—a program heretofore praised by the Chancellor’s Office—because it sends the message that stretch courses do not offer sufficient help to these students.

Across the board, members of English Council were baffled as to how the Board of Trustees came to determine (a) how to set a new cut score, (b) why a summer course was the best option, and (c) how meaningful help could be given in a brief, stand-alone program that will receive no funding from the University. Echeverria’s presentation offered no real answers to

these questions. A slide entitled, “Why an Early Start Program?” states the Trustees and Chancellor’s reasons for the program:

- [“Early Start’ is a] natural and logical outcome of deliberation, discussion, and debate that has occurred within the CSU for at least the past 13 years.
- If the CSU reduces the need to offer courses for academic deficiencies, we can expect: more students ready to begin college-level coursework and more students who successfully complete their degrees [.]
- *Students Ready to Begin Are More Likely To Succeed!* (emphasis in original, 19)

Echeverria presented these reasons, but when pressed for the data behind them she had none to offer.

The cover letter included with EO 1048 and the Mandatory Early Start policy states that campuses are required to develop individual plans for how each campus will comply with Early Start. These plans were due five months after the policy was introduced. According to the EO, “Campus plans should include general plans for any and all curricular modifications related to the Early Start Program. Proficiency activities may be offered in a variety of approaches recommended by appropriate faculty and administrative leadership” (“EO 1048”). The EO lists several options for what plans might entail, such as “state supported summer courses, Extended Education Special Session courses, courses offered via a coordinated program developed with regional community colleges, summer bridge programs, on-line coursework, and other best practices” (“EO 1048”). Of course, each of these options brings with it accompanying problems or challenges, which I will attempt to address briefly below.

A Review of the Options for Providing an Early Start

While state-supported summer classes (those classes paid for through each campus' general funds) would be the least expensive option for students, campuses are unclear as to who would teach these classes. In a 2009 article from the Los Angeles *Daily News*, staff reporter Susan Abrams noted that with the budget cuts the CSU has faced over the past few years, some campuses that used to offer extensive summer programs can no longer afford to do so (Abram). Most faculty members who teach composition at semester campuses are not offered summer contracts, so campus administrators could opt to bring in less qualified, (likely) non-union faculty to teach these summer courses. Courses offered through Extended Education programs (also referred to as Extended University or Continuing Education) are as much as twice as expensive for students as state-supported classes, and writing program administrators have very little control over who is hired to teach in these programs. However, the state of California's budget crisis of 2009-10, which led the CSU to make drastic cuts including a systemwide ten percent pay cut, led administrators to see expanding Extended Education programs as a means of alleviating some financial strain.

Offering Early Start by way of Extended Education programs in the CSU would require significant changes to CSU policy, and therefore this plan was on the agenda of the Committee on Education Policy in September of 2010. According to the minutes from the meeting, such changes could help "the CSU in meeting its core academic mission by offering courses through Extended Education thereby freeing up resources on the state support side that could be re-deployed to critical areas" (10). Not surprisingly, "English and mathematics remediation (Early Start Program)" are specifically mentioned here as programs to which Extended Education is particularly well suited (10). There would be many hurdles to overcome in order to expand

Extended Education beyond current offerings—not the least of which would be changing the collective bargaining agreement with the California Faculty Association—but in these difficult financial times such a change is possible.

EO 1048 also mentions outsourcing developmental composition and math to community colleges (CCs), an idea discussed at length in Chapter 4. A primary challenge connected to such outsourcing continues to be the availability of courses and scheduling at CC as the students already attending CCs are also required to take these remedial courses. As noted in Chapter 4 in the section on “Community College Implications,” the Education Policy Committee and CC administrators agree that while CCs are open to helping CSUs, they cannot do so at the cost of providing services to their own students.

On her visit to English Council to present the idea of Early Start, Echeverria spoke of how the mandate could be met by expanding the already successful summer bridge programs offered across the CSU. What Echeverria failed to recognize (but which the Council took great pains to make clear to her) was that these programs tend to be offered through Equal Opportunity Programs and rely heavily on grant money. According to a CSU Annual Outreach Report, “in 2007-08, 22 CSU campuses offered Summer Bridge programs receiving funding totaling approximately \$3.0 million” at a per student cost of “\$1,451” (23). These programs are highly successful, but they are also very expensive, often lasting up to eight weeks; and in addition to the academic programs of writing, math, and often a social science course, they also include academic and personal counseling components. In addition, Summer Bridge programs often offer housing to the students. All of these factors lead to excellent but highly staffed and costly programs. English Council members were clear with Echeverria that while most campuses would love to expand summer bridge programs, it would be prohibitively expensive to do so. Moreover,

it is difficult to understand how an unfunded mandate like Early Start could be offered through Summer Bridge at campuses like Los Angeles or Dominguez Hills, where over eighty percent of incoming students place into remedial courses. How could these campuses possibly offer Bridge to so many students?

The final option the EO presents is that of expanding the number of on-line programs on offer. English Council has been fairly successful in making the argument that while on-line resources can be of help to students, on-line modules and grammar websites will not allow students to make the kinds of gains in writing that they are hoping for. When both Echeverria and Ephraim Smith, her successor, visited English Council to discuss Early Start, they made it clear that they understood that composition programs would not be asked to implement on-line plans. But, they did speak positively about the on-line programs as an option of math (Personal English Council notes). Math departments on various CSU campuses had been willing to experiment with on-line math courses. As recently as 2009, for example, CSU Bakersfield opted to replace all of their sections of remediation math—a program that serves over 700 students—with an on-line computer program overseen by a single instructor (Schrecker). However, Ellen Schrecker, in an article for *Forbes.com*, notes that “substituting the Internet for personal contact with a classroom teacher proved disastrous” for the students. “When these students took their final exams only about 40% passed, compared with a 75% success rate the prior year” (Schrecker). Once the word got out through Schrecker’s article about the failure of the pilot at Bakersfield, less was said from the Chancellor’s office about initiating on-line options.

English Council’s Stand against Mandatory Early Start

At the English Council meetings preceding EO 1048 (fall 2007 and spring 2008), there had been a great deal of positive energy around the new stretch and DSP programs campuses

were developing. In EO 665, the Chancellor's Office had presented faculty with a mandate for change, and the faculty met that mandate: they implemented leaner, less expensive programs that in some cases reduced the number of faculty required to teach composition. In spite of the cuts to budgets and staffing, CSU composition faculty believed in the programs they were developing. They were seeing positive results. Therefore, when Echeverria came to the fall 2009 meeting to preview Early Start, English Council responded to her from a position of strength. This was a group of experts who could speak clearly and powerfully about how writing is taught in the CSU, pointing out the holes in the logic behind such ideas as expanding summer bridge programs to fulfill the Early Start mandate, and reminding Echeverria that the EPT was not the only means of placement of students. When Echeverria left the meeting, English Council members had some hope that even though Early Start would still happen, at least Echeverria was willing to listen, and that maybe some of the most negative parts of the policy could be revised (Personal Notes).

Despite these hopes, English Council meeting of April of 2010, four months after EO 1048 had come out, was one of the bleakest meetings I recall attending since I began attending meetings in 2003. At least when EO 665 was introduced, the Council was energized to make changes to comply with the order. In the case of April 2010, the mood was cynical, bordering on hopeless. In an e-mail sent a few weeks after the spring meeting, the usually staid and sanguine John Edlund was driven to write of Early Start, "Ultimately, it all boils down to this: In order to reduce the need for remediation, we are going to create a new systemwide remedial course" ("RE: Early Start Board Presentation"). Edlund went on to remind the Council that the mood of optimism English Council had held even after Echeverria's visit was broken. Echeverria, who had given the impression that she was at least listening to the Council's concerns, retired from

her post as Executive Vice Chancellor after less than six months on the job, and EO 1048 was a reality.

While discussions of what kind of resolution the Council should pass swept around the listserv before the meeting, on Wednesday evening before the composition meeting about ten members who referred to themselves as the “Bartleby Club” met to discuss how they might convince the rest of the Council to agree to take a stand against Mandatory Early Start and to refuse to participate on the campus planning committees. The idea of the “Bartleby” approach got a good reception on Wednesday night. The name tapped into the pessimism the group felt and the desire to say, “I prefer not to” when it came to participating in the planning of Early Start (Melville 10). Plus there was the bonus of adding a literary flourish to what was primarily a composition issue. People were angry and saw nothing positive about MES. The consensus from the pre-meeting was that EO 1048 would be one more mandate from the Chancellor’s Office that was doomed to fail at bringing about any positive results for students.

More department chairs and non-compositionists attended the Wednesday night composition meeting than I had seen in years. The most obvious reason for this increase in attendance was that these individuals were charged with heading up the planning committees and composing the campus plans. The meeting ended with those present agreeing that the best step for English Council might be to refuse to take part in EO 1048 or Early Start. So, by the time a break out group met on Thursday afternoon, when most resolutions tend to be drafted, an historic thing happened: for the first time in English Council history, the Council wrote a position statement in which they carefully laid out the reasons they refused to participate in an Executive Order from the Chancellor. This statement, with the help of proxy ballots from all of those who

attended the break out but could not stay to vote on the resolution, was approved by the Council and was sent out the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the president of every CSU.²⁷

The position statement protesting EO 1048 and mandatory Early Start has the same structure as a resolution. It starts off by affirming whatever positive inclinations might be behind the executive order. It states, “We understand that the Board of Trustees’ resolution to implement Early Start programs on all CSU campuses is an effort to help integrate first-year students into mainstream academic life quickly, humanely, and with a high degree of probability that they will graduate” (“CSU English Council Position Statement”). But, the statement moves on quickly to a “however,” in this case, referring to the fact that the executive order stipulates “Early Start as a precondition for enrollment at any CSU campus.” Additionally, the position statement charges that the policy is “discriminatory” in that it forces “an identified group of students to participate in summer [classes] as a pre-condition of enrollment to the university, even though this same population of students is not only fully qualified for admission, but arrive at the CSU having earned high school GPA’s of B or better” (“CSU English Council Position Statement”). Other concerns listed in the statement include the mandatory nature of Early Start, issues of access, and the cost of the program. The statement also notes how Early Start seems to value remedial summer program over DSP and stretch programs in spite of the great deal of evidence from a number of campuses indicating that innovative first-year programs (e.g. directed self-placement and stretch) are successful at retaining students, improving compliance with EO 665

²⁷ While English Council officially meets from Thursday morning until midday on Friday, many of those who come from the Composition meeting on Wednesday evening tend to leave on Thursday evening.

(systemwide, roughly 85% of students are compliant within their first year), and improving graduation rates (“CSU English Council Position Statement”).

The statement then notes that, “For these reasons, English Council recommends that writing programs throughout the system decline to participate in the design or implementation of mandatory Early Start Programs” (“CSU English Council Position Statement”). It ends, however, with the caveat that “conditions are different on different campuses and that some writing programs might for various reasons feel compelled to participate, and these programs have our full support,” but “the Council as a whole feels it is important to voice our strong opposition to this ill-conceived, however well-intentioned, program” (“CSU English Council Position Statement”). The reception of the position statement differed a great deal depending on the audience. As will be explored in the next section, by taking the strong stance it did, the statement and the Council raised a voice of concern that caught the attention of the Statewide Academic Senate and the California Faculty Association (CFA) when a more measured statement might have gone unnoticed.

Partners in the Fight: Statewide Academic Senate and Access and Equity

Statewide Academic Senate

From almost the beginning years of the Council, the CSU statewide Academic Senate has assigned a senate liaison who also happens to be a faculty member in English to attend English Council and report back to the statewide Senate about any issues the group may take an interest in. These issues tend to be related to class size, release time, etc. From my perusal of English Council records and from my own experience with the Council, it seems these senators have not been very active members of the group. Coinciding with Geri Echeverria’s 2010 visit to English Council to promote Early Start, a senator from CSU East Bay, Susan Gubernat, began to attend

English Council. Shortly after English Council sent out the Position Statement on Mandatory Early Start, Gubernat shared English Council statement with statewide Academic Senate in the hope that the Senate would also protest the policy. She also encouraged other English Council members to share the position statement with their campus Academic Senates so that individual campuses would write their own statements or resolutions.

The Statewide Academic Senate's (ASCSU) resolution is quite similar to English Council's position statement, stressing the same issues. The statement pressures "the CSU Board of Trustees, the CSU Office of the Chancellor, and campuses of the CSU to explore other means" to increase retention among first-year students. The statement specifically includes DSP and stretch as alternatives to Early Start as means to increase retention. Like English Council, they "oppose the implementation of 'early start' programs as a pre-condition for enrollment at any CSU campus" ("Opposition to Impending"). Seven campus Academic Senate chapters wrote their own resolutions which mirror the resolutions from the ASCSU and English Council statement. For example, the resolution from Los Angeles stresses that Early Start makes inappropriate use of the ELM and EPT "which were originally designed as placement instruments, to either grant or deny otherwise qualified first-time freshmen (FTF) admission to CSULA" (AS-CSULA). These resolutions also stress the importance of campus autonomy, and lament that Early Start is mandatory for all remedial students.

As would be expected, these individual resolutions stress those aspects of the policy that would most seriously impact the campuses for which they were written. For example, the resolution written by the senate of the CSU Dominguez Hills (AS-CSUDH)—the CSU campus located in one of the most socioeconomically distressed communities of Southern California—notes that "students will be particularly adversely affected by mandatory 'early start' programs

which may prevent their working during the summer to earn funds for attending school during the academic year” (“AS-CSUDH”). Therefore, the campus’ Academic Senate

urge[s] that, prior to any implementation, the CSUDH implementation team ensure that serious attention is paid to the financial consequences—both to the campus and to individual students—resulting from the various "early start" approaches. Exemptions should be made broadly available to students who have work or family responsibilities during the summer. (“AS-CSUDH”)

While all campuses that submitted resolutions mentioned the issue of the cost of the program for their students, Dominguez Hills put particular emphasis on offering exemptions broadly and offering the early start program at no cost to students.

In response to concerns like those addressed in the resolution above, the University provided a list of frequently asked questions about Early Start on its website. To the question, “Will Early Start costs be covered by financial aid for needy students?” they note, “Financial aid will be provided to needy students from the federal Pell Grant program to cover their fees.” Students who run out of financial aid before they graduate may “qualify for a second Pell Grant and therefore, more aid. It is also possible that State University Grants (SUG) may be available to some students.” Not surprisingly, the site fails to address what can be done for students who lose much-needed summer income while completing Early Start.

Access and Equity

Members of English Council were invited to participate in a group organized by the California Faculty Association called Access and Equity. Unlike English Council or the Academic Senate, in addition to faculty members, this group also includes staff and administrators and was organized with the specific goal of retaining access for underrepresented

groups in the CSU (CFA “Access and Equity”). Along with faculty and staff from across the CSU, two key participants of the Access and Equity include Steve Teixeira, a labor organizer and former director of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) at CSU Los Angeles and Kimberly King, an activist and professor of psychology also from the Los Angeles campus. The group has organized its constituents’ protests to Early Start with an active listserv followed by members from across the CSU and with a website repository of all the media coverage, resolutions, and a “toolkit” for groups wanting to protest Early Start.

Members of Access and Equity attended the January 2011 Board of Trustees meeting in Long Beach in order to protest the policy. While the obvious issue of how Early Start is more likely to impact students of color was central to the protest, the Access and Equity group also focused their resistance on the socio-economic implications of the policy, highlighting the inequality of the preparation students receive in California high schools. In their PowerPoint presentation from the trustees meeting, Teixeira, King and their colleague Suzanne McEvoy stressed that:

“Remedial” Students *Are Not* to Blame

- They are the majority (58% in 2009) of all CSU first-years who meet all eligibility requirements . . .
- Their average H.S. GPAs are above 3.0, and they are in top third of their high school class
- Government Priorities *are* to Blame—CA Public Ed k-12 (sic) spending/student 47th in Nation.” (emphasis in original, 5)

Just as Modarres argued in his article, Access and Equity stressed that for campuses like Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills, the feeder high schools are unable to properly prepare students to attend the CSU without needing to take remedial classes.

On the groups' *Access and Equity Toolkit* webpage they note, "These students have already been cheated by the state's underfunding of their K-12 education; yet, against the odds, they earned a place at the University—only to face this additional requirement. As such, it poses a threat to important civil rights." While many English Council members monitor the Access and Equity listerv and support the group's efforts, the two groups differ in the ways they characterize K-12 education in California. English Council is careful never to place blame for poor EPT scores onto K-12 teachers. Access and Equity attempts to link their argument that schools are not preparing students to succeed at the CSU to the inadequacy of funding for those schools. This caveat may make the argument more palatable to some English Council members, but it will never appeal to the Council as a whole, particularly English Education faculty.

Joining Forces in a Common Critique

An aspect of the Early Start policy that the statewide Academic Senate, Access and Equity and English Council all dispute is the way Early Start devalues programs that the individual campuses have in place that work. All three groups fault the policy for failing to allow campuses to decide which strategies to use to address student needs on their own. Finally, English Council, Academic Senate, and Access and Equity agree that the EO puts too much stress on the EPT as the only means of gauging student success or failure instead of recognizing the innovative programs designed by faculty. While none of these groups goes as far as to call for the complete abolition of the EPT (although, as the next section will reveal, English Council is getting closer to taking such a position), both Access and Equity and English Council question

the need for the Education Testing Service (ETS) to be the exclusive means of placement for students in the CSU.

The mention of consultation with English and Mathematics Councils within EO 1048 is not enough to allay the concerns any of these three groups have about the Early Start policy, which states that “proficiency scores on the EPT and ELM be reviewed and analyzed every two years by the Early Start Implementation Team in consultation with the Mathematics Council and English Council, as appropriate” (“EO 1048”). Notice the term “consultation.” English and Math Councils were not the ones to make the policy, but they are given the chance to consult on it. The final words of that sentence from EO 1048 also raise concerns. Who will decide when it is “appropriate” to consult the councils? And what will count as consultation? An e-mail from John Edlund to English Council sums up the view among English Council members that Early Start will do nothing to change the results of the EPT: “Even if the parents and students don't set up enough of a howl about mandatory Early Start to kill it, ten years from now, the EPT will still be placing 50% of students in remedial courses, Early Start will be declared a failure, and some new equally ineffective initiative will be rolled out” (“RE: Early Start Board Presentation”). Edlund summed up the attitudes toward Early Start among English Council members: Early Start is not a policy members want anything to do with. The idea that the Council will be consulted when appropriate offers only cold comfort.

Notice, too, that the Executive Order continues to stress the EPT and remedial courses when credit bearing alternatives have been found. Edlund notes that Early Start is “contrary to what most campuses are doing.” He laments that, “The whole discussion with English Council was not framed in a ‘here's the problem, what are the solutions?’ mode.” Instead, “It was framed as ‘here's Early Start’ without ever carefully defining the problem Early Start was supposed to

solve.” While the Chancellor’s Office note in various places that Early Start was developed “in consultation with” English Council, Edlund reminds the readers of his e-mail that “[t]hose conversations were certainly not with us” (“Re: Early Start.”). Access and Equity stress this point as well, when they note that “The CSU already has successful remediation programs that are supported by experts in the field.” Furthermore, the group states that, “There is no evidence that a mandatory summer program will be effective in bringing students to proficiency, whereas current academic year programs result in an 85% student success rate” (“The CSU’s Mandatory Early Start Program.”). This kind of support from Access and Equity served as a boost to English Council’s position on Early Start generally and summer programs specifically.

The relationship between ETS and English Council was strained with changes to the EPT that were announced 2008 (the move to a single scorer and on-line scoring). The strain only increased when ETS’ new role in Early Start was announced in May of 2011. At the CSU Testing Center Directors conference, it was announced that ETS would be developing a new on-line database to enable reporting between campuses on which students had met the Early Start requirement. Such a system is necessary because students can complete Early Start at one campus in the summer and attend a different one in the fall. The database’s actual cost has not yet been made available to the public, but the bond between the CSU and ETS has gained one more powerful cord. English Council members were made aware of the expansion of the ETS/CSU partnership through Access and Equity because a member of the group who is a testing center director for a campus attended a conference at which the system was discussed. The sharing of such information allows both groups (and the Academic Senate is also likely to protest such a move) to make their own cases against the policy. Whether the concern is over the corporatization of the CSU, the lack of campus autonomy, or the growing control ETS has over

placement in University, the more information like this that is made public within the University system among varying interest groups, the more likely it is that the Chancellor and the Trustees will need to respond to the critique.

“Could We All Agree?” A Litmus Test of English Council’s Unity

As more and more English Council members were asked to serve on mandatory Early Start Task Forces on their campuses, it became clear that many members would hold their noses and participate after all. On October 24, 2010, John Edlund sent an e-mail to the English Council listserv with the question, “Could we all agree?” in the subject line. In the message, he suggested four points for consideration:

- Students naturally vary in their ability to read and write critically, and some need more preparation than others. . . .
- College-level reading and writing is a matter of attending to author, purpose, audience, arguments, evidence, and the ability to read from different perspectives and engage in a dialog with the text. It is not a matter of the complete, once and for all mastery of grammar and mechanics.
- A test score is at best a rough estimate of which students would benefit from additional college-level work with additional scaffolding.
- The work assigned in so-called "developmental" or "remedial" writing courses in CSU is not a repeat of high school work, but consists of assignments specifically designed to develop college-level critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities that will allow students to be successful in university courses.

Edlund concluded the e-mail with, “Although we disagree on some details, it seems to me that all of us would agree with the above, and that all of this argues against Early Start” (“Could we all

agree?”). He then invited others to respond; if consensus was reached then a response to Early Start could be drafted. Edlund’s e-mail was a litmus test of sorts for English Council to determine if the group might be ready to move beyond the Bartleby position and make recommendations for campus Early Start plans.

Four English Council members wrote back within the next hour to state their agreement. Then, the following response came from Bob Mayberry, Composition Director at Channel Islands, which was the first campus given permission by the Chancellor’s Office to eschew EPT scores in order to use DSP. Mayberry stated his agreement with Edlund’s first three points, however he noted,

[T]he third one grants too much credit to what a single test score can do. I would suggest something along the lines of:

--A test score measures the ability of students to take a given test; it can never accurately identify which students would benefit from additional college-level work with additional scaffolding. (“RE: Could we all agree?”)

Amy Heckathorn, composition director from Sacramento wrote in, agreeing with Mayberry. But, within thirty minutes, Edlund replied, noting that he thought that Mayberry’s edit would “split the group.” Edlund reminded readers that his goal was to “find a statement that includes both those who think a test might be useful in some way as part of the process and those who think all tests are bad.” He closed this e-mail, noting that, “We will never get the Trustees to buy a no tests ever anywhere position. I am trying to craft something that we can agree with that sounds perfectly reasonable to outsiders” (“RE: Could we all agree?”). The issue of reliance on the EPT was not raised again.

The next point up for debate was whether or not any CSU developmental courses were repeating high school work. Glen McClish, Chair of English at San Diego and then English Council president, wrote, "I must say that I am skeptical about the final point." He further noted that "what happens in developmental courses is to a great extent prebaccalaureate." McClish concluded his e-mail with the caveat that "If I am the only one in English Council who expresses such skepticism, and I suspect I am, then you should consider me an irrelevant outlier and move ahead with the list of essential points" ("RE: Could we all agree?"). While a few people wrote in to state their agreement with Edlund's position that that content of developmental courses is not prebaccalaureate work, no one else wrote in to agree with McClish. For example, Mark Thompson of Stanislaus replied to McClish that he did not agree with him that the purpose of an introductory composition course was to prepare students to take other writing courses. He noted that while San Diego may still offer a course with prebaccalaureate work, "that's just not true on our campus" where this course is a credit-bearing university course ("RE: Could we all agree?"). So as far as the listserv discussion was concerned, McClish was an outlier.

Edlund also replied to McClish, noting that, "If students naturally vary in their ability, it is not necessarily the case that students who need more scaffolding are repeating high school work" ("RE: Could we all agree?"). He went on to state, in a later e-mail response, "The Chancellor's Office and the Trustees (and the public) talk about "high school level" and "college-level" (and "proficient" and "non-proficient") as if these are objective criteria recognizable to all. We tend to hedge and qualify any such definitions we use because there is in reality no principled way to draw this line. . ." ("RE: Could we all agree?"). Edlund warned that such hedging is not good for our students. Instead, he argued that we need to hold firm in the position that our courses belong in the University. Edlund concluded by reiterating,

That is why I keep returning to the idea that developmental courses (or stretch courses) do not re-teach high school content or repeat high school experiences. Not all of our students need these transitions into academic discourse, but many, perhaps most, would benefit from them. Early Start is predicated on a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of these courses. (“RE: Could we all agree?”)

Edlund made this point in the hope that English Council could still reach consensus on his original points and “all agree.” As Edlund saw it, English Council could take the opportunity to educate the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees about the purpose of first-year composition.

Rong Chen of San Bernardino brought the discussion back to the EPT, by asking “. . . why is the EPT held as the yardstick of college-readiness in English?” Chen reminded readers of the weaknesses of the EPT by stating, “in spite of all endeavors by the CSU and the state to improve high-school English education and in spite of the all-too-difficult-to-miss changes in the demographics of the state” EPT placement never budged because “the EPT is still designed as a norm-referenced test (the test population being placed on a bell curve) but used as a proficiency test (with a line drawn perpendicular to that curve).” Chen acknowledged that “uproot[ing] an idea that is as deeply entrenched as the validity of the EPT” is “harder than moving a graveyard,” but if English Council united “as a group, we would have a message that most of us can agree to.” Then, “it may even be an issue of moral responsibility” to see that the EPT is overturned since “as the CSU English faculty, we played a (small? large? medium-sized?) part in making the EPT a proficiency test (At least, we did not put out enough resistance to stop it in the 1980s.)” Therefore, Chen called upon English Council to dismantle the EPT. He ended with a proverb

from his native Chinese: "The one to detach the bell (from a ferocious bull) should be the one who'd attached it" ("RE: Could we all agree?").

Chen's impassioned plea to live up to our moral responsibility received many positive replies, but the discussion was over. The answer to Edlund's question of "Could we all agree...?" was, "no." Edlund found no consensus among the Council and to date, summer of 2012, English Council has made no recommendations regarding Early Start.

Detaching the Bell

The story of English Council's history regarding remediation began with the threat of a test in 1971. English Council was able to help avert the implementation of the CLEP test. However, as a result, many well-intentioned people like Edward White, using the best research available at the time, brought another test into being. The EPT went from its benign origins as a placement test to help students find the appropriate composition class, to a tool used to exclude the very students it was designed to help (Appendix A charts the dates of these events). I find Chen's call to "detach the bell" of the EPT from the bull of exclusion a fitting place to end my study. If the bell can be removed from the bull at all, then it will be done at least in part by English Council members who stand together, despite their differences, and speak truth to power.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter Five ends in the year 2010, with English Council grappling with how to respond to the Chancellor's mandatory Early Start program and unable to come to consensus on the way the organization frames developmental writing, and, to some extent, first-year composition generally. In fact, it is sobering to note that the need to define what the teaching of writing should be is as old as the field of English itself.

According to Sharon Crowley in *Composition in the University*, as early as 1910 it was necessary for the fledgling profession of college writing to prove that writing in academic English was not simply something every educated person could do. Crowley argues that it was the role of university English programs to “distanc[e] students from their own language” (60). She depicts this “distancing” as a three-step process of first “[d]efin[ing] English as a language from which its native speakers are alienated,” then “establish[ing] an entrance examination in English which was difficult to pass,” and finally “install[ing] a course of study that would remediate the lack demonstrated by the examination” (60). This process was clearly successful, enabling writing to become the most commonly taught curriculum in every university in the country. And it necessitated a battery of tests, the earliest of which was the Harvard exam that “proved” how foreign and difficult writing is for the novice student. “And,” notes Crowley, “while this alienating approach to English provided scholars with a field of study, English teachers were busy constructing students as people who did not enjoy sufficient mastery of their native tongue” (60). This combination Crowley sees of first manufacturing alienation, then creating tests, and finally providing remedial services is one that can be seen again and again

throughout the history of composition. In other words, the gatekeeping function of composition is as old as composition itself.

Therefore it should not come as a surprise that English Council is having a difficult time coming to consensus about the role of remediation in the CSU. To the present day, some in English Council are arguing to retain the gatekeeping function of composition. Even in 2012, I see this in the insistence by some members that developmental courses should retain their remedial designation because (at least on some campuses) these courses exist to help students grasp content they should have learned in high school. Others members, however, are fighting to break out of the gatekeeping role—as typified by the desire to let go of the remedial designation and encourage directed self-placement instead of standardized testing. These competing definitions of basic writing and its role have complicated English Council’s stance on remediation.

The conclusion of this study answers two primary questions. How can California State University (CSU) English Council empower faculty, not always toward unity, but toward deeper engagement with the teaching of writing? How does such activism, as exemplified by English Council, enable faculty to respond strategically and, collectively toward mandates coming from administrators whose priorities differ from ours?

It is with these initial research questions in mind that this final chapter begins. In spite of the ways that holding varying definitions of remediation and first-year composition limit the Council, I argue that in addition to fulfilling its own mission to educate CSU English department members in the teaching of English, English Council also fulfills the aspects of the missions of other widely known organizations. These include the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). I then go on

to consider how English Council’s activism surrounding remediation and student writing has spread beyond the confines of the CSU to the California Community Colleges (CC) and the University of California (UC). Finally, I will suggest how other universities or university systems could benefit from forming their own English Councils to serve both faculty who want to advocate on behalf of at-risk students as well as our pedagogies for serving those students nationwide.

The Once and Future English Council

According to the Constitution of the CSU English Council, “[t]he purpose of this organization is to encourage effective teaching of English in the State of California” (Article II). This statement of purpose is short, simple and apolitical—as one would expect from a non-profit organization. As an affiliate of NCTE, however, English Council epitomizes many of the characteristics of its constitution as well. The NCTE regards its purpose as being: “to improve the quality of instruction in English at all educational levels” and

to encourage research, experimentation, and investigation in the teaching of English;
to facilitate professional cooperation of the members; to hold public discussions and programs; to sponsor the publication of desirable articles and reports; and to integrate the efforts of all those who are concerned with the improvement of instruction in English. (III, Object)

The CCC, as the composition-specific higher education arm of the NCTE, shares NCTE’s mission statement, but adds an interesting element that English Council also exhibits, which is “working to enhance the conditions for learning and teaching college composition and to promote professional development” (“Constitution of the Conference on College Composition and Communication of the National Council of Teachers of English”). Over the next several

pages, I will revisit these mission statements to stress how the CSU English Council fulfills its own mission in addition to those of the NCTE and the CCC.

My original goal for the study was to discover and understand the history of English Council and the role it has played in advocating on behalf of students designated as “remedial” within the CSU. Having researched the history of English Council from its inception in the early 1970s through the early 2010s, I am left regarding the organization as a vital resource for faculty on multiple levels. English Council certainly educates CSU English Studies faculty—especially those in administrative positions such as WPA, chair or coordinator of their campuses’ English departments. The Council also enables members to share individual specializations within English Studies and to consider how to link knowledge of the field and local realities to better the teaching of English Studies within local campus settings. In fulfilling its specific mission, “to encourage effective teaching of English in the State of California,” English Council also meets other needs of its members and their campuses, which I will discuss below.

English Council not only serves CSU faculty, but also CC and UC faculty. For example, English Council of the California Two Year Colleges (ECCTYC) often holds its meetings simultaneously with the CSU English Council. ECCTYC members often attend and present at CSU Council sessions, in addition to having their own sessions (separate from their CSU colleagues.) The UCs, California Faculty Association (CFA), Chancellor’s Office and high school English teachers frequently participate on panels. All of these additional participants at meetings help to enrich the perspectives of all who attend Council meetings and thereby fulfill the primary mission of the Council.

In the next two sections I will recap the specific ways English Council nurtures its members and their campuses. First I will discuss ways in which the Council nurtures leaders who

serve the CSU but also take their places on an expanded stage. Then I will consider how the specific context of the CSU Master Plan has shaped the Council.

Education: Encouraging Effective Teaching

Set in the largest university system in the country and serving twenty-three campuses, English Council functions as an incubator for change and new ideas. Meetings are organized around the educational goals stated in English Council's constitution, specifically "to encourage effective teaching of English in the State of California." Since the Council's inception in the 1960s, English Council meetings have included topics as diverse as: "Sharing Best Practices for Teaching All Areas of English Studies", "Cutting-edge Theory Can Enrich Teaching" or "Integrating Technology into Teaching." Examples of these "technology sessions" include one in the 1980s on how having students compose on "microprocessors" impacts their writing, and in 2010 there was a session on how student blogs and class wikis can engage learners.

Attempts are made at assuring that all of the strands of English Studies are supported by English Council. Meetings officially begin on Thursday mornings and end Fridays at noon. On Thursdays there are two panel discussions on issues designed to appeal to all English Studies faculty members. Some meetings have included plenary sessions with guest speakers such as in fall of 1987, when a luncheon speaker from UC Berkeley discussed UC/CSU connections, or in fall of 2009, when the Vice Chancellor of the CSU Geri Echeverria presented a new policy to the Council. But, in reviewing agendas from 1985 through 2010, the more frequent program is to hold one and sometimes two panel sessions on topics that are either timely or somehow pertinent to English Council members. A few examples of panels over the years include one panel from spring 1988 on the "Implications of the Master Plan for CSU English Departments" with a Chancellor's Office representative, an English Council member and a representative from the

statewide Academic senate (English Council Archives). In fall of 1990, the panel was titled “Master’s in English: Angles of Vision” and the talks were titled:

- “Student Goals”
- “New Directions in Program Emphases”
- “Admission and Exit Standards for English MA”
- T[eaching] A[ssociaite] Selection and Training” (English Council Archives)

In fall of 2006 when the panel was titled “New Directions in Pedagogy,” talks included:

- “Student Achievement in 3 Instructional Presentations”
- “Using Web-based Multimedia Material to Teach Phonetics”
- “Teaching and Popularizing Medieval Literature”
- “Using Read-aloud Protocols in Teacher Preparation and Composition Classes”
- “Sustained Silent Writing in Literature Courses” (English Council Archives)

Of course there have been plenty of literature panels; such as in spring 1989, a panel focused on the “Evolving Canon and the Curriculum,” and in spring of 1995, the panel was on “Interdisciplinary Directions in the Major: ‘Literature and Anthropology,” with speakers presenting talks entitled:

- “Scenes of English Department Life: Mr. Bloom’s Culture War”
- “Literature and Popular Culture: An Interdisciplinary Approach”
- “Literature and Science: Ways of Seeing and Knowing” (English Council Archives)

While the focus of my study does not allow me to discuss these sessions in detail, hopefully mentioning them here provides some insight into the range and scope of English Council plenary sessions. These sessions have educated members, opening a window into scholarship of national conference caliber without the price of a trip to a faraway destination—and, as an added bonus, have given faculty the ever-important line on their vitae that comes with conference presentations.

These sessions also serve another function, which is to encourage cross-disciplinary discussions. Poets and linguists may spend hours every year in English department meetings, but how often do they have the chance to discuss how their areas of study intersect? English Council provides these opportunities. English Council member Goen-Salter told me in an interview that she gets “new ideas” by attending English Council meetings. She went on to say,

. . . we are doing such amazing work on our campuses. I get my batteries recharged from [attending]. So as a resource both personally and professionally – personally to recharge my batteries and professionally for giving me new ideas, new ways of thinking about things, forward thinking, thinking outside the box, ammunition. . . . I couldn’t work without it, I would never quit going. (Goen-Salter)

These kinds of interactions over panel presentations help forge bonds between English Council members. These bonds are essential. For example, when the time comes for the Council as a whole to vote on resolutions that only impact some areas of English Studies knowing one another as competent professionals from past discussions over less-contentious issues helps members regard and trust one another to make wise decisions.

As discussed in the Introduction and again at length in Chapter 4, the breakout sessions at English Council meetings have given members, especially those with administrative positions, much-needed insight on issues of hiring and supporting contingent and junior faculty, preparing for and meeting accreditation guidelines, stretching budgets in lean years, and on the rare occasions when one is available, spending a surplus. This kind of ancillary support may not qualify as “encourag[ing] the teaching of English” in the direct way that the plenary sessions described above do, but this is the kind of vital support chairs and coordinators working in a large state university system so desperately need, as evidenced in Norman’s comment that she “couldn’t work without” English Council.

Advocacy: Improving the Conditions

In addition to being an incubator for new ideas, English Council is a place for faculty to mobilize and take action, as explored multiple times throughout the study. It is in this function of promoting advocacy that I see English Council gravitating toward an essential purpose that may not be mentioned in its constitution, but is certainly included in the mission of the CCC. The CCC’s mission statement specifically advocates “working to enhance the conditions for learning and teaching college composition.” As Mutnick so convincingly reminds us, “[n]either academic or social margins will disappear because we—or our students—wish they would.” It is our role as faculty, argues Mutnick, to resist “the status quo” and work to “challenge existing conditions” (46). In discussing the material conditions for students and faculty during English Council meetings and in working together to draft resolutions, English Council is “challeng[ing the] existing conditions” of not just basic writing, as Mutnick impels us to do, but of English Studies as a whole—or at least English Studies in the CSU.

One example of English Council offering support in challenging the status quo was articulated by Richard Hansen, of CSU Fresno, who told me in our 2007 interview that English Council was an essential resource when the composition faculty were fighting his campus administrators' idea of outsourcing composition to area CCs. He also found it to be essential in Fresno's move from using the EPT for placement in composition to using directed self-placement (DSP). Hansen noted that he had heard little about DSP until Bob Mayberry from the Channel Islands campus made his presentation to English Council and then the idea "began cooking in his head." Hansen told me that when he talked to his dean about DSP, the dean did not want to take it seriously until Hansen was able to point to another campus in the CSU that had implemented DSP with the approval of the Chancellor's Office. The dean particularly appreciated it when Hansen made the case for how DSP "might help with the EO665 remediation issues." So, Hansen noted that, "in a very real way, if it were not for English Council, they would not have DSP at Fresno" (Personal Interview).

Similarly, Goen-Salter notes that English Council provides English Studies faculty with "a pipeline to policies in their formation and possible impact of the system as a whole of all twenty-three campuses in advance of [their] being brought up on our individual campuses." She noted that the Council "either gave me information I would not have had access to or they gave me insight, systemwide, on information I already had a limited view of. Both ways, it's been a crucial professional resource for me" (Personal Interview). And Thorpe also argued that "whenever I make arguments on my campus—and as Writing Across the Curriculum coordinator I'm also having to make arguments to the administrator—then I'll use NCTE, I'll use CCCC, I'll use [Council of Writing Program Administrators] and I'll use English Council. It's nice to have a

national contact, but also a more local contact” (Personal Interview). English Council resolutions serve as key resources for many WPAs to use in negotiations with administrators.

In my study I specifically address thirteen resolutions written by English Council and delivered to Chancellors and campus administrators. These are a fraction of the total number of resolutions written by the organization in over forty years. In the context of my interviews for the study, I asked participants about their perceptions of the effectiveness of English Council resolutions. Participants’ attitudes toward the effectiveness of resolutions was mixed overall, but as Michael Thorpe put it, “I think those resolutions are really helpful. I mean, I know people who say they’re just kind of a peeing in the wind kind of thing, but even if just some people go back and use them locally . . . I think they’re useful.” But, Thorpe did add that, “I think [we] need to do a lot more with them.” Other participants echoed Thorpe’s enthusiasm about the importance of resolutions.

Expanding on Thorpe’s comment about the process of writing English Council resolutions, Ana Donahue noted that when she first attended Council meetings she was “excited” that the Council was talking about moving beyond “the EPT and remediation, skills, precollege” to more progressive understandings of student writing. But, over time she worried that “nothing came of” those discussions and resolutions. She notes that she thought there was not enough agreement among Council members for the resolutions to take the kinds of stands she was hoping for. Donahue spoke particularly of a discussion I noted in Chapter 4, when Amy Heckathorn called for English Council to reassess the cut score for the EPT in 2005. Donahue recalls that she “got a little discouraged when the discussion came.” When “Heckathorn was talking about the randomness of the score” some English Council members “got offended” by her characterization of the test. To Donahue, that discussion left her feeling that English Council

was “too big and too fractious” for people to agree upon a revised cut score. Donahue told me that she wishes English Council “were more forceful on the notion of remediation.” But, she speculates that since “conflicting beliefs” about remediation lie “at the root” of the conflict over EO 665, “no one wants to go there.”

A similar concern is that English Council compromises too quickly. When asked what she thought of the ways that English Council faces challenges to our pedagogy and programs from the Chancellor’s Office in general, and about EO 665 in particular, Elizabeth Cruz told me that she thinks that English Council is in the habit of reacting to the Chancellor’s Office mandates instead of getting out in front of issues. “We are recipients of these random mandates” said Cruz, “and sometimes for better or worse,” English Council must ask “how can we work within the mandate and then how can we at the same time push back to show them the mandate is flawed, semi-flawed, slightly ironic, something...” (Cruz, Personal Interview). But pushing back against mandates is not enough for some Council members.

According to Flachmann,

Before John Edlund [became president of the Council] we were pretty much a reactionary organization. We’d hear something, we’d get pissed off and we’d write a resolution. And the resolution would try to remedy it; you know, often we were right and often the CO had moved too fast or hadn’t consulted with us. But it was always after the fact. The decision was already made. (Personal Interview)

I will expand on how Flachmann went on to report that she felt Edlund helped the Council move away from reacting to taking a more “proactive” role in a later section of the chapter.

While some of my participants, like Flachmann, thought English Council had become more deliberative over the years, other English Council members still saw the Council as a

reactionary group in the 2000s. For example, in 2007, Donahue told me that she didn't think the Council was addressing EO 665 "systemically." She lamented that English Council was "dealing with this one issue at a time rather than getting to the root of what people think and the ideologies that are on the line . . . and attacking that. That seems to be too dangerous."

Part of what members find so challenging about the resolution process is the need to draft resolutions that represent the various possible positions that exist among English Studies faculty on the 23 CSU campuses. Add to that members frequently complain that resolutions fall on deaf ears. Throughout my study, I have described the work the Council put into crafting carefully worded resolutions only to receive no comment in return from the Chancellors Office. Even in the best-case scenarios, resolutions rarely seem to produce the results members hope for in writing them.

In *The Activist WPA*, Adler-Kassner reminds readers that in order to bring about real change, it is vital not only to identify issues worth mobilizing around, but also to "envision what success will look like" (101). "Success is crucial for encouraging participation" contends Adler-Kassner. "And while our professional ethos may to some extent value Sisyphus-like efforts to fight the good fight, efforts that seem never to achieve what they've set out to do can sap the energies of even the most energetic person" (101). I see English Council resolutions in this light—they help the Council define success, to clarify to the powers that be what kinds of programs we believe should exist in the CSU.

Resolutions may not qualify as successes themselves, but the successful drafting of a resolution that is approved by the Council gives English Council members a means of responding to attacks on good, existing programs with pedagogically sound alternatives. However, in spite of all of these challenges, I argue that the activity of drafting, writing and

disseminating resolutions has helped English Council to become the cohesive organization that it is today. In the end, however, Donahue reiterated what both Stein and Thorpe have said of English Council resolutions: “It’s nice to have something from a body of CSUs across the system, have some kind of statement and agreement and it is nice when that agreement reflects my views” (Ana Donahue, Personal Interview). So, at least for Donahue and Thorpe, while the discussions surrounding the drafting of resolutions can feel like “pissing in the wind,” the end product of the process is worthwhile.

The act of writing together has helped English Council members to learn what the diverse membership values, to talk about those values, and to decide collectively when to compromise with the Chancellor’s Office and when to stand up and defend what the Council believes in. While Adler-Kassner has an important point in calling for the need to recognize and celebrate success, some might argue that English Council members have trouble agreeing about what should be considered a success. Specifically, I am thinking here of the conflicts that still exist in the Council surrounding the way some English Council members partnered with the Chancellor’s Office to design the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) for high school students even though the course is closely tied to what many on English Council regard as an unfair test of eleventh graders. There are members who believe the Council should never have agreed to have anything to do with eleventh grade testing, and therefore that the ERWC program is too great a compromise. On the other hand, in the case of mandatory Early Start, there are those who think the Council went too far in refusing to participate. They feel that the extreme position against any participation was impractical and shut the door on dialogue with the Chancellor’s Office. Both of these criticisms are valid: in the first case, English Council is seen as

compromising too quickly; in the second case the Council risks being excluded from the negotiation table.

Autonomy and Support: a Paradox

Throughout my study, I have noted the ways in which English Council has sought united positions, while at the same time respected the autonomy of individual campuses. Balancing unity and autonomy can be a complex undertaking; it is a search for common ground while valuing differences in theory, pedagogy and campus realities. A good example of this attempt at balance is found in the previous chapter. When Edlund submitted his list of features of basic writing in his “Can We All Agree?” e-mail, he was working to find common ground among Council members. It would have made for a tidier conclusion to my study had I been able to state that everyone agreed on his list and English Council was able to send it on to the Chancellor’s Office. But as noted previously, such consensus was not reached. It is a rare enough feat for all English Studies members in a given department to agree on a values statement; how much more difficult a task is it when faculty members from twenty-three campuses strive to reach consensus? That noted, I argue that English Council remains powerful, relevant, even vital, after thirty plus years in existence because it holds these two seemingly contradictory ideals—unity and autonomy—in tandem. English Council members strive to help educate one another about our areas of specialty within English Studies, while at the same time preserving the autonomy of individual faculty and campuses to apply that knowledge as best fits each context.

Years before Edlund sent out his “Could we all agree?” e-mail, Elizabeth Cruz presciently told me,

It seems to me like if at English Council we could agree upon certain goals and outcomes [and] then leaving it to each campus how to best do that; then we’re in a

stronger negotiating position. We're all arguing, [but] we have a similar end goal. Then I think you're negotiating from a position of much more power as a collective. (Personal Interview)

But how can English Council bring about such unity? According to Kim Flachmann, it has a lot to do with who is leading the Council or, in the case of "Can We All Agree," who is leading the discussion. To Flachmann, moving toward consensus is about getting "the disgruntled people to talk" as Edlund tried to do with the e-mail. Flachmann went on to note, "I think at the heart of that is communication. So, if people get to vent, and talk and whine, I think academics are mainly whiners. . . . And once we get to vent, then we are ready to compromise" (Personal Interview). Flachmann noted that when the Council has a leader like Edlund at the helm we are much more likely to see our way to compromise.

Even when unity or some form of consensus is reached at an English Council meeting, that does not mean that all members will be satisfied with the result. For example, after English Council agreed to oppose mandatory Early Start in 2010 and drafted the position statement addressed at length in Chapter Five, the position statement was sent to all CSUs and their English Studies Chairs. Upon receiving the statement, Mark Thompson of CSU Stanislaus, who had not been able to attend the Council meeting, wrote an e-mail to the Council listserv presenting his concerns about the statement. One concern of interest here is that the Council proposed that its members might work together to "[d]evelop a reciprocal Early Start option for each campus." Thompson noted that Stanislaus already had "a long-standing team [made up of faculty and staff across the campus] and model program, and we like both." Thompson explained that members of their team were not necessarily member of English Council and went as far as stating,

Frankly, I don't want any group at the system level—including English Council—to mandate how Stanislaus responds to Board Policy on ESP. . . . I believe that the Council can best support the campuses by advocating maximum campus autonomy in implementation, and I have no problem with reciprocity in that context. (“RE: Early Start Board Presentation.”)

While it is certainly English Council's role to promote the autonomy of all campuses, one thing that strikes me as particularly interesting about this response is that it came from a member who was unable to take part in the discussion at the English Council meeting. I believe that this inability to attend the meeting contributed to the Stanislaus faculty's concern about the Council usurping the role of the individual campus. In the course of our interview, Kim Flachmann touched on the issue of some campuses' (not Stanislaus specifically) inability to attend meetings. Flachmann speculated that nonattendance is likely due to a lack of funding for travel on some campuses. But, she laments the absence of her colleagues “both for the sake of the Council missing out on their input and for their own professional development and the support the Council could give their campus programs. . . . There are just such incredibly important reasons for going” (Personal Interview). I wonder if Mark Thompson would have been as uncomfortable with the idea of having the Council speak for his campus if he had the opportunity to actively participate in the Council's deliberations.

At the close of this study in 2010, a subcommittee on deliberation and voting was convened in order to determine ways of encouraging alternate forms of participation for those unable to attend meetings—perhaps on-line deliberation and voting. It will be interesting to see these on-line venues for participation that do not require travel to a meeting will serve to help

those who do not currently attend meetings to feel more engaged with the work of English Council and how those virtual conversations will impact the Council's deliberations.

In spite of the challenges English Council has in reaching consensus, I agree with Vernon Hornback, an early English Council member, in his 1972 article for *Association of Departments of English Bulletin*. Hornback told his readers

Perhaps because it was born, or rather reborn, in a climate of crisis, and because we have faced a steady series of challenges and managed to cope, and even more, succeed in many instances in actually shaping and controlling the forces that affect our academic destiny, the Council has developed an almost fraternal unity which enable us to disagree vigorously within our organization, but to act in unity with equal or greater vigor when faced with a common problem. (2)

I believe that if members put their minds to it, consensus will eventually be reached as to what CSU English Council members mean when defining first year writing, but such consensus is likely to be the result of negotiation, compromise and the dilution of strongly held beliefs. In the end, it is this effort to educate one another and move forward together that makes English Council the effective systemwide organization that it is.

Public Intellectuals

All histories include stories of leaders who emerge to organize and rally the rank and file members. The history of English Council is no different—strong leaders have certainly emerged. While one could argue that everyone who regularly attends English Council is a leader on his or her own campus, the preceding chapters have explored in some detail the leadership of at least nine presidents of the organization. I want to discuss briefly those I regard as “public intellectuals” within English Council. English Council serves as a kind of training ground for

public intellectuals, whose stage is not always national, but systemwide, statewide. The descriptions of the individuals below are presented to exemplify the ways in which these public intellectuals are knowledgeable scholars working in the field of English Studies, but they are also working with the specific knowledge of how to negotiate within the confines of the CSU—a huge bureaucratic system with varied stakeholders—and the state of California.

Three examples of public intellectuals from this study are Edward White, English Council member from the organization's beginnings in 1962 to his retirement from CSU San Bernardino 1997; John Edlund, president from 2003-2009 and current member; and Goen-Salter, current English Council president (circa 2012) and member since 1997. The study details these members' contributions at length and I will not recap those here. However, I do want to take a moment to connect the significance of these contributions to English Council as an organization.

White—an elder statesman of composition studies with ten books, nearly countless articles and conference presentations who is still teaching courses on assessment and the challenges of Writing Program assessment—was one of the first leaders within the Council. During his tenure, White was president of the Council, spearheaded the design of both the EEE and EPT and holistic scoring in the University, and spoke before the state legislature in order to secure funding for basic writing programs within the CSU. He was also provided with an office in the Chancellor's Office to allow him to work closely with others on administering the EEE and EPT. White sparred often with his officemates at the Chancellor's Office, but he always remained in the conversation. When, in 1971, Gerhard Friedrich wanted to inform CSU English faculty of the impending danger of writing courses being replaced by a test, White was one of his contacts. White was indeed a public intellectual firmly rooted in the CSU and his local campus culture.

John Edlund does not yet have White's national reputation or publication history, but he is indeed a public intellectual nurtured by and still serving English Council. Edlund was president the Council twice in highly tumultuous times with the introduction of EO 665 and its call for the end of remediation in the CSU. He began attending the Council in the mid-1990s as Writing Center Director at CSU Los Angeles in order to develop a deeper understanding of what was happening around the CSU and how that would impact his own campus. As described in detail in Chapter 4, when the CAPI program was losing its funding and EO 665 was gaining steam, Edlund was one of a small number of people summoned by the Chancellor's Office to discuss an expanded Early Assessment Program—in other words, another test.

One of the key features of Edlund's leadership style is the way he is able to facilitate communication among individuals with opposing viewpoints. As noted above, Kim Flachmann has a great deal of respect for Edlund's leadership style. Flachmann attributes Edlund with helping the council move from being "pretty much a reactionary organization" to one that is more "proactive." Flachmann noted that "since his presidency we have tried to anticipate problems [and have gotten in] there solving them before they've become problems." She specifically noted Edlund's role in designing the ERWC instead of just going along with David Spence of the Chancellor's Office in signing on to help with another test for eleventh graders hoping to attend a CSU. According to Flachmann,

Edlund [was] the one who heard about this testing program that Spence was doing and he went in and said we need an intervention. He and Alison [Jones] went down there and said they needed a meeting. ... That's huge. No president of English Council had ever done anything like that and at that very point our role changed as a council. (Kim Flachmann)

In being unwilling to wait for the Chancellor's Office representatives to inform English Council of the next policy coming down the road but instead initiating the conversation, Edlund set himself apart from many other English Council presidents. Edlund has proven himself to be the kind of public intellectual, who, like White, helps keep the Council in negotiations others would have abandoned and has helped keep the Council from becoming obsolete in contentious times.

Sugie Goen-Salter is my final example of the kind of public intellectual nurtured by English Council. Goen-Slater has done important work in higher education in California, not merely the CSU but for the CCs as well. Along with her colleague at San Francisco State, Goen-Slater has developed San Francisco State's Integrated Reading/Writing (IRW) program, which I discussed at length in Chapter 4. She has traveled around the state promoting this program to colleges who express interest in it, but has also published several articles on the national level about the importance of designing programs that present viable alternatives to students beyond remedial models. She has also spoken before the Board of Trustees regarding Early Start and serves as an excellent representative for English Council. Goen-Salter began her term as English Council Chair in fall of 2011, and so, I believe, has only begun in her role as a public intellectual affiliated with English Council.

It is vital for the future of higher education in California that English Council expand its reach beyond our own campuses. We must have highly respected, highly visible representatives to speak on our behalf who can be called on speak on the organization's behalf as White did to before the legislature, as Edlund did with the Chancellor over the ERWC, and as Goen-Salter has done regarding Early Start. Of course it is possible, even likely that these extraordinary people could have risen to the status of public intellectuals on their own. They may not have needed

English Council as a staging area, but the Council needed them and gave them opportunities to vet ideas and hone their positions.

Context is Everything: California, Here We Are

English Council is shaped by the university system in which it originated. Donald Gerth notes in his 2010 volume on the history of the CSU that this university system “is a reflection and a part of the building of a nation-state, California” (xviii). He describes the history of the CSU as

[A] stunning story of organizational change in the context of the needs of the greater society, change propelled externally and internally, change propelled by the circumstances of California from a frontier that was already a diverse culture, and by the leadership of persistent and often visionary educators as well as external political, economic, technological and cultural leadership. (Gerth xviii)

English Council entered the story of the CSU in the 1970s because of such “external political leadership.” As readers of Chapter 1 will recall, Chancellor Dumke was concerned about the projected numbers of incoming students that the CSU was required to admit according to the *CSU Master Plan for Higher Education*. In order to create room for all of these students, Dumke embraced the idea of equivalency testing. In order to resist that plan, English Council first designed and implemented the English Equivalency Exam and then the English Placement Test. These actions on the part of the Chancellor and the Council all came about because of the specific setting of California and the way that higher education is structured according to the California Master Plan for Higher Education—the importance of which cannot be underestimated. Indeed, Gerth charts the “contemporary development” of the CSU from 1960

and the introduction of the Master Plan (xvii), which allowed the CSU to evolve into its mission as primarily a teaching institution.

Master Plan in Jeopardy

The Master Plan provides oversight not only for the CSU, but also for the California Community Colleges and the University of California. As important as the Master Plan has been to the CSU, some have argued convincingly of late that the Master Plan is not only on life support, but has died altogether. In fact, in July 2011, Lars Walton, Vice Chancellor at UC Riverside, wrote an obituary for the Plan that appeared in the *Huffington Post* claiming

The loss of the Master Plan will leave a major void in the State of California. It is expected that the State will experience a shortage of [one] million college graduates by 2025. Without the Master Plan, students will now experience sharp increases in tuition as well as reductions to access and quality of instruction. The loss of dependable funding for the three systems of higher education is expected to put new strains on the criminal justice and social welfare systems. (Walton)

Walton drives home his not-so-subtle point by ending the obituary with the lines, “in lieu of flowers and in remembrance of fifty-plus years of service to the people of California, donations can be made to local scholarship funds.”

Of course the governor, CSU, UC and CC Boards of Trustees and Regents still contend that, like a Soviet era leader no one has seen in public for years, the policy is not only alive, but relevant. In a 2009 presentation to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan, Chancellor Reed included a slide stating that “The Master Plan is not broken.” According to Reed, the problems that exist with the CSU fulfilling the Plan exist because the state of “California has abandoned its commitment to higher education” (“California’s Master Plan: Today and Tomorrow”). The

health of both CSU and of the *Master Plan* have been in steady decline since I began my study in 2005. Indeed, according to a 2010 California Faculty Association report, “the overall decline in the CSU’s ability to serve the state as evidenced by even a few stark facts: a 20% cut in state funding since 2007, the termination of more than 2,500 faculty since 2007, and a projected enrollment reduction of 40,000 students” (“The CSU Graduation & Achievement Gap” 26). In the course of my study, student fees have gone up over 35% between 2007 and 2010, with the increase as high as 47% on one campus (National Center for Education Statistics). The CFA contends “[t]his failure to warn the public that the CSU’s mission and future is profoundly imperiled—even if graduations rates improve—is troubling.” Instead of alerting the public of the CSU’s inability to serve its students, the Chancellor has chosen to focus on “graduation percentages alone” in order to claim that “the system can continue to do more with less” (“The CSU Graduation & Achievement Gap” 26). What the CFA calls a “failure to warn the public” about the ways in which the graduation policy threatens access could be regarded as an intentional effort on the part of Reed and the “deliverologists” to cut off services from students they would rather not have at the University in the first place.

The attempt to overhaul the CSU by way of Chancellor Reed’s current Graduation Initiative is incompatible with a Master Plan designed to provide affordable higher education to all Californians who aspire to attend college. The CFA warned that changes brought about by Reed’s Graduation Initiative, “will have an especially negative impact on low-income people and communities of color” and went on to predict that “the provision of a broad liberal education for communities that might have no other access is at the heart of the CSU’s mission and at the heart of what is under attack” (“CFA White Paper: ‘Restructuring’ the CSU or Wrecking It?” 4). These attacks bear mention at the conclusion of a study of the CSU English Council, especially

when considering the history of the organization with regard to serving at-risk students in the CSU. The establishment of the California Master Plan for Higher Education, as noted by UC President Clark Kerr (who was instrumental in its development), can be lauded as “the first time in the history of the United States, or any nation in the world where such a commitment was made—that a state or nation would promise there would be a place [in a college/university] ready for every high school graduate or person otherwise qualified” (“Testimony of Dr. Clark Kerr”). No matter how the story is told, policies such as EO 665, the Chancellor’s Graduation Initiative, and mandatory Early Start create barriers to access and undermine the Master Plan.

Alliances beyond the CSU

The concern over the jeopardy of the Master Plan and the state of higher education is certainly not limited to the CSU; faculty and staff from all three branches of public higher education in California have spoken out against attacks on the Plan. English Council’s partnerships with the California Faculty Association (CFA) and Access and Equity described in Chapter Five serve as examples of the kinds of resistance necessary to protest the demolition of the Master Plan and all of higher education in California. Similar alliances are forming between CSU, CCs, UC and even K-12 faculty. In March of 2010, a rally to save public education took place across the state. Teachers, students, parents and staff mobilized in a day of protest where, according to one report, “tens of thousands” of people took to the streets to declare unity and protest not only the traditional labor concerns of salaries and benefits for teachers, but also decreased per student spending, class size, and the culture of testing (Maung). These protests attracted the attention of statewide media outlets and helped strengthen bonds across the various branches of public education, but in the climate of economic decline these protests did not garner the public support they might have in more fiscally stable times.

In addition to English Council and the California Faculty Association, other organizations are working on behalf of at-risk students within higher education in California. English Council of the California Two Year Colleges (ECCTYC), sister organization to the CSU English Council, is worthy of more praise than I can give it here. Without the participation and alliances made with ECCTYC members, English Council would have been far less successful in protesting such issues as outsourcing composition courses to CCs. Similarly, English Council positions on issues such as teacher preparation and class size have helped the CC English Studies programs to improve their working conditions (see Chapter 3 for more details). This alliance is vital to the continued success of both organizations.

Another interesting alliance within CSU higher education can be seen in a series of reports published by the UCLA Civil Rights Project. This organization has been publishing social science research regarding schooling, civil rights, and access for all since 1996. In 2011, they released a series of eight studies on the state of crisis within the CSU.²⁸ One of the reports is a study by CSU Access and Equity members Kimberly King, Suzanne McEvoy, and Steve

²⁸ The rationale behind why an organization housed at a UC and focused on issues of civil rights would take the time to report on the state of the CSU is found on the organization's website. The editors note that as the largest branch of public higher education in the state, the CSU "has a much larger undergraduate student body than the University of California system and educates a much larger group of Latino and African American students." They go on to state that "Many CSU students are first-generation college students struggling to get an education in difficult times" ("Education for Students at CSUs"). For those reasons, a study of the access for students of color within the CSU is a fitting subject of the UCLA Civil Rights Project.

Teixeira entitled “‘Remediation’ as a Civil Rights Issue in The California State University System” which they conclude with the finding, that “there is a reproduction of economic and racial inequality within the CSU. Low-income CSU-eligible students are being unfairly punished by recent CSU remediation policies for being born into their economic backgrounds and attending schools in their communities” (27). Whether it comes in the form of rallies publicized across the state, an obituary in a national publication, or research published by a notable civil rights organization, the fruit of these partnerships is vital to spreading the word about the inequalities going in on the CSU and across public higher education in California.

Overcoming a Legacy of Testing

The task of ensuring that the students the CSU’s mission charges us to serve can only come by ending remediation as we have known it in the CSU. It is essential for English Council leadership and for those of us everywhere teaching students whose access to higher education is at risk to heed these words from Tom Fox, whose literacy study at CSU Chico is worth bearing in mind here, “Although many students, and many students of color, find support and strength in writing courses, we need to find institutional structures that do not further marginalize students of color and that do not underestimate their literacy” (69). Fox notes here the vitally important work that has been done to serve students who enter our institutions with less preparation than their peers. That work is evidenced throughout this study and highlighted in the timeline in Appendix A. The English Council and English Studies faculty began their work on behalf of at-risk students in 1973 when the first results of the English Equivalency Exam were compiled. The tests and courses my academic elders designed came about out of a desire to better serve CSU students. Yet, as Fox goes on to note that, beyond designing courses and teaching them with integrity and compassion, “We are obligated to help our students gain access to the university so

that by virtue of their participation they redefine it more democratically (Fox 69). What I believe Fox is calling for here is nothing less than a revolution and I join him in that call. The revolution Fox and I are calling for here is rooted in the truth that all CSU students should be treated equally and not charges more for their education or held to a more arduous standard than their peers. In order to do away with remediation as it was designed from the introduction of the English Placement test in 1977, CSU English Council and its allies will not only need to rally against policies like EO 665 and Early Start, but we will also need to eliminate the English Placement Test. Students who are admitted to the CSU must enter on an even playing field. As Americans know all too well, there are times that the best way to preserve democracy is to break from an system that no longer serves its purpose.

Implications beyond California

The time period in which this dissertation is being completed has been characterized by economic turmoil. While the economic situation in California has been dire in the 2000s and early 2010s, California is certainly not the only state having to make tough choices about how to fund higher education. The Occupy movement which was at its height in fall of 2011 may have been accused of being without a central message, but at its core the movement strives to reengage the “99%” and help us to believe that all members of society “can reclaim democracy, build a just society and create a better world for everyone” (Jobin-Leeds). Educators have been key participants within the Occupy movement and these activists have taken their protests to campuses like CUNY and UC-Davis. As Conor Tomás Reed, who help host a May Day 2012 protest at CUNY that included 2000 participants, notes, and protests over higher education have also taken place in “Quebec, Chile, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Spain [and] England.” Clearly, the CUS and California are far from alone in facing a crisis in higher education. Chapter 5 focuses

on the challenges the CSU campuses, and therefore English Council members, have faced because of Chancellor Reed's introduction of the Graduation Initiative and mandatory Early Start. The CSU is not the only university system in the county taking on such initiatives. In fact, according to a CFA report, the CSU is partnering with "24 systems of public higher education representing 378 individual colleges and universities that collectively enroll more than three million students" ("CSU Graduation" 27). In addition to the CSU, some of the university systems also considering such policies include the State and City University of New York systems, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and the Minnesota State University System.

All of these public universities have joined the "Access to Success Initiative," which is an offshoot of the Education Trust and an organization whose name betrays its connections to deliverology and its top-down administrative methods: the National Association of System Heads. The primary goal of the Education Trust is an honorable one. They pledge to "cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015" (Access to Success). Few would argue with such a goal. The organization's most visible work has been to provide statistical data on the graduation rates of colleges around the country along with information about how the graduation rates of minority students compares with those of white students. All of this information is compiled on their website. As the author of the PASSHE faculty union's blog put it in July of 2011,

I'd love nothing more than to have a sustainable system that could do right by any student who wants a college education. But we don't have that, especially while our Governor proposed in March to slash our state allocation in half (the budget

bill about to pass the P[ennsylvania] legislature sets the reduction at 18%).
 (“PASSHE and the US Education Delivery Institute”)

The author reminds readers of similar points that English Council, California Faculty Association (CFA) and Access and Equity members have made in California by wondering “how our system is supposed to educate *more students* and *do it well* while our funding is getting crushed under the collective foot of a state government that isn’t very interested in paying for much of anything.” And again, when he states that, like in California, “the “do-more-with-less” trope has been pushed beyond its logical extreme currently in P[ennsylvania]” (“PASSHE and the US Education Delivery Institute”). Similarly, in the CFA White Paper titled, ““Restructuring the CSU or Wrecking It?” the authors claim that “[d]eep sacrifices have been made by students, faculty, and staff and it is obvious that the budget cuts have already undermined the quality of a CSU education and access to the state university for thousands” (3). However, CFA warns, we must not “underestimate the power of arguments” that call for “reducing entitlements, creating leaner, more ‘efficient’ institutions, and spending less” (3). As I am completing this study, deliverology and Access to Success are too new to Pennsylvania and most of the other states in the consortium to have any policies such as mandatory Early Start in place, but it seems only a matter of time until they do. And it will be important for faculty impacted by these policies to have opportunities to attend meetings and respond strategically.

Regardless of the mechanisms for dismantling them, Open Admissions and basic writing programs are clearly under attack. As Otte and Mlynarczyk argue in their 2010 volume *Basic Writing*, “In the new millennium, several of the oldest and most highly esteemed open admissions units attached to universities were phased out” (64). Two of the primary examples the authors use to make this point are the University of Cincinnati and the University of

Minnesota. The former “decided to do away with University College, a two-year open admissions unit at the main campus” which for over twenty years, “had offered developmental work within a supportive environment to underprepared students with the goal of helping them make the transition to a regular baccalaureate program in the University” (168). The latter, Minnesota University’s General College “had a distinguished history of offering basic writing and other support services to underprepared students” (168). According to two faculty members at Cincinnati, the University’s intention in eliminating University College was “to remove nearly all underprepared students from the main campus’s degree-granting units in order to bolster UC’s academic ratings in such publications as *US News and World Report*” (qtd. in Otte & Mlynarczyk 168). At the University of Minnesota, the complaint from the administration was that “students who began in General College took much longer to graduate, thus increasing the average time to attain a baccalaureate degree,” which was keeping the University from qualifying as one of the country’s top research universities (168). This kind of maneuvering sounds a lot like something Michel Barber and the deliverologists would suggest. The time it takes for students to graduate has become more important to administrators than serving the students of the communities in which a university is situated. These kinds of statements have nothing to do with teaching students to become educated citizens; the focus here is corporate, on delivering a product on time at a reasonable price. From this line of reasoning, if some students take more time to learn, they are too costly to the organization and therefore need to be removed from the system before they can slow it down.

Otte and Mlynarczyk go on to note that “Although a baccalaureate degree has become an increasingly important credential in today’s society, access to basic writing and other compensatory programs for underprepared students is not a high priority for state legislators and

university officials” (168). This kind of suspension of services for at-risk students is becoming ubiquitous. Lisa Krieger, in a 2009 *San Jose Mercury News* article on the reduction in basic writing courses at the CSU East Bay and San Francisco campuses, notes that at City University of New York (CUNY) when students are unable to place directly into first-year writing courses, they “are directed to an outside company.” She also found that public universities in Washington state are in the process of losing all state funding for developmental courses, and in Oklahoma, campuses are charging “extra fees for” such instruction.

There are likely many more troubling stories like those provided above. Across the country, faculty and staff unions, student groups and other sympathetic parties are organizing around issues of access to services for students who need them. I submit that an English Council style organization could be of great support in these states. I do realize that every state and university has its particular context that brings with it particular challenges. That is why all activism must take into consideration the local realities. It is unlikely that in, say, Oklahoma, or other “right to work” states, an organization like English Council could take on the activist stance around issues of remediation and access that it has in California. But that does not mean that such a council could not serve faculty in other important ways.

Such an idea is far from original. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, White tells readers that in the early 1970s, other states were going through conflicts similar to those English Council was going through with regard to the CLEP exam. In fact, White noted that “[t]he Florida English Council echoed California's protests.”²⁹ He also described a NCTE sponsored

²⁹ A note about the Florida English Council: I have been unable to learn anything about the Florida Council other than what White shares about it. Further research on the Florida council is called for. How long did it meet? How many campuses were represented? What led to its end?

conference held in Peoria, Illinois and titled “The Politics of CLEP” (White 280). A national conference seems fitting for today’s fight for the existence of basic writing—and, more importantly, to keep students who desperately deserve higher education from losing their places in universities across the country. NCTE, CCCC, and the CWPA are all poised to help advocate for these universities in states where basic writing is under siege—and their mission statements all clearly state that such advocacy is within their purview. Some may argue that past resolutions on topics such as working conditions and students’ rights to their own languages have only had limited impact. However, such resolutions make clear the priorities of the organizations. They are positions that appeal, in Lincoln’s terms, to the “better angels of our nature.” They call us to consider our field’s potential for positive change. The time is here again for such bold statements to be made. A resolution (or resolutions) about the importance of access for students at risk of being disenrolled or refused access is required. Such a resolution would also have the advantage of giving a much-needed boost to the faculty who serve these students in states or university systems where organizing a group like English Council would be unrealistic.

In his 1972 article, Hornback urged his colleagues around the country to form English Councils of their own and to gain affiliate status through NCTE in order to “develop close working relationships and personal ties among your colleagues in the two-and four-year institutions in your area” (2). He went on to claim that “A strong regional professional association, with vigorous leadership, enlightened cooperation among the members, and an aggressive program of self-evaluation and renewal can help us emerge on the other side of the

These questions will need to wait for another study or perhaps another researcher to explore them.

1970s better than we are now” (2). As true as that was in the 1970s, how much more is it today? As I stated in the introduction, one goal of my study was to document the strategies that English Council used to negotiate with administrators and boards. Inasmuch as pressures of the sort faced by English Council are not unique to California, I believe that the strategies used and the lessons learned by English Council have much to teach others working in the field of English Studies throughout the nation.

Final Thoughts

I have no doubt that English Council provides vital services for faculty and serves as a model for English Studies faculty working in university systems across the country. English Council educates the English Studies faculty of the largest university system in the country, provides opportunities for professional development, and gives faculty vital information to take home to their campuses. All of these services help English Council members negotiate strategically with those in positions of power over their writing programs as well as the junior faculty and students so tied to those programs.

This study of the history of English Council and its ties to remediation in the CSU reveals a history of creating structures to serve students, but also of the need to tear down those structures when they no longer serve students. In the 1970s, English Council developed a testing structure to assess and serve marginalized students. The EEE and the EPT were designed with the best of intentions and they served students well in their time. Placement testing results helped to justify new programs and new pedagogies. The CSU has served these students; they have gained access to the university. The challenge now, is to keep that tradition of access by rising up in protest against policies like EO 665 and Early Start that target underserved students, by

abolishing the EPT and using current placement methods. As demonstrated here in the conclusion, this history of diminishing support for basic writing is not specific to the CSU.

Times have changed; understandings of remediation and the needs of writers have changed. English Council has served the CSU by leading the way in new pedagogies and placement strategies (such as DSP and stretch courses) that enable us to serve our students without furthering their marginalization and without labeling them as “remedial.” But, challenges continue. The EPT has yet to be dismantled; marginalized students continue to be targeted by policies such as Early Start and President Reed’s Graduation Initiative. English Council cannot solve these problems alone. There are also national and statewide movements afoot with which English Council can join forces. We must continue to make strategic alliances with other activist organizations both within English Studies (such as NCTE and CCCC) and outside the field (with organizations such as CFA and Access and Equity). We need strong leaders. We need to communicate and negotiate with one another. And we need to know our history. It is my sincere hope that this study will be one tool among many to support English Council and serve as a hopeful model for others who want to unite their voices with ours within English Studies in the work of speaking—our local, contextualized, hard-learned—truth to power.

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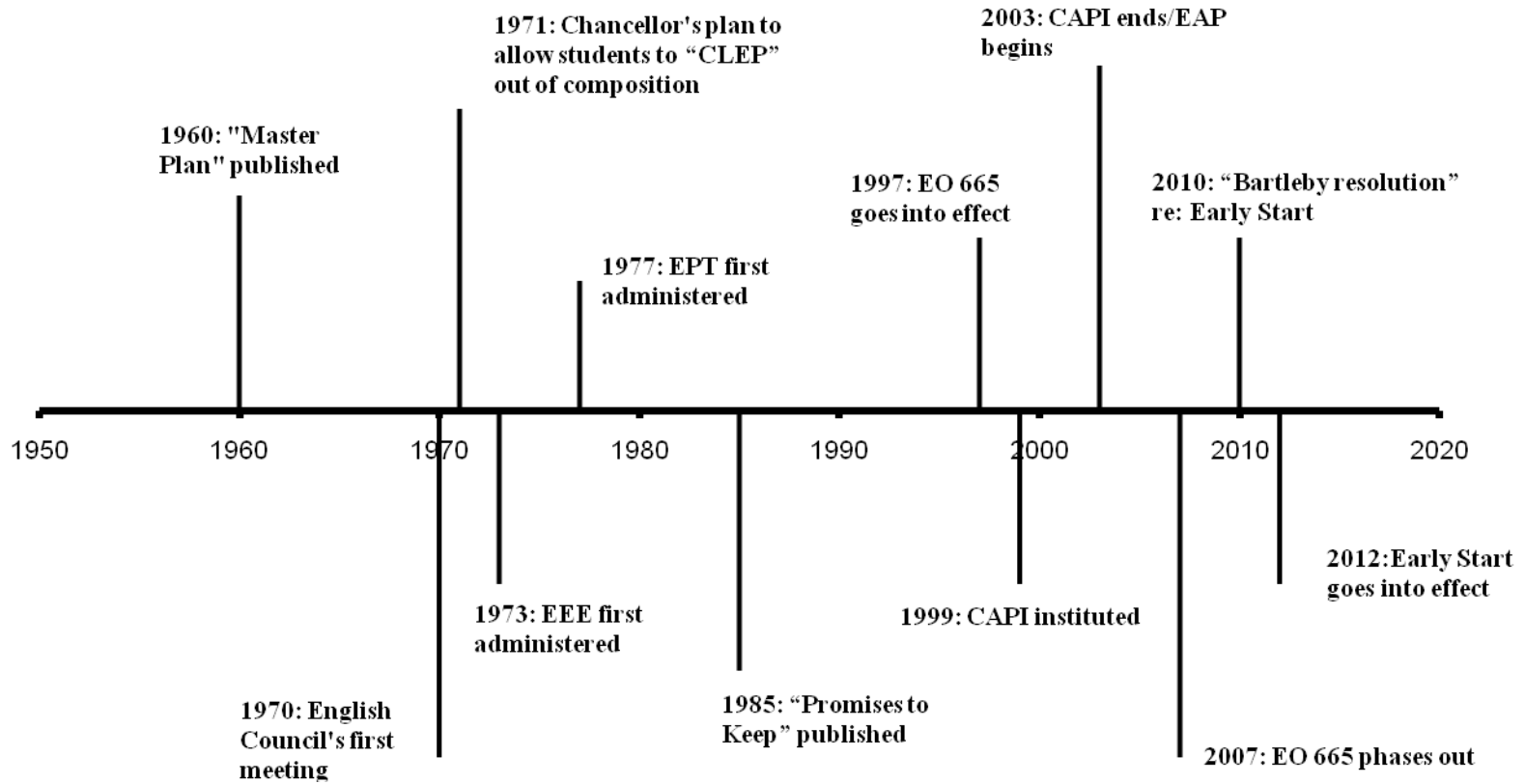
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APPENDIX A

CSU English Council Timeline



APPENDIX B

Sample English Placement Test

**The California State University**

Focus on English – English Placement Test

Assessment of Reading Skills—30 Minutes***Part A: Reading Comprehension***

Students will be asked to analyze the ideas presented in brief passages (typically 100-150 words). Students should be able to read critically in order to:

- identify important ideas
- understand direct statements
- draw inferences and conclusions
- detect underlying assumptions
- recognize word meanings in context
- respond to tone and connotation

Students may be asked to select the answer choice that best summarizes a passage, explains the purpose of a passage, focuses on a specific detail, explains a word in context, compares/contrasts two aspects of a passage, explains the implications or suggestions made in a passage, identifies causal relationships, etc.

Directions: Each passage below is followed by questions based on its content. Answer all questions following a passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage.

Questions 1-3 are based on the following passage.

The search for a workable panacea is not new. Spanish explorers sought the Fountain of Youth. Millions of Americans used to seek health and contentment in a patent medicine called Hadacol. During the past two decades, however, more and more people have been turning to various branches of psychology for magic solutions, hoping that psychology can take care of any problem, cure the common cold, or solve the riddle of existence.

1. From the passage one can infer that the word “panacea” means

- (A) utopia
- (B) religion
- (C) cure-all
- (D) life style

2. According to the passage, what do the Fountain of Youth and Hadacol have in common?

- (A) Neither really existed.
- (B) Both brought their discoverers great fortunes.
- (C) Both helped to end the search for magic solutions.
- (D) Both were thought to have great power.

3. What does the passage call into question?

- (A) People’s expectations of psychology
- (B) People’s use of the lessons of history.

- (C) The relationship between psychology and medicine.
 (D) The legitimacy of the field of psychology.

Answer key: 1.C 2.D 3.A

Part B: Vocabulary in Context

Students should be able to understand the meaning of a particular word or phrase in the context of a sentence.

Students will be asked to consider grammatically similar words and choose the one that fits most logically into each sentence in place of a nonsense word, “gliff.”

Directions: For each of the following questions, choose the best word or phrase to substitute for the underlined portion containing gliff, a nonsense word.

4. Though Mr. Rivera is a gliff man and could live anywhere he chooses, he still lives in the small house in which he was born.

- (A) an unhappy
- (B) a wealthy
- (C) an ambitious
- (D) a strong

5. The water looked fine for swimming but, in fact, the currents in the river were gliff.

- (A) contaminated
- (B) soothing
- (C) treacherous
- (D) unnoticeable

6. Many of the problems we have with our natural resources could be gliffed if all of us did what we could to conserve those resources.

- (A) avoided
- (B) defined
- (C) publicized
- (D) understated

Answer key: 4.B 5.C 6.A

Part C: Logical Relationships

Students should be able to read two related statements and understand the relationship between them to see how

- they may contrast
- they may illustrate cause and effect
- they may contradict each other
- they may show cause and effect
- one may explain the other
- one may provide a more specific example to illustrate the other
- one may explain consequence
- one may clarify something implied by the other

Students will be asked to find exactly what the second sentence does in relation to the first and/or how the two sentences relate to each other.

Directions: In each of the following questions, two underlined sentences have an implied logical relationship. Read each pair of sentences and the question that follows, and then choose the answer that identifies the relationship.

7. The Historic Dominguez Rancho Adobe, usually visited by those in search of tranquility, became a political battleground.

The cities of Compton and Carson each claimed ownership of the estate.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It makes a comparison.
- (B) It provides factual support.
- (C) It describes an inevitable result.
- (D) It introduces a different point of view.

8. Harry typically vacations in Tahoe. Two years ago, Harry spent his vacation in Madrid.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It clarifies an assumption.
- (B) It notes an exception.
- (C) It adds emphasis.
- (D) It draws a conclusion.

9. Teresa has missed the last three practices of the dance step. She cannot perform the maneuver.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It states a consequence.
- (B) It suggests a cause.
- (C) It offers proof.
- (D) It limits a preceding idea.

Answer key: 7.B 8.B 9.A

Assessment of Composing Skills---30 Minutes

Part A: Construction Shift

Students should be able to rephrase a sentence by beginning with a different construction and producing a new sentence that does not change the meaning of the original. These questions ask students to

- find a more economical or effective way of phrasing a sentence
- find a more logical way of presenting a fact or idea
- provide appropriate emphasis
- achieve sentence variety

Students may be asked to spin out a sentence using an introductory phrase beginning with a gerund or an adverb, etc.; or to avoid slow starts, they may be asked to consider a more appropriate noun phrase, or to consider a phrase that includes parenthetical information.

Directions: The following questions require you to rewrite sentences in your head. Each question tells you exactly how to begin your new sentence. Your new sentence should have the same meaning and contain the same information as the original sentence.

10. The student senate debated the issue for two hours and finally voted down the resolution.

Rewrite, beginning with Having debated the issue for two hours, . . .

The next word or words will be

- (A) the issue
- (B) it
- (C) the student senate
- (D) a vote

11. The tree fell away from the house when it was struck by lightning.

Rewrite, beginning with Struck by lightning, . . .

The next words will be

- (A) It was when
- (B) it fell when
- (C) the tree fell
- (D) and falling

12. Watson maintains that the worsening economic plight of the poor is reflected in the rising unemployment rate.

Rewrite, beginning with Watson maintains that the rising unemployment rate. . .

The next words will be

- (A) reflects the
- (B) and the plight of
- (C) is what worsens
- (D) is worse

Answer key: 10.C 11.C 12.A

Part B: Sentence Correction

Students should be able to find the best way of correcting a sentence in order to resolve problems of

- clarity
- sentence predication
- parallel structure
- subordination and coordination
- modification
- sentence boundaries

Students are asked to select the best way to phrase an underlined portion of a sentence. This question type tests the students' understanding of syntax, usage, and idiom rather than specific knowledge of grammatical rules.

Directions: In each of the following questions, select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. Choice (A) is the same as the underlined portion of the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose answer (A).

13. Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and tossed them to the dogs lying under the table.

- (A) tossed them
- (B) tossing them
- (C) tossed the bread

(D) they tossed

14. Many doctors are now convinced of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.

- (A) of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.
 (B) of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.

(C) that the reduction of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.

(D) that a fiber-rich diet reduces the risk of colon and heart diseases.

15. Painters studied in Florence for the opportunity both to live in Italy and for seeing the art treasures.

- (A) and for seeing the art treasures.
 (B) and to see the art treasures.
 (C) as well as the art treasures to be seen.
 (D) as well as seeing the art treasures.

Answer key: 13.C 14.D 15.B

Part C: Missing Sentence

Students should be able to select an appropriate sentence that most logically

- begins a paragraph
- fits in the middle of a paragraph
- ends a paragraph

Students may be asked to find the most appropriate topic sentence (one that most successfully generalizes what follows); to find the most appropriate middle sentence (adds specifics or carries the paragraph forward in some way); or to find the sentence that logically concludes the paragraph.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a passage with a missing sentence indicated by a series of dashes. Read each passage and the four sentences that follow it. Then choose the sentence that can best be inserted in place of the long dash (——).

16. —— . Scholars hold differing opinions. Some trace the roots of Mexicans in the United States all the way back to the earliest migrations across the Bering Strait. Others start with Aztec society to demonstrate the historical continuities between contemporary Chicanos and their Aztec ancestors. A third group identifies the “Spanish Borderlands” period (1540-1820) as the earliest phase of Chicano history. (A) When does Chicano history begin?

(B) There is continuing interest in Chicano history.

(C) Chicano history has fascinated scholars for many years.

(D) Few are concerned about setting a precise date for the origin of Chicano history.

17. Many Easterners think that all California college students surf every day, wear sunglasses indoors as well as outdoors (even on rainy days), and mingle with the superstars daily. —— . A recent survey of students on a large, urban CSU campus revealed that only 2 percent had surfed, and although 40 percent did wear sunglasses, 15 percent of those were doing so on their doctors’ recommendations. As for the superstars, barely 10 percent had met a Hollywood actor.

(A) The possibilities of such stereotypes are endless.

(B) Stereotypes, however, are often misleading.

(C) Probably both Easterners and Californians would like to fit all of those stereotypes.

(D) Most California students do live up to those enviable stereotypes.

18. Accompanying the article on humor were pictures of a leering Groucho Marx and a grinning Sigmund Freud, one a brilliant humorist and the other a brilliant analyst whose own study of humor has been largely ignored. The unlikely pair attracted readers to the article, whose author made two major points. Serious studies of humor are rarely undertaken. ———.

- (A) Comics would urge us to laugh, not soberly to study laughter.
- (B) What a joke a Freudian analysis of the Marx Brothers would have been.
- (C) The studies that are made are rarely taken seriously.
- (D) Freud was interested in all aspects of the human mind.

Answer key: 16.A 17.B 18.C

Page 10 Part D: Supporting Sentence

Students should be able to read a sentence and decide which of four subsequent sentences will give appropriate logical support by adding relevant detail stating a probable cause or explanation providing a supporting example

Students will be asked to discriminate among sentences that might all seem related to the original sentence, but only one of which provides logical support for the original.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a topic and four sentences. Select the sentence that provides the best support for the topic presented.

19. Chester Nakamura is an expert on Samurai swords.

- (A) The swords are richly decorated, and their engravings have meaning to the collector.
- (B) Collectors around the world seek his advice about swords they plan to buy.
- (C) Each Samurai took pride in his sword.
- (D) Many people in the United States have extensive collections of such swords.

20. It is not true that intellectual development stops after age 17.

- (A) Older people commonly complain of poor memory.
- (B) Many older people can learn at least as well as young people can.
- (C) People in their 60s, 70s, and 80s have been studied.
- (D) Sometimes depression can cause what is assumed to be mental deterioration.

Answer key: 19.B 20.B (Focus on English 3-10)

Sample Essay Prompts

1. “Because of cell phones, hiking in wilderness areas may be safer than before, but it is also noisier than ever. Although people might bring cell phones with them to use in case of an emergency, emergencies are rare. More often, people receive incoming business and even social calls. Technology seems to be following us everywhere: into the wilderness, and then back into civilization. Anywhere at any time, everyone else present can be disturbed by one person’s call. Because more people in these circumstances are bothered by cell phones than are helped, these gadgets should not be permitted in certain public places or designated natural areas.”

—Lois Quaide

Explain Quaide’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

2. “The purpose of public universities should be to train the appropriate number of people for the professions. In order to fulfill this purpose, the number of students admitted to each field of study should be pre-set, as in Sweden, so that no more people are trained than will be needed to fill the estimated number of openings in each profession.”

—Phyllis Stein

Explain Stein’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

3. “Two-thirds of adolescent and adult Americans drink alcohol, and of those, 8 to 12 percent will become alcoholics or problem drinkers. To combat this huge public-health crisis, we should begin a national system of licensing, with appropriate penalties. Applicants for a drinking license would first be required to study a manual containing basic information about alcohol and the law, much like the driver’s manual we all memorized in high school. Next they would have to pass a written test, after which they would receive a drinking license. License holders, and only license holders, would then be able to buy alcoholic beverages (including beer). Most of the problem drinkers would, at some point, probably face arrest on alcohol-related offenses. If convicted, they would lose their license. A liquor store or bar caught selling to an unlicensed drinker would lose its license as well.”

—Earl Rochester

Explain Rochester’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

4. “Ours is an open, fast-moving society—equipped with cars, trains, planes—that makes it too easy for us to move away from the people and places of our past. Not too many families live together in the same neighborhood; generally, we travel long distances in order for grandchildren and grandparents to spend time together, and often we lose track of old friends we never see again. As a result, we tend to lack the close, supportive relationships that people in former generations enjoyed. The advantages to living in such a highly mobile society are thus outweighed by the disadvantages.”

—Perry Patetic

Explain Patetic’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

5. “For many Americans, the concept of success is a source of confusion. As a people, we Americans greatly prize success. We are taught to celebrate and admire the one who gets the highest grades, the one voted most attractive or most likely to succeed. But while we often rejoice in the success of people far removed from ourselves—people who work in another profession, live in another community, or are endowed with a talent that we do not especially want for ourselves—we tend to regard the success of people close at hand, within our own small group, as a threat.”

--Margaret Mead

Explain Mead's argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading. (Focus on English 24-25)

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Interview Questions: While these are the questions I plan to take into the interviews with me, I do not plan to adhere to them without deviation. My hope is that these questions will spark conversation and interest in my participants. As Erlandson et al. put it, “*opportunistic sampling* allows for following leads during fieldwork, taking advantage of the unexpected and flexibility” (italics by the authors, 83). The current lists of questions are rather expansive, and are here as a representation of what topics may arise in the interviews. While some interviews may cover all of these questions, the lists are by no means meant to be seen as templates of the interviews.

I will employ two sets of questions—one set for each group of participants. The first, directed toward the senior group, will include:

- May I record this interview?
- May I use your name and the name of the campus(es) with which you were affiliated during the time you are going to describe or would you prefer me to change the names?
- How did you come to be involved in English Council?
- Was there a specific event that let English Council or some of you within English Council to “take on” the Chancellor regarding the CLEP test?
- If so, could you describe it?
- If not, when did you realize that something “big/important” was going on?
- Could you describe some of the strategies used by English Council to communicate with those in power who wanted to expel students who preformed poorly on the CLEP test?
- Which strategies worked?
- Which strategies needed to be revised? Why?
- Was the group unified or were there disagreements about how to approach those in power?
- If so, how did the members of the group go about solving disagreements within the group?
- When and if divisions arose within the group, did they arise according to the needs and proclivities of individual campuses, or did they fall along philosophical, pedagogical, or political lines? Or was it something of a combination?
- Did you decide on overt criteria for coming to compromises?
- If so, what criteria did you use to decide upon a compromise from your initial positions?
- What unforeseen circumstances arose from those compromises?
- Could the situation have been resolved as successfully without an organization such as English Council? Why or why not?
- What can current English Council members learn from the 1968 experience?
- What similarities and differences do you see between the two situations?

The second group of questions, directed toward current English Council Members:

- May I record this interview?
- May I use your name and the name of the campus(es) with which you were affiliated during the time you are going to describe or would you prefer me to change the names?
- How did you come to be involved in English Council?

- What strategies are being used by English Council to communicate with those in power with regard to EO 665?
- How well is your or your campus' stand toward EO665 represented?
- Are these strategies working?
- Which strategies need to be revised?
 - Why?
 - How might they be revised?
- How are we going about solving disagreements within the group?
- What criteria are we using to decide upon compromises?
- Is English Council helping faculty from your campus respond to the pressures on your local campus regarding EO 665?
 - How?
 - If not, what could English Council help your campus more?
- Are you aware of the events of 1968 English Council's role in the beginning of remedial courses in the CSU?
- If so, what are you thoughts on the policy that came out of that time?
- Do you see any parallels between the 1968 situation and what's happening now with EO 665?
- What more could English Council do to serve you or your campus with regard to EO665?