Professor Terri Bonebright, Provost and Dean of the College
Professor David Sutherland, Associate Provost
Professor Alice Hines, Director of the Writing Program
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Dear Professor Bonebright, Professor Sutherland, and Professor Hines:

Allow me to begin by thanking you for the generous hospitality and warmth with which I was received by the staff, faculty, and students whom I had the honor to meet during my recent visit to Hendrix. In particular, Professor Hines did a marvelous job of facilitating meetings with stakeholders, as well as creating a truly friendly and collegial atmosphere in which to work together. Conversations among colleagues across small liberal arts colleges give everyone an opportunity to reflect on our work with undergraduates and to clarify values associated with those efforts. I was most grateful for this opportunity at Hendrix.

This is an especially tender moment for the liberal arts, with the very idea of liberal education under some scrutiny by those who question the sustainability of our tailored pedagogies, our creative attentions to individual students, and our interests in developing civic sensibilities. In my thirty-two years of teaching writing, in my directorship of two writing programs, and in my role as incoming chair of the Small Liberal Arts Colleges Writing Program Administrators consortium, I have come to embrace writing as one of the most vital and potently transformative of the liberal arts, broadly defined. Our students' work as writers permits us to glimpse intellectual engagement, the formation of ethical personae, and principled involvement in conversations about ideas that matter. If we do not offer our students experiences in writing that provoke creativity and catalyze new knowledge, we fail them as small liberal arts practitioners.

For many years, Hendrix has maintained its two-tiered requirement for writing across the college. In its design, the requirement speaks to an interest in helping students make the sometimes difficult transition between high school- and college-level writing practices, where disciplinary preferences and a demand for individualistic thinking can befuddle students accustomed to producing formulaic prose. At the moment of the writing requirement's inception, few schools were so forward-thinking as to structure writing into the very fabric of its college-wide curriculum. The requirement was ambitious, anchored in ideals that necessitate not only regular vigilance and nourishment by faculty and administrators, but also periodic refurbishment, renovation, and renewal, all of which from to time to time involve degrees of substantive revision. Such changes will no doubt demand difficult and purposive deliberation on Hendrix's part as the college reorients its efforts in order to keep its strong aspirations for writing instruction in view. I see this as a quite exigent moment in the long history of Hendrix's writing requirement. Tweaking and tinkering (however necessary at times) will likely be insufficient to evoke the kinds of lasting promise that Hendrix's Writing Program deserves.

My understanding of the current state of affairs regarding writing at Hendrix comes from fourteen meetings with administrators, program directors, project facilitators, faculty, and students. Each meeting prompted a rich and candid conversation focused on pedagogies, instructional responsibilities, values, constraints, and future aspirations. I sensed dedication and commitment on the part of everyone involved, from student tutors to top administrators. It is clear that Hendrix cares deeply about student success and is eager to move forward. But nearly everyone I spoke with pointed to one or another dysfunction regarding the teaching of writing at the College. These include concerns regarding (1) the design of W1 courses, (2) the monodepartmental location of W1 faculty, (3) the sustainability of W2 staffing, (4) the ongoing professional development of the W2 faculty, and (5) students' abilities as writers, both as they enter and exit the College. In addition, faculty attending to writing spoke about an attenuated *esprit de corps* among W1 and W2 faculty, a lack of local agreements about the value of writing instruction arrived at through regular discussion and debate, and the need for a lexicon and set of contingent values for good writing shared by students and faculty campus-wide.

Quality of Student Writing

Every faculty member I spoke with commented on what he or she perceives as a recent decline in the quality of student writing (witnessed in work at all levels). Some found it difficult to specify those declines, and spoke in generalities regarding levels of preparedness. Others, however, spoke about large numbers of students who struggle to make an argument's progression of sentences and paragraphs cohere in service of an identifiable intellectual agenda. Still others complained that their students tend to read uncritically and in unsophisticated ways, which in turn delimits their ability to place themselves in conversation with the work of others whose positions they are expected to grapple with. Students too often repeat rather than inventively respond to others' analyses and arguments, I was told, so that papers simply parrot positions that professors would prefer students to critique. When students do attempt real argument, some professors report finding those attempts hampered by insufficient understandings of the texts and issues under consideration, leading students to produce thin and predictable discourses marked by mere assertion rather than reasoned analysis of evidence.

Some of these difficulties are faced by nearly everyone who teaches undergraduates, even at the best of U.S. colleges and universities. We might remind ourselves, too, that jeremiads about the declining quality of students' written work have been fashioned at least since the 1890s. I was given no student work—judged either strong or weak—on which to base more substantive evidence of decline. Just so, the frequency of expressed concerns points to a problem, real enough in being widely perceived, that deserves close attention. Faculty I spoke with report that somewhere between one-third to one-half of the student body is unprepared for the kind of written work that Hendrix demands. Though not supported by exact conglomerate data, such estimates come from professionals who have worked with students for many years, and who regularly comment upon and evaluate students' discourses. This perception of decline is the first factor that speaks to the need for renewed attention to writing on the part of the College.

A second drumbeat of concern among faculty is that the teaching of writing has become too diffuse and therefore tends to be almost "invisible," and difficult to "pin down" as a coherent initiative. They speak about wishing that the teaching of writing in its W1 and W2 manifestations follows a more coherent developmental trajectory, that those requirements be taken up in a less

scatter shot fashion by students, and that majors build into their gateway and capstone courses a clearer sense of discipline-specific preferences for writing. Often, I heard faculty and students attest to disappointment or confusion regarding the structural logic of a W1 to W2 sequence and the illogic of taking the two courses in random sequence, sometimes W2 taken before W1 is successfully completed! Contemporary practice is clearly not meeting intended goals.

Recommendation #1: Widely distribute the responsibility for teaching W1 courses.
The W1 requirement was originally intended to help students transition from high school- to college-level writing. Such a transition is precipitous for many students, even those coming from the best high schools in the country, because it involves nothing less than a change in one's participation in academic culture. High school students are generally expected to produce prose that lends itself to standardized assessment, which by nature figures writing not as the production of discourse sensitive to occasions of intellectual inquiry but as the use of formulae repeatable across opportunities for testing. Though many students arrive at college eager to slough off these constraints, others find the demands of college writing idiosyncratic or particularistic. Strategies that may have worked well in high school and on standardized tests no longer hold so that we often discover gaps between test scores and actualities of performance in college classes. For some students, our invitation to engage in what has been called "higher order thinking," whereby they are asked to think beyond the information given and tailor discourses within contexts of analysis that they must assemble from independent research, tends to overwhelm them as writers. Research has shown that even the best writers move forward on a complex path of gains and losses—two steps forward and one step back—so that even rudimentary skills may temporarily disappear in favor of attempting writing techniques with high cognitive demands.

For these reasons, it is both appropriate and prudent that the faculty who teach W1 courses be intimately familiar with the intellectual, rhetorical, and writerly practices of first-year students. How accustomed are students to navigating the (sometimes competing) demands of writing assignments? How adept are they at choosing a mode of approach or line of inquiry when they are asked (for good reason) to determine such things on their own? What strategies for producing intellectual prose are at hand, and which must be gleaned from one's reading in the subject? How shall we best model or exemplify what we take to be good writing for our students? How, then, do we support them in "catching on?" What can we learn from other similar colleges' approaches and struggles? What does recent scholarly literature in Writing Studies tell us about best practices, innovative methods, and research initiatives?

For the past thirty years or so, Writing Studies has evolved as a rich interdisciplinary site for scholarly investigation, theorizing, and methodological experimentation, its hypotheses, findings, and sensibilities assembled from linguistics, literacy studies, rhetorical theory, the Western history of rhetoric, cultural studies, publics theory, and other semiotically-inflected areas of study. Though the teaching of writing was largely managed by departments of literature for much of the twentieth century, colleges and universities began in the late 1970s to locate the teaching of writing elsewhere, either as a multidisciplinary initiative (similar to Hendrix's W2 requirement, shouldered by the College's faculty) or as a transdisciplinary program, typically housed directly under a dean, provost, or vice-president for academic affairs. Though such transfers of administrative and teaching duties often have had political effects, they were stimulated by an interest in distributing the responsibility for teaching writing more widely, in

multidisciplinary fashion, undergraduate writing understood as part and parcel of most academic work, and not simply as an adjunct to the teaching of literature, though writing about literature certainly exists as one among several disciplinary preferences for undergraduate writing.

Though the W1 program was initiated as a college-wide interest, at present all of the W1 courses are taught through the English department, creating a heavy burden for that department, a symbolic imbalance in the minds of faculty in other departments, and a singular instructional modality in the early writing experiences of students, most of whom are required to respond to fiction or poetry in their W1 courses. This is not to say that one cannot write powerfully in response to such sources, but to question whether or not this is the best practice for all students, many of whom have difficulty managing a response to public issues, let alone a demanding novel such as *Moby Dick* or a sequence of Shakespeare plays, and most of whom will not go on to major in English. No doubt, strong reading goes hand in hand with strong writing, but if a nascent academic writer only encounters fiction in her writing class, will she be adequately prepared to encounter mostly non-fiction analyses and arguments across the curriculum? Even if it weren't outmoded, the teaching of first-year writing using principally literary models seems out of step with Hendrix's otherwise cross-disciplinary egalitarianism. The English department seems to be aware of this irregularity, recently proposing that its W1-coded courses be decoupled from those given the LS coding. Furthermore, it is clear that the English department has other vital work to do, supporting and strengthening its major in the areas of literary studies, creative writing, and film. To give it sole responsibility for teaching first-year writing sets up a default proprietorship that seems unhealthy for the department and the College.

Though it may involve more rigorous incentivizing and robust professional development, if first-year writing is taught by a multi-disciplinary staff, it will likely have the effect of improving the teaching of W2 courses across the College. A commonplace formulation has it that first-year writing "uses a subject in order to foreground writing" and that writing-in-the-disciplines courses "use writing in order to foreground a subject area." Though this may seem to be a minor distinction in emphasis, the difference between one and the other foci often requires a rather complex set of pedagogic reorientations, value shifts, and intervention strategies. Once mastered, however, the ability to teach both early and later writing courses—one a formative feature of a general education curriculum, the other an apprenticeship in disciplinary practices—gives faculty a professional range nearly unique to the liberal arts, where writing is everyone's business. Experience shows that certain faculty members (typically those in the Humanities) will readily assume a place at the table since they traffic most generously in texts and often examine the production, distribution, and reception of discourses through cultural, philosophical, and historic lenses. But faculty in the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and the Arts bring other sensibilities and expertise to the table that will help students newly understand the opportunities and demands of fashioning academic prose.

We should remember, too, that stepping up to teach first-year writing requires all of us to shift from the narrow contexts of our discipline-specific pedagogies and practices to the wider context of general education—not that we must step out of our disciplinary shoes exactly, but that we must attend to whole intellectual persons, who expect a required writing course to prepare them both for successes as college writers and for their participation as public writers, in civic and professional occasions beyond college.

Recommendation #2: Regularize the curriculum for W1.
Many faculty I spoke with wished for a more easily identifiable approach to teaching W1 courses, an approach that allowed faculty to design courses composed of an array of issues taken up by students, but adumbrated by a set of shared instructional goals. Such an approach must therefore be capacious enough to accommodate various kinds of written analyses and arguments assigned by faculty, but specific enough to direct a course of study in writing accomplished by a cycle of reading and writing activities that trace a sequential logic prescribed for writers new to the academy, but eager to learn techniques associated with the production of sophisticated prose prepared for smart readers, who identify as members of an intellectual (but not necessarily discipline-specific) public. The approach used in W1 will likely entail a lexicon of terms and distinctions for written analysis and argument, perhaps a set of conceptual and pragmatic tools for attending to close and critical reading, to drafting and revising texts, and to the production of essayistic prose.

I recommend that W1 be refashioned as a course required of all first-year students. No one should be able to place out of the course because of its foundational role in Hendrix's curriculum. That is, its instructional goals should be so closely modulated by and tied to the College's investment in its students that it cannot be replaced either by high school experiences or by proficiency testing. The course sets the rhetorical standards for writing at Hendrix, and should do so through Hendrix-specific means. Rather than recommending that students successfully complete W1 in their first or second year of study, it might well require that students take W1 in either their first or second semester of the first year. This allows the course to more genuinely anchor their experiences as Hendrix writers.

The approach should aim for nothing less than shaping all Hendrix students as sophisticated writers, able to read challenging texts with contextual sensitivity and interpretive power, capable of responding with imagination and care to the work of others, cognizant that strong writing requires the intensive labor of drafting and substantive revision, and eager to embrace the persuasive potentials of inventive and abiding argument. Earlier, I mentioned that first-year writing prepares our students for both college and civic life. Here, I would go so far as to recommend that Hendrix's first-year writing courses introduce students to the rhetorical realm of the public intellectual—the professional journalist, activist scholar, cultural critic, or science writer who takes up the responsibility to translate scholarly knowledge to non-expert citizens. It is this realm of public discourse that our students know least about, but the one that they will likely turn to as readers and writers in their lives as literate adults.

To signal Hendrix's renewed attention to first-year writing, I suggest that the W1 courses be taken out of the English department to become courses offered by the Writing Program. The designation might be something like "Writing 110." Faculty from any department, including English, would teach the course, but it would be designed as a writing course, and not as a discipline-specific course with writing added to it. I suggest that these courses be focused on issues of interest both to disciplinary practitioners and to the wider, educated public. For instance, a physicist might teach a course on nuclear energy, understood as a public issue rather than simply a disciplinary specialty. A child psychologist whose primary research is in the

effects of corporal punishment of children might design a writing course focused on how that issue has been debated by schools, policy-makers, and parents, and invite students to judge the quality of those non-expert discourses by reviewing some of the scholarly research on that subject. A course on U.S. slavery, taught by a U.S. historian, might invite students to write about slave narratives, historical scholarship on the slave trade, public-intellectual work on slavery, and contemporary commentary on racism by the mass public.

I met with Professors Jaudon and Tinsley, who are shepherding Hendrix's newly-fashioned "The Engaged Citizen" courses through their second iteration. I noted that writing about intellectual and public issues is one of the course's learning goals, and that such work, which we might think of as either civic writing or public writing, has been the province, at least since Aristotle, of rhetorical education. Assuming that these courses examine issues about which citizens and other reasonable persons disagree, The Engaged Citizen might well provide a measure of instruction in framing and fashioning arguments. This would nicely complement a newly-designed first-year writing course, or with modifications, The Engaged Citizen might become itself the site for first-year writing instruction, though such a conglomerate course would require extensive resources, substantive revision, careful planning, and imaginative coordinations of staffing.

Ideally, however, a refurbished, universally-required first-year writing course should stand alone, supported by the kind of inquiry that goes on in TEC. The issues that students write about in the writing course might well be comparable to the sorts of issues explored in TEC—socially-sensitive issues that have been of interest to both citizens and scholars, issues over which reasonable persons disagree. It is hard to imagine a more rigorous curriculum for first-year students that than this pair of courses, especially for a school that so deeply values civic-intellectual streams of thought and action. With such an arrangement, Hendrix would be distinguished among liberal arts colleges in regards to rhetorical instruction, which serves both scholarly and public interests.

Recommendation #3: Enrich and extend the W2 courses.

This is the area of the curriculum that I heard least about. Outside of members of the English department and members of the committee who approve newly-proposed W2 courses, I met with no faculty who spoke about their teaching of these courses. This is worrisome since I must conclude that there is a lack of interest in attending to these courses across the College. I understand that the professors who teach these courses have from time to time attended workshops on various aspects of writing across the curriculum, but they do not seem regularly to meet as a group or to collaborate in even the most rudimentary ways. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that when I inquired about these courses, responses were vague at best. Most often, I was bluntly told something along the lines of: "We really don't know what goes on in all of those courses." To be fair, I should say that such mystery is not unique to Hendrix. Many schools have put wide-ranging second-tier writing requirements into place across the college and have difficulty thereafter capturing a coherent sense of the whole. After all, the W2 requirement is carried out in the context of significant contingencies (each discipline having its own generic preferences multiplied by each professor assigning writing in more or less unique ways) that nearly defy synthesis, making oversight challenging.

Still, a major requirement such as this deserves the college's full attention. To begin, syllabi and assignment sequences might be collected and archived. Someone might initiate a content analysis of these documents, or might draw out best practices or identify sticking points. Student work might be archived and treated to similar analytic scrutiny. Strong student work might be published in an online journal, its editorial team drawn from across the disciplines. Perhaps most importantly, each department might develop an online guide for its writers where, at the very least, citational practices could be outlined, remarks about the role of writing in carrying out disciplinary research made, and models of good writing displayed.

Though it is likely a good thing that so many W2 courses now exist, from what I heard, students seem to encounter them in an almost random way, and—more problematically—see their W2 credits as perfunctory, sometimes choosing courses that are (wrongly or rightly) perceived as involving non-demanding writing tasks. As a corrective, departments could decide to offer some of their writing-involved courses as major requirements, taken up at the gateway and/or capstone moments—the early course tied to an introduction to discipline-specific methods, the later course tied to the production of a summative document or independent research project. At other schools, especially in the Sciences, a capstone document is composed for a wide non-expert audience, forcing a student to translate experimental findings to public audiences eager for such information, but unable to decipher expert-developed data. Such a practice would nicely support Hendrix's interest in civic-intellectual engagement.

Recommendation #4: Create a cadre of undergraduate writing fellows.
Hendrix's Writing Center is an important site of undergraduate support. Professor Hines and Professor Stevens have done an excellent job training the tutors for their work in supporting careful reading, inventive brainstorming, and strong revision. I had the pleasure to meet a group of committed writing tutors who spoke about the dynamics of their work in great detail. Clearly, Hendrix writers benefit from their care and concern. They operate in a cramped space, which sends a mixed signal to the community regarding the importance of strong writing in the curriculum, and tutors made a special plea for an arrangement that would give them breathing room and a measure of privacy in their consultations. We should remember that successful tutoring demands the full attention of both parties. As it stands, tutors work in a cheek-by-jowl setting that may well compromise the delicacy and complexity of their work. To combat the space crunch, other schools have established satellite tutoring in residence halls during peak hours, and Hendrix may want to investigate this possibility.

I strongly suggest that Hendrix also investigate the possibility of using what are typically called "writing fellows," students who support writers in targeted courses, either W1- or W2-coded. These are typically experienced tutors who have worked with the general population, and are familiar with the dynamics of dyadic exchange to generate arguments and stimulate strong revision. Assigned to support writers in a particular course, a fellow's client load for the semester consists only of the students in that course, with whom he or she meets regularly. The professor determines when the fellow should attend the class, typically at moments when writing projects are getting launched, discussed, or reviewed. The fellow may or may not have been a student in the class to which he or she is assigned, and may or may not have experiences in other courses in the department. As I see it, the first order of business would be to query W2 professors to determine who might want to be assigned a writing fellow, and to attempt matches based on

present personnel's strengths and specializations. Typically, science and social science writing fellows will be in high demand, and they should be familiar with the genres that will likely be assigned in those classes. As an apprenticeship in one of the "helping professions" of the academy, this work may qualify for an engaged learning experience, which may be of interest to students as part of their Odyssey work.

Recommendation #5: Regularly assess the writing of W1 and W2 students.
Assessment is a vital and expected part of writing program administration. It is the coin of the realm for accreditation, planning, resource allocation, and course revision. Programmatic assessment of one sort or another gives practitioners a sense of how well they are meeting their intended goals, helps us establish and revise benchmarks for our instruction, and stimulates discussions about values. I saw no evidence of past assessment of writing at the course, department, or college level. Such inattention makes it nearly impossible to speak about either refreshing or overhauling writing courses in any substantive way since there are no examples of writing—good, bad, or in between—to anchor such important work. Without data, one is left with hunches, guesswork, and vague assumptions.

One need not turn to intense quantification in order to glimpse students' performance. Portfolios of work can be read and evaluated using holistic measures. Students' writing, produced at the beginning and end of the semester, can be blindly reviewed. Papers from across W1 and W2 courses can be gathered up, stripped of identifiers, and reviewed by raters who employ locally-designed evaluative rubrics, sensitive to particular interests identified by those who regularly teach the courses. I am happy to provide examples of this approach, to suggest experts in assessment, or to sketch out the major modes of evaluation and experimentation now practiced across the nation. Writing assessment has become a rich sub-field, with at least two journals devoted to its theorization and practice. Regular formative assessment will assist the writing program director and other administrators in making difficult decisions regarding resource allocation, staffing, and faculty development. What's more, assessment gives faculty a powerful tool for self-evaluation and self-reflection. The question "How well are we doing what we claim to be doing?" is a tough question to ask from time to time. Yet, if assessment is carried out ethically—sensitive to local context, personalities, institutional culture, and professional politics—it can be a valued and trusted expectation.

Recommendation #6: Pay close attention to the needs of underprepared and ESL students.
I was very impressed with Hendrix's commitment to multilingual students, both in recruitment and support. Professor Stockwell is an imaginative and forward-thinking expert who clearly is providing smart and inventive support for this population. Your immersive summer program is a smart initiative since it eases students into U.S. academic culture by situating that experience as one of involvement in a new set of sophisticated literate practices. With increased numbers of multilinguals on campus, such programs will likely need additional resources, and Professor Stockwell's tailored instruction of one-on-one support will likely reach a saturation point, and you may want to extend ESL support in new directions.

It is also prudent to think carefully about the relationship between the quality of newly-admitted students and their support as nascent academic writers. As I mentioned, I recommend that you develop a data-rich profile of those recently-admitted students (in this case, those with low-

scoring SAT verbals or other similar indicators of a lack of preparation). You may want to offer a written placement examination to determine which students would benefit from a first-year writing course tailored to their needs, or activate a system of "directed self-placement," which has proven to be a reliable but less onerous approach to population sorting.

Recommendation #7: Establish post-doctoral positions in the Writing Program.
A number of small liberal arts colleges (Denison, Swarthmore, Oberlin, Haverford, and Davidson among them) have recently turned to a post-doctoral faculty housed in the Writing Program to help them carry out strong writing instruction, and such an arrangement has been in place at Duke University, Stanford University, Princeton University, and Harvard University for some time). These faculty provide a "first line of defense" for first-year writing. They tend to be energetic, inventive, and committed young professionals who add value to our ranks without requiring permanent teaching arrangements or tenure-track expenses. Typically, these post-docs are hired for two, three, or five years, with stipulations for periodic review. Offered salaries commensurate with other new professors, full benefits, and a travel stipend, these are attractive positions for accomplished academicians who otherwise might well be unemployed in today's academic labor market. A standard arrangement is five courses per year, typically three of them first-year writing courses, and two of them writing-intensive courses in their home disciplines. I have worked with nearly one hundred writing post-docs at two institutions, and can attest to their vitality and interest in designing smart, well-structured courses, often making use of multimodal affordances and innovative pedagogic techniques. They provide, in other words, generous "bang for the buck," and would refresh both W1 and W2 courses. I envision these faculties teaching one-third of the W1 courses, with the remaining two-thirds taught by regular-rank faculty from across the College. Obviously these percentages could be adjusted.

Recommendation #7: Enrich the administration of the Writing Program.
In her career at Hendrix, Professor Hines has carried out a remarkable set of initiatives, has taken the helm of a complicated and contextually-sensitive writing program with both energy and imagination, and has given the College more of her professional life than anyone could accurately calculate. Her care for individual students—seeing them *as* whole persons who struggle and succeed against a backdrop of both promise and possibility—is exemplary. It is difficult to imagine the breadth of her dedication to helping students embrace the potentials of strong writing over many years.

As has been the case at many small liberal arts colleges, Professor Hines has been the sole Writing Studies professional on campus, a position that has some advantages, of course, but also distinct limits. As writing program administrators, each of us brings somewhat unique temperaments, sensibilities, and preferences for how writing should be taught, for what constitutes good writing, and for how best to manage the daily exigencies of this work. Though variations in practice certainly exist, the professional wisdom among writing program administrators is that no one person should manage a writing program for more than a decade, this seen as a reasonable period to effect change and maintain a particular set of curricular strategies more or less tied to a single professional's expertise and vision. Factored into such a figure is also the prospect of "burn out," a difficult to reckon with but very real effect of intense administrative work such as this. We should keep in mind that the decade-long term is intended to protect the professional and institutional life of a writing program administrator, and in no way

predicts an end to scholarly interest, allied professional roles, and readiness to tackle new projects. It is no more and no less than a rule of thumb.

If Hendrix decides to search for another Writing Program director, I suggest that this person's primary field of study be either in Writing Studies or in Rhetoric. Guidelines for structuring and setting the desired requirements for new directorial positions can be found on the Council of Writing Program Administrators website (http://wpacouncil.org/). There are many such professionals available, and many strong graduate programs offering PhD's in those fields. Experience in a small liberal arts setting may be desirable, but it is unlikely that you will be able to generate a large pool of applicants of such experience is a requirement. I suggest that you continue to employ the structural arrangement of the Writing Program as a free-standing, independent academic unit, with its director (and associated directors, if any) reporting to the Provost. This seems most appropriate given the transdisciplinary nature of writing at the College, the multidisciplinary staffing of writing courses, and Hendrix's commitment to writing as a liberal art. It will important that such an individual be given a generous stipend for professional duties outside the College, a budget line for regular assessment, and monies for the faculty's professional development. For consistency, I suggest that the Writing Center and ESL support be part of the program's institutional structure.

Writing program administration is complex work. In addition to a repertoire of "people skills," a successful administrator will bring to campus an abiding concern for writing instruction understood as demystification of special cultural habits and preferences, best understood as a variant of advanced literacy. He or she will consider intellectual writing as best supported by a sophisticated set of teachable skills, but also value writing as our primary vehicle for moving knowledge forward. Clearly, this is a pivotal moment in the College's long history, with administrative change at the highest levels, its interest in invigorating liberal-educational priorities, and new aspirations for the role of writing in the academy and in the world each in view. There is much at stake here, and I wish the College well on its journey toward renewal and change.

It has been my pleasure to get to know and briefly work with so many impressive faculty, staff, and students at Hendrix and to learn about the College through honest and friendly conversation. Your writing program has long been a vital feature on the curricular landscape, and I am confident it can enrich its value in years to come.

Respectfully yours,

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