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UNRAVELING AT BOTH ENDS: ANTI-UNDERGRADUATE EDU- CATION, ANTI-AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, AND BASIC WRITING AT RESEARCH SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT: This article describes the double bind of basic writing programs at public research institutions on the West Coast, offering the situation at the University of Washington as a case study. With a conflict between the university's perceived mission as research and graduate education and its commitment to diversity, the university's Educational Opportunity Program writing sequence is itself at risk in the face of the anti-affirmative action movement, Initiative 200. Using Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the university's public documents on mission and diversity, a Seattle newspaper's description of the EOP program and the consequences of the passage of I-200, and the documents of a gubernatorial commission of the future of higher education in Washington state, the author advocates using this analysis in the public debate about diversity and basic writing programs.

Initiative I-200: The Washington State Civil Rights Act

Shall government be prohibited from discriminating or granting preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, education, and contracting?

Passed 58.5%, November 3, 1998

While Maureen Hourigan and others have argued that the theorizing and practice of basic writing should not originate in the research universities (1996), where basic writing is often beneath the horizon, basic writing programs at Carnegie Research 1 universities remain an important facet of work and thought in issues of basic writing. Think of us as educational canaries, if you will, whose lost voices may preface the dismantling of diversity in U.S. public universities, and con-

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tributing to a system that permanently locates basic writing students and students of color in lower tiers of the hierarchy. Part of the reason for this lies in the sheer numbers of degrees granted by RU-1 schools. As the recent Boyer Commission report notes, while research institutions "make up only 3 percent of the total number of institutions of higher learning . . . they confer 32 percent of the baccalaureate degrees" (1998). For basic writers, often first generation college students and/or students of color, access to baccalaureate degrees at research schools is often through or enhanced by enrollment and participation in basic writing and academic support programs. Indeed, diversity and retention of underrepresented students at public research schools may well be a partial function of the success of their basic writing programs.

Currently though, on the West Coast, basic writing programs at public research institutions are caught in a double bind. On the one hand, the public research institutions typically perceive their educational mission to be research and graduate education. The consequence of this perception is to undervalue even retaining first- and second-year undergraduate students at their campuses, or at the very least, limit them as my institution suggests, to "select freshmen most prepared to take advantage of a research based university . . . result[ing] in a rise in the admissions index" (Strategy II). With more "efficient" use of resources demanded by the deepening corporatization of the university, lower division undergraduate writing instruction, itself often construed as "remediation," conflates with all writing instruction to make it superfluous, especially basic writing instruction.

This movement is not limited to my institution: for many of the West Coast's RU-1 universities, the change has been under way for most of the past decade. And, unlike schools in the East and Midwest, mainstreaming of underprepared students has not been the primary response from writing programs. Instead, the "intensive," "stretch" or "turbo" course has seemed the better option for providing continuing support for underprepared students.¹ Sometimes the move from a separate, "remedial" writing course to one of these options has been generated by university-level, higher administration. As Glynda Hull reports, the University of California system simply abolished "remediation" in 1991. She says that, while generations of faculty had repeatedly affirmed the need to teach all students who had been admitted to Berkeley over the 20th century, the administration made the change by fiat, driven by financial needs. As she indicates, this

. . . represented a new strategy on the part of the administration, which through this century, had been content to let faculty and individual campuses struggle with the remedial question and decide their own answers. In April, 1991, the UC President issued a directive, which came to be known as the

“Gardner Initiative,” instructing all campus administrators to transfer remedial courses in English and mathematics to community colleges or Extension programs. (19)

The result for the University of California campuses was a rethinking of how to support underprepared students, with the new system offering “turbo” courses, intensive, smaller, more theoretically sound writing courses.² Nonetheless, even while the 1991 Gardner Initiative was generated by finances and resulted in positive change in writing instruction, the symbolic value of removing “remedial” courses is important. When pressed financially, research universities cut courses deemed less central to their mission.

On the other hand, the recent successful anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives, in California and in my home state of Washington have contributed to decreasing public research institutions’ ability to attract, recruit, and admit representatively diverse student populations. Last November, the voters of the state of Washington overwhelmingly answered “yes” to the question in the “The Washington State Civil Rights Act” query:

Shall government be prohibited from discriminating or granting preferential treatment based on race, sex, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, education, and contracting?

You’ll note that the ballot question says nothing about banning affirmative action, but that of course was its entire intent. By December of 1998, the three-decades old Educational Opportunity Program at the University of Washington, whose two-course, for credit, composition-requirement fulfilling writing sequence is housed in the Expository Writing Program which I direct, was as much at risk as its students.³ And in California, the effect of Proposition 209 had been to significantly decrease the population of underrepresented students at the most elite schools of the University of California system, with underrepresented students “cascading” down to the less elite campuses (Miller 46).⁴

These two movements—the falling away from lower division undergraduate services at public research institutions and the embracing of the anti-affirmative action crusade—are often addressed administratively as separate issues. Yet the interaction between the two movements is invidious and has contributed to our losing sight of the main event. While we have argued about whether to mainstream basic writers, whether to test basic writers, and even whether to acknowledge the social perceptions that “create” the subject position of basic writers, those who have no interest in a wider educational franchise are

closing the doors at research institutions. The canaries are gasping.

As Michael Bérubé characterizes the current educational impasse between progressives and liberals in the face of conservative forces,

In such stormy political weather as this, liberals [and progressives] have a crucial role to play in educational policy, and it consists largely of supporting American children's right to a public education system unmarked by savage inequalities, and of maintaining higher education policies that make college as widely available as possible. . . [For progressives] To engage in mundane—and fundamental—local policy struggles such as these [financing education] *without* the aid of liberal constituencies is to treat American public education as if its existence were beyond question, as if there were no way that conservatives could shrink the franchise, as if it only remained for us to talk about multicultural theory and curricular procedure. (237)

He argues in *Public Access* that we must become public intellectuals in the local sense, engaging in the fight to retain a vital public education system. When progressives and liberals argue about basic writing and the categorization of basic writers, we need to remember that none of us intends for the access to education itself to disappear. Yet that is clearly the thrust of initiatives such as California and Washington's initiatives.

Using the case of Washington as an example, I examine the two "unraveling" ends of basic writing at research schools—lower division undergraduate education and anti-affirmative action. In doing so, I analyze, primarily through critical discourse analysis, the textual-rhetorical space of lower-division writing in the University of Washington's public documents on future enrollment, a lengthy local newspaper article on the Educational Opportunity Program at the University of Washington in the shadow of I-200, and the report of the Governor's "2020 Commission on Higher Education." I want to foreground the need for rhetoric and composition specialists, especially those also responsible for basic writing or Educational Opportunity Program writing, to participate vocally in the available university and political forums. The challenge for rhetoric and composition scholars in reading these materials is to take seriously those public documents that educational institutions and governmental commissions on education produce. Legislators and educational policy makers in state governments treat university policy documents as just that—policy contracts. So when these documents contradict and undo other policy initiatives, such as diversity commitments, we must point to the contradictions and present counter arguments. With attention, and through attention to the pro-

duction of knowledge, we can make local, public resistance possible and effective.

Scene 1

It was my first meeting as a member of the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee. English was the largest unit in the division and I had served in the Senate for several years, agreeing to serve on the Executive Committee. I was just getting ready to go through the tenure process. We had a new president, coming to us from the University of North Carolina, and we all were interested in what was in store. To say the Senate had been "reactive" rather than "proactive" in the past few years would be putting it mildly. The Provost began to tell us about the new master plan, which apparently had been completed before the academic year began. We were seeing this "master plan," the new president's first public statement on the future of the university, for the first time. The meeting virtually halted as the President of the Senate asked for copies of the report, the Provost replying that he didn't realize that we might want them. Every Executive Committee member wanted one.

End of Scene

Who speaks? What can they speak? Who is silent? My method in analyzing the documents arising from Scene 1 attempts to answer those questions.

I took the report home, reading with interest that the largest growth in the college population over the next 20 years was likely to be in under-represented populations. However, when I reached the following paragraph, I became quite concerned:

There is also the transition from K-12 to higher education. The question of remedial education is a vexing one. At the heart of the problem is an inadequate link between K-12 and the colleges and universities. There is no question that we are bound together: We provide K-12 with teachers and they provide us with students. The quality of teachers and students matters to both. Running Start is one example of a partnership at work, but it is not enough. Every time the University of Washington must offer another space for remedial education—in foreign language, in mathematics, and in English—it is using instructional resources to do something that should already have been done.

For nearly three decades, the compositionists in the English department had been insisting that our "basic writing" program was NOT

remedial, that its students should have and finally did receive full credit, as well as satisfying the composition part of the general education requirements. In fact, we had come to think of it as the place where talented students who may not have been on an academic track in high school could get needed information about and practice in academic writing, in richer, longer, ultimately better ways than our other one quarter, "regular" composition course provided. So I took my place in that line of compositionists, and I squawked, complained, and argued. I alerted the potential allies of the program, and together we insisted that there were no remedial English composition courses.

Yet what I later realized was that all lower division writing is remedial, superfluous, unnecessary in an "efficient" system. The reference in the passage to "Running Start" makes the efficiency trope clear. Running Start is a Washington state program in which high school juniors and seniors can simultaneously attend high school and community college, receiving credit for both, and thus eliminating the need for lower division courses at baccalaureate institutions. Just a few years old, 500 of last year's entering first year class at the University of Washington (a little more than 20% of the entering class) had Running Start credit, and almost every one of them had it in composition and thus had no further composition requirement.

So who is speaking this document? Without faculty input, the document presented us an unusually clear instance of the administration speaking, stripped of any pretense of faculty input. The "we" of the document, the university's upper administration, speaks to the "you" of a Higher Education Coordinating Board, state legislator, state administrator, state business community audience. The document proposes that its readers consider the current state of educational cooperation to be parallel with the moment of the domestication of wild grasses for agriculture (12), presumably before the benefits and opportunities of agribusiness, and argues that inter-institutional cooperation, like large-scale agriculture supporting early civilizations, is the key to solving access to higher education. That is, the RU-1's share of agricultural duties is to grow the top of the line hybrids.

Confirmation of the continuing sense of lower division composition as superfluous came two years later in the revised "master plan" on enrollment demand, produced in November of 1997. The corresponding segment now read:

Education should be a seamless process: high school graduates prepared for freshman level work in community colleges or universities; community college transfers ready for a university major. It is not. Large numbers of students repeat in college materials that they should have mastered in high school, especially in foreign languages, math and science. Commu-

nity college transfers often find that they have not taken the right courses, or enough courses, or what they learned does not match what they are expected to know.

Recommendations (several lines later)

To Prepare Freshmen

- With K-12, coordinate teaching and learning in areas related to university proficiencies or core areas of study, especially in the following areas:
- Mathematics including general quantitative reasoning, pre-calculus and calculus.
- Foreign language instruction, especially the commonly taught languages of French, Spanish and German.
- Science instruction including chemistry, physics and biology.
- Writing composition.

Thus while the earlier outcry managed to displace the overt designation of any particular composition course as remedial, the system designated all “writing composition” as suspect. The revised document contains several other so-called strategies to improve efficiency, couched in the language of corporate higher education, including moving students directly from community colleges into majors to not hiring faculty whose major responsibilities involve lower division courses [read composition faculty]. In short, the most efficient, streamlined, smart business operation virtually eliminates lower division instruction. To be maximally efficient, the university should admit only those students who can benefit from attending a research university, presumably the students who have APed, CLEPed, or Running Started themselves out of a lower division general education. If only we could get them to select their major while in their junior year of high school (first year of Running Start), it would be ever so much more efficient.

But a whole group of people have disappeared since the original document: the underrepresented students, a population largely co-terminous with our Educational Opportunity Program basic writing students. In the original draft report, the college populations expecting the most growth were Asian Americans, projected to increase 252%, African Americans at 80%, and Latina/o students at 113%. It is this group of students who represent the greatest part of the enrollment pressure on the state’s four-year institutions, the very genesis of the need for any enrollment strategy report. These same students, however, are absent in the final report, presumably dispersed via the elimi-

nation of remediation, and the inefficiency of supposedly duplicated educational services. And these students also disappear from the four-year baccalaureates in a statistical shell game. The Higher Education Coordinating Board chooses to report aggregate minority enrollment figures from both the community college system and the six baccalaureates. Doing so allows them to claim that minority enrollment in higher education matches state's minority population. Ignoring the separation of minority students into the community college has important effects as Eric Branscomb points out: to strand and to permanently place underrepresented students in community colleges. And conveniently, the elite institutions can quit bothering with this messy commitment to diversity.

Scene 2

It's approximately three weeks before the November election. I'm reading the paper at home and spot an article reporting on a poll showing that more than 60% of Washington state's population plans to vote "yes" on Initiative 200, banning "preferential" treatment of anyone in government. I shake my head, thinking that surely we aren't going to imitate California. The article hangs over me for days. And in that same week on Sunday, I read Marsha King's article in the Sunday Seattle Times, and I worry. If this article is in a newspaper which has publically taken a vigorous stand against I-200, supporters of affirmative-action are in deep trouble.

End of Scene

They were in deep trouble; the vote came in at 58.5% in favor of Initiative 200. In this second analysis, I review that particular article that I found so troubling through the lens of critical discourse analysis. While the *Seattle Times* opposed Initiative-200, the positions adopted in this article suggest deep contradictions in that support. I'm identifying two of those positions here—the ideologies of fairness and of numbers, as examples of arguments that we, as public advocates of our students and teaching, must counter.

The two ideologies are pervasive in discussion about education, and they point to one of the most profound problems in making our case to the public. The ideologies undercut commitments to diversity in public higher education, yet they are widely held by the public, who have rarely examined them closely. Because these ideologies undercut commitments to diversity, we need a clear understanding of how they work, particularly in public forums. The first, that of fairness, is pervasive in discussions about affirmative action and civil rights, at least in part because fairness and equality are closely related concepts

in government and law. Legal scholar Martha Minow has written eloquently of the problem within legal analysis of associating “sameness with equality and difference with inferiority or disability” (89). In her argument, even the notion of equality itself creates the framework of inequality: if some are equal, then there must be others who are not. The problem as she analyzes it is that bi-polar categories help maintain inequality. If this larger legal framework maintains inequality, the internal conventions maintain that all parties are ideally equal, even when it is manifestly obvious that they are not. Contract law is one area in which this presumption is voiced, and equality is presumed even when one individual signs a contract with a giant corporation. A valid contract assumes equality to bargain and a meeting of the minds. Think of the “contracts” you sign with credit card companies or mortgage or rental agreements: take our terms or go without. With the ideologies of equality and fairness so embedded in the political and legal systems, it should be no surprise to find its principles applied to educational situations in which, once again, it is manifestly obvious that the “system” produces neither fairness nor equality. Mentioning fairness and equality in the educational context brings to mind the individual student, each of whom must be treated fairly and equally, and masks the treatment of groups of underrepresented students. The ideologies of fairness and equality in discussions of affirmative action thus become “conversation stoppers,” halting talk at the point we perceive that anyone might be treated unfairly. This ideological construction is threaded throughout the *Seattle Times* article, undermining the newspaper’s anti-I-200 position.

The second ideology, that of numbers, quantification, and statistics, is equally powerful. In this ideology, numbers are fair and objective, telling the “real” story, outside of human prejudices. As historian and philosopher of quantitative science Theodore M. Porter has argued, the rise of statistics co-occurs with the rise of Western democracies. They are, in fact, part of governing. He argues:

It is, on the whole, external pressure that has lead to the increasing importance of calculation in administration and politics. Those whose authority is suspect, and who are obliged to deal with an involved and suspicious public, are much more likely to make their decisions by the numbers than are those who govern by divine or hereditary right . . . Calculation is one of the most convincing ways by which a democracy can reach an effective decision in cases of potential controversy, while simultaneously avoiding and minimizing the disorderly effects of vigorous public involvement. (28)

Those who govern can turn to the numbers and say to the public, “what

else can we do when we are faced with these numbers?" deflecting discussion away from whether those are the right numbers to be considering at all. As Porter suggests, "[q]uantitative rigor is most valued when there is political need of its odor of objectivity, as a defense against suspicions of ideological bias or, worse, corruption" (30). Porter sees the rhetorical power of quantification in part as restricting the domain of what can be discussed in a numerical framework. The numerical framework of limits and statistical analysis always within those limits are another feature of the coverage of educational affirmative action in the *Seattle Times* article. So with this framework in place, let us turn to the *Seattle Times* and this key article.

The *Seattle Times* is one of two daily newspapers in Seattle. While Washington state is approximately 90% European American, Seattle has a large population of Asian and Pacific Islanders, some large pockets of Eastern European immigrants, East Africans, and an African American community of about 10% of the city's population. The author of the article Marsha King had been on the education beat for several years often writing lengthy feature articles. This article, "Diversity Efforts Have Not Been Without Controversy," was a Sunday feature, the lead article in the "Local News" section, a little more than 1,000 words long. While the article's lead section focuses on the Educational Opportunity Program, its second and subsequent sections move away from "educational" efforts, that is, support for underrepresented students at the university, to the key point: admissions. Undergraduate admissions to the University of Washington is first, followed by a subhead "Gaps in Grades and Test Scores," a reference to high school grades and SAT scores, and then moves to graduate and professional admission. Two brief sections on actual enrollment and graduation rates follow, with the final section headed "Diversity Efforts Continue." The article's photograph is centered on the fold line on the front page, with the article beginning below, while the continuation inside takes two entire pages.

I followed the lexical chains in the article to isolate agency, action, and the stakes being described. In particular, I was interested in what actions university administrators could enact, what people of color could do, and what work was distributed to "statives," marking university life. I was also interested in the adjectives and nouns designating each group of stakeholders in the university's admissions process. To give you a sense of how the chaining works in this article, I quote the opening below:

One afternoon in May 1968, members of the University of Washington's newly formed Black Student Union (BSU) marched into the office of their school's president and demanded, among other things, that the UW admit more minor-

ity students. President Charles Odegaard and faculty leaders pledged to address the concerns.

With that start, here are the actions open to people of color in this article: one subset of actions includes *marched, demanded, pushed, contended, stormed, rendered, prodded, raged*. Another subset includes *couldn't compete, didn't graduate, weren't mentioned, were identified, lag, dropped, remained*. From the lexical chains of verbs alone, people of color were argumentative and emotional; at the same time, they weren't competitive, constituting the leftovers, the less able. University officials on the other hand *pledged, estimated, counted, knew, looked, created, admitted, found, projected, recruited, set up, toughened, complied, appealed, ruled*, in short governed a university community rationally. Race was represented as a *factor* (as in *deciding* or *significant factor*), *extra credit, boost, leg up, points, advantage, or consideration*. Students of color were represented as *minorities, race-based admissions, subject to growth, minority pool, separate, less academically qualified, quotas, special cases, 15% below the minimum, underrepresented*, and then specifically as *African American, Hispanic, Native American, Filipino and Pacific Islander*.

What was at stake here was the real estate of "undergraduate slots," "room," and the "offers" that Washington's schools could make. In short, the stake is sketched as a kind of property interest in available slots. These offers and slots were characterized throughout the article in quantitative terms, arrived at through numerical grade point averages and SAT scores, minimum admission criteria and selection procedures that totaled numerically. And this numerical orientation interlocks with the ideology of fairness. What could be more fair than admitting students by the numbers? "Fairness" as a background condition for the argument against affirmative-action programs and support programs for underrepresented groups is suggested in the passages below.

- 168 If extra credit for race were taken away,
169 these young men and women would have been
 denied admission.
170 In their place would be different young men and
 women, primarily Caucasians and Asian Ameri-
 cans.
200 It's fair to say
201 that the national gap of about 90 points on the SAT
 between large groups of blacks and whites is consid-
 ered significant.

So what underrepresented students are getting is "unfair," because they receive "extra credit," and the students who should have been admitted were not. Moreover, "it's fair" to mention that black stu-

dents typically score 90 points lower on the SAT, without comment about the arguments over cultural, racial, and gender bias on the SAT.

Another aspect of the fairness ideology is also embedded into journalism practices. As we know from critical discourse analysts such as Teun van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough, the newspapers and other media do constant work preserving hierarchy. One of the ways they do this in the U.S. is through the maintaining of even-handedness or "fairness" in the reporting of events. Thus, rough equality is given to "sides" or "perspectives," ignoring the issue of value, flattening important distinctions. While much has been made of "advocacy" journalism, the standard daily fare in most U.S. newspapers is giving all sides "equal" say, because that is what's "fair." This discussion of "fairness" is a constant refrain within the article. In the first example, lines 29-35, appearing near the beginning of the article, read as follows:

29 Most people would likely agree
30 that helping to increase the number of college-
 educated minorities is a good thing for those indi-
 viduals and societies.
31 But there's one strategy
32 that's been used around the nation
33 that many people don't like:
34 awarding some college applicants an advantage for
 their race, effectively displacing others
35 who have equal or better grades and test scores.

So, fair-minded people want to help individuals and societies by increasing the number of college-educated minorities *except* of course unless they *displace* others (read white, middle class) students "who have equal or better grades and test scores." In lines 168-170, we have fairness raised in terms of the "extra credit" given to race, and that point is emphasized in the assertion of a *significant* gap between black and white students on the SAT scores.

The playing out of the ideology of numbers has two distinct patterns in this discourse. One is in the assertion of the limitation of the educational franchise. That is, there are only so many slots and they are limited and apparently cannot be expanded.

48 But few would disagree
49 that the debate potentially is critical for this state
50 where demand for undergraduate slots is projected
 to increase dramatically
51 due to the children of baby boomers
52 and due to the growth rate of the minority popula-
 tion,

- 53 which is expected to be much higher than non-
 minorities.
54 Across the nation, race-based admissions policies
 are used by selective institutions—schools for the
 most part
55 that have more applicants
56 than they have room.

Notice in lines 48-56 that the emphasis falls on the “growth rate of the minority population which is expected to be *much higher* than non-minorities,” giving the other framework for numbers—the minorities who will overpopulate our educational institutions (even though the children of the baby boomers participate in this as well). The emphasis on place, room, and more applicants than space, then is applied to the two most selective state schools in Washington state, Western Washington University and the University of Washington.

- 153 Washington’s colleges and universities made about
 27,000 offers to high-school seniors
154 who applied for admission this fall.
155 Of those, the UW and Western accounted for 14,000.
156 Race made the difference in roughly 440 cases,
 primarily at the UW.

Here we have an actual count for just how many admission offers were affected by “race.” And our discussion has been limited to space at the most competitive, in-state universities. As Porter suggested, quantification sets the parameters: there are only so many spaces, and in a specific number of those spaces “race made a difference.”

Scene 3

In a large lecture hall on the University of Washington campus, the Washington 2020 Commission held a public meeting, attended by both students and faculty. The meeting was not intended to gather information from students and faculty; it was simply to present the Commission’s perspectives. Both students and faculty ask questions, sometimes heatedly, about the direction of the Commission. Much of what the Commission members have to say translates into “bottom line” rhetoric. I ask why the Commission is advocating new admissions standards at the same time it asserts a commitment to “reaching out” to underrepresented groups. At this point, one of the members accuses faculty of avoiding numerical assessments of students, refusing to separate the truly capable, refusing to be “accountable.” No one mentions that the proposals for electronic education and outsourcing will handle stu-

dent growth by keeping some students off campus.

End of Scene

Once again, the questions of who speaks and who is silent are at issue. The final document that I want to consider briefly is a political one, the product of a gubernatorial commission, charged with setting the direction of higher education in Washington state for the next twenty-five years. No faculty member sat on the commission and only one community college student was a member. It was composed primarily of executives of major corporations in the state, many of whom had served at various times as regents of the various four-year institutions. I have included below two excerpts from their final report, which appeared less than a week after Initiative-200 was successful.

Excerpt 1

To fully serve the educational needs of Washington's people and its employers, we must do more than simply respond to those seeking entry to our post-secondary institutions. We must reach out to those who traditionally have been underrepresented and under-served by post-secondary education: people from low-income families, people of color, families with no prior experience with post-secondary education and people who live far from traditional campuses. This will require not just system expansion, but also active recruitment of students from these families and communities, and a commitment to adapt service delivery to their needs.

Excerpt 2

Given the immediacy of the increase in *demand*, the enrollment plan should give priority to strategies that *expand capacity* without requiring *new construction*. Priority should be given to proposals that: (a) reduce the cost of delivery by *adding capacity at marginal cost*, or (b) expand programs in *high demand/high cost areas*, subject to the provision of *start-up* funds. Simultaneously, the state should expedite the build-out of branch campuses that have already been authorized. These campuses are needed now to serve urban communities that lack access to education beyond the community college level.

In addition, this Enrollment Plan should provide for *contracting with independent and for-profit providers* when public institutions are full. If the state can make *agreements with independent*

providers that expand capacity less expensively than expanding the capacity of full public institutions, then this option should be used.

In the first excerpt, the commission makes clear that it intends to stay committed to broadening the educational franchise. They speak in terms of "reaching out," and "not just system expansion but also active recruitment" of underrepresented students. In the second excerpt, paragraphs 2 and 3, we see the means by which this is apparently to be accomplished—the further corporatization and privatization of our public universities. The metaphor of the economy applied to university is literalized, with phrases like "adding capacity at marginal cost," entrepreneurial language such as "start up funds" and contract language of "contracting with independent and for-profit providers." And once again, we see the ideology of numbers in the background—we have only so many slots on the current campuses, so further access to education must come without building new buildings, and by "outsourcing" the excess demand to "independent and for-profit providers." So we will actively recruit the under-represented students into something less than the regular universities. For "them" we'll contract outside the university.

Aftermath

From the October 28, 1999, University of Washington's *University Week*:

The enrollments of new underrepresented freshmen (African Americans, American Indians and Latinos) declined by 31.6 percent, after the passage of Initiative 200, the law that prohibits the consideration of race or ethnicity in admissions. The changes from 1998 to 1999 are: African American, from 124 to 83 (down 33 percent); American Indian, 53 to 41 (down 23 percent); Latino, 196 to 131 (down 33 percent); Asian American and Pacific Islander, 1,053 to 1,118 (up 6 percent); and Caucasian, 2,299 to 2,439 (up 6 percent). (1-2)

The effect on the Educational Opportunity Program writing course enrollment reflects these changes. From our typical 12 sections of the initial course in the two-course sequence with 18 students registered in each, we dropped to seven sections, with the cap lowered to 15 students. The real estate of admission "slots" previously awarded to underrepresented students now returns to its rightful owners.

Conclusion

The use of critical discourse analysis, here combining of the analysis of agents and actions along with the ideological tropes of fairness and the objectivity of numbers, helps explain how the newspaper that supports the rejection of the anti-affirmative action initiative ends up arguing for it and how the 2020 Commission can both welcome and reject the increase in enrollment in underrepresented students. Pointing to those moves is work for local, public intellectuals—writing program administrators and rhetoricians challenging conventional understandings, persuading governing boards to examine the contradictions in policy, broadening the public debate. Thus, this paper is not only about the double bind of anti-lower division undergraduate education and anti-affirmative action, but it is also a paper investigating the sociopolitical linguistic milieus in which our programs exist.

But we can't simply speak out without doing our homework. We must read our institution's internal documents and analyze them for inconsistencies and contradictions. The contradictions found in my institution's documents were not glaring wake-up calls to eliminate programs that enhanced diversity, a move that might have awakened more sympathetic faculty attention. Instead, they were more subtle, identifying the courses as duplications that most underprepared students would need to succeed in the university. Similarly, the 2020 Commission's call for increased recruitment is canceled when the means of educating those newly recruited students are moved off campus, to the "kitchen table computer" or "independent and for-profit providers."⁵ We need to know where the competing commitments conflict. We must analyze the local scene and become familiar with the ways in which these issues are debated in public as well.

Critical discourse analysis is one method by which we can pinpoint the ruptures and contradictions, knowledge we need to have on hand if we are to speak as public intellectuals. Along with political and rhetorical analysis, it is a tool that anyone considering a career in rhetoric and composition needs, and as such, it is a required course for our doctoral students. By keeping the ideological in close focus, critical discourse analysis—with its attention to agency, action, stakes, and absence as well as presence—provides us with the analysis tools we need to assess our situations. Once we assess the local terrain, we can begin to challenge the unconsidered ideologies that govern public discussion about access to higher education. How we go about doing that is to take on roles that most faculty never imagined themselves doing: contacting legislators, staying in close contact with our university's representative to the state legislature, asking our professional organizations to provide education about guidance in lobbying,

and talking with the reporters who cover education in the local media. As Cary Nelson and Stephen Watt put it, “Devote substantial energy to multiple forms of public outreach, from lobbying legislators to explaining our work to general audiences” (13). Tom Fox’s fourth chapter of *Defending Access: A Critique of Standards in Higher Education* sketches the type of political work that can be done on our local campuses; clearly this is one part of the “tactics” we need to use. We also need to take seriously the ordinary documents and local news that describe us and our students, rather than dismissing them as just university politics or local news. As Susan Miller suggests in the introduction to *Assuming the Position*, “ordinary texts unite experience, official discursive practices and fleeting statements on graphic surfaces that make specific cultural signatures legible” (6). Our work also requires that we attend to those ordinary texts.

No one should expect this to be easy. Academics in general have left the playing field of public intellectual discourse. We are a seldom heard voice on issues of public policy that intersect with higher education. Some, like Stanley Fish, insist that our voices on public and political issues are irrelevant.⁶ But this ignores that fact that what we teach is what will be taught elsewhere, not only in higher education, but in the curriculum of the public schools. And those of us at Carnegie 1 universities need to recognize our role as canaries in the access and diversity debate—if we don’t speak, situated as we are in tenured or tenure-line positions at ranked public institutions, we abandon the commitment many of us made to democratic education. As Nelson and Watt put it, “we can work to make things better, losing some battles and winning others, or we can passively let things get worse” (14). I’m opting for learning to speak.

Notes

1. Arizona State University, for example, has moved to the “stretch” approach, where students produce the same work over two courses instead of one. See, for example, Greg Glau’s extensive analysis of the program and its successes, in “The ‘Mainstreaming+’ Approach,” ERIC ED 419237, and “Bringing Them Home: Arizona State University’s New Model of Basic Writing Instruction,” ERIC ED 403558.
2. Hull’s report, a close study of the history of Subject A testing and courses at the UC-Berkeley campus and a report on the changes in support in writing courses for underprepared students, is a model of the kind of local site studies we need.
3. Students at the University of Washington fulfill the first-year com-

position requirement in a single quarter's course. Students in the Educational Opportunity Program, whose writing is assessed as needing extended course work, enter a two-quarter sequence. Both quarters count as credit-bearing courses, with one fulfilling the composition requirement, the other counting in general education credit, and students must successfully complete both courses for credit. Students are also required to take two more "W" courses, originally aimed at disciplinary writing, but these requirements were effectively gutted in 1995, when three first-year writing courses were designated as acceptable fulfillment of the "W" course requirement. While our EOP writing students are typically not the basic writers enrolled in open admissions schools, they are, in this context, less traditionally prepared than their cohort, and as such, are "basic" writers.

4. James Miller, of course, sees this as a positive outcome of Proposition 209.

5. Governor Gary Locke's spokesperson for higher education, former UW Law School Dean, Walter Loh, created a considerable faculty reaction when he suggested that access to higher education could expand by "kitchen table computers" connected to electronic courses at the universities.

6. For an extended discussion of this position, see Fish's *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995).

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