

Embodying the WPA:

Advice Narratives for Writing Program Administration

Edited by Jackie Hoermann-Elliott, Juliette Holder, Jennifer Judd, & Danielle Littlefield Brady

Even among the quietest of us, there are stories to be told.

Stories of how we dressed for the campus visit, whether or not we drank wine with the search committee at dinner.

Stories from the first year as the WPA, remembering how we physically composed (or contorted) ourselves and our offices for comfort – our own or others’.

Stories of how we hugged a bereaved teacher, toasted in celebration, or laughed a little too loud at that one department meeting.

All WPAs have stories, deeply embodied tales whispered over coffee at conferences to colleagues or soon-to-be WPAs, and this edited collection seeks to gather many of those essential stories into one book that will benefit early-career and graduate WPAs for years to come.

As seen in the recent call for *Learning on the Bones: (Un)Becoming Writing Program Administrators* (edited by Casie Fedukovich, Joyce Inman, Paula Patch, and Sherry Rankins-Robertson), there’s a groundswell of scholarly interest in WPA physical and mental wellbeing, particularly for seasoned WPAs considering how to transition to new roles outside of writing program administration. *Embodying the WPA* differs in its emphasis on the physically material and/or visceral experiences of new WPAs, broadly and inclusively defined to include graduate WPAs, early-career WPAs, or quite possibly faculty returning to WPA work after a long tenure away.

Questions to Consider

Proposals should prompt readers to explore questions, such as:

- Whose bodies are (un)welcome in writing programs?
- How can embodied practices shape writing programs?
- When do our bodies get in the way of our WPA work, and how do we react?
- When and how do we rely on our bodies to support our work? Or others’ work?
- Where do our material/physical positionalities and locations reside in relation to others?

- In what ways has WPA scholarship tended to focus on disembodied rather than embodied dimensions of WPA work?
- How can candid discussions of embodied experiences benefit the next generation of WPAs?
- When have embodied experiences made WPA labor feel joyous or rewarding?

These questions are intended to encourage creative thinking around this topic. Contributors might also think in terms of relevant keywords, including but not limited to: racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, or religious discrimination; dressing and officing practices; chronic illness and disability; child-free, pregnancy, or parenting status; mindfulness, exercise, or wellbeing; creativity and hobbies; fun, playfulness, joy, or connection; grief, trauma, and crisis; mindfulness or contemplative practices; public speaking and physical presence; exhaustion and burnout; and celebration or commemoration.

While the focus of this collection is on the experiences of and advice for new WPAs, we welcome submissions from WPAs of all ranks (including graduate students) because our goal is to include narratives from a range of perspectives, voices, and institutional contexts.

Advice Narrative Genre

Embodying the WPA also differs from other books in terms of form while leveraging what many WPAs do best: give great advice. The genre for chapters will mirror the style of short advice narratives (2,500–4,000 words) published in [Parenting While PhDing](#) (Rutgers UP, 2025), which are brief and accessible to the busy administrator and make space for a range of diverse perspectives and storytelling approaches. Successful proposals will feature:

- an evergreen or timeless, tagline piece of advice in the title,
- author name(s), email address(es), institutional affiliation(s),
- a description of the narrative (up to 500 words) that connects to the title,
- integration of scholarly sources is encouraged, but not required

Submission & Contact Information

Questions can be sent to embodyingthewpa@gmail.com, and proposals can be sent to the same address no later than **11:59 pm on Monday, September 7th, 2026**. The anticipated timeline for the collection is as follows:

September 7, 2026: Proposal submissions due

October 2, 2026: Acceptances sent

January 8, 2026: Complete submissions due

March 5, 2027: Feedback provided

May 14, 2027: Revised submissions due