

Letter from the Editors

In recent years, there have been increasing demands for WPAs to explain what it is that students learn in college-level writing classes, and further, how we know they learn anything at all. Often accused of “soft scholarship” by those in other disciplines, many WPAs have focused their research efforts on demonstrating what we do in ways that administrators, students, and the public at large will find more valuable.

At the forefront of the drive for more empirical scholarship in WPA work have been Chris Anson and Ed White, whose addresses at national WPA in 2006 and 2007, “The Intelligent Design of Writing Programs: Reliance on Belief or a Future of Evidence?” and “Testing In and Testing Out,” encouraged and inspired us to undertake more data-driven, empirically-based research. We are proud to include these two important talks in this volume, along with a variety of articles that engage in precisely the types of research Chris and Ed suggest. The articles—“Remediating Writing Program Administration” by Carrie Leverenz, “Predicting Success: Increasing Retention and Pass Rates in College Composition” by Elaine Fredericksen and Elizabeth Brunk-Chavez, “Self-Placement at a Distance: Challenge and Opportunities” by Ed Jones, “What WPAs Need to Know to Prepare New Teachers to Work with Adult Students” by Michelle Navarre Cleary, and “From Incomes to Outcomes: FYW Students’ Prior Genre Knowledge, Meta-Cognition, and the Question of Transfer” by Angela Rounsaville, Rachel Goldberg, and Anis Bawarshi—address a variety of important WPA issues using both quantitative and qualitative research.

We feel strongly that the articles in this volume will serve as long-term sources for present and future writing program administrators as we engage in the research and scholarship so crucial to increased understanding of and appreciation for the work we all do.

As we begin the transition of the journal to our incoming new editorial team, we look forward to our next volume, the content of which we have had a hand in determining, but which will be further served by the editorial expertise of the new team. This new team consists of co-editors Alice Horning, Debra Dew and Glenn Blalock, who will be ably assisted in various

capacities by Greg Giberson, Jim Nugent, Lori Ostergaard and Ed White. We thank WPA readers for the experience of serving you as managing editors the past few years and look forward in eager anticipation to the new talent and scholarship of the team that follows.

—Deirdre Pettipiece and Timothy Ray

