

More Seats at the Table: Welcoming Diverse WPA Perspectives

Lori Ostergaard, Jim Nugent, and Jacob Babb

When we look closer to home—in the colleges and universities at which many of us work—we also see a system that parses its participants into those who are at the table and those who are on the margins. Which students are college-ready? Whose languages are valued? Which faculty members have tenure and voting rights? Who serves on which committees, and why? Whose ideas tend to be heard? Asking these questions can help us see who is on the inside and who is out, and can spur us to ask how we might reshape our institutions to be more inclusive.

—Mark Blaauw-Hara

As editors of *WPA*, we sometimes feel compelled to point out that CWPA is not now, nor ever has been, officially affiliated with the WPA-L listserv: the council does not own, moderate, or manage it in any way. That said, we acknowledge that subscribers to WPA-L and *WPA* share a common discipline and profession, and the fast-moving conversations of that digital forum frequently occur among—and reflect the values of—the readers of this journal. As Doug Hesse pointed out in the first issue of *WPA* under his editorship, the unhurried pace of our academic scholarship (relative to our various electronic forums) compels us to read—and write to be read—in more thoughtful, deliberate ways (7). This past fall, the conversation of WPA-L erupted in a particularly complex, heated, and quickly evolving exchange. For this issue of *WPA*, we invited some of that important conversation onto the pages of this journal to become part of the more deliberate and lasting scholarly discourse of our field. In the edited symposium “Building a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Ethos: Three Dialogues for WPAs,” Michelle LaFrance and Elizabeth Wardle examine how we might enact intersectional feminist values and radical inclusion in our work as

WPAs. The three dialogues comprising the symposium are structured according to the career stages of their diverse participants:

- later-career WPAs (Linda Adler-Kassner, Susan Miller-Cochran, Peggy O’Neill, Mya Poe, Annette Powell, and Shelley Reid);
- early-career WPAs (M. Melissa Elston, Genevieve García de Müller, and Karen-Elizabeth Moroski); and
- graduate students (Anicca Cox, Ashanka Kumari, Vyshali Manivanna, Mandy Olejnik, and Sherita V. Roundtree).

During the composing process, these contributors provided commentary on one another’s work from their diverse subject positions, and our associate editor Jim Nugent worked closely with the symposium editors to embody at least a portion of that multithreaded interaction within the layout of the symposium itself. The symposium contributors also agreed to make an archival version of their complete dialogue available online at <http://wpa-council.org/wpa42n2>. We are grateful to the symposium contributors and to Elizabeth Wardle and Michelle LaFrance, who responded with inspiring leadership to our request to assemble this timely and important work.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

This issue also features six articles that explore issues from institutional mission and college/high school connections to ongoing efforts to revise pedagogical approaches and contradictory representations of our work. The first article, Megan Schoen’s “Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It: A Survey on Writing Programs and Institutional Missions,” shares results from a national study of WPAs’ attitudes toward institutional missions and how those missions may shape our programs. Schoen calls on WPAs to develop an ecological understanding of how our writing programs work in our institutions and how we might align our programmatic goals with institutional missions. The next two articles encourage WPAs to work to strengthen connections between college and high school sites of literacy education. Thomas Deans and Jason Courtmanche’s “How Developing a Network of Secondary School Writing Centers Can Enrich University Writing Programs” suggests that writing center directors develop a networked relationship with writing centers in middle and high schools rather than establishing a binary that prevents collaborative work with those centers. They call on institutions to light up new nodes in regional networks with secondary schools. In “From Dialogue to Collaboration in Dual-Credit Programs,” Caroline Wilkinson interviews dual enrollment high school teachers and uses her findings to show that WPAs involved in the

professional development of dual enrollment teachers need to learn more about those teachers' experiences before and after they complete graduate training in composition pedagogy. Joe Cirio's "Meeting the Promise of Negotiation: Situating Negotiated Rubrics with Students' Prior Experiences" argues that students need to articulate what they value about writing before they can help to negotiate rubrics, ultimately concluding that the work of articulating those values could be more pedagogically beneficial than the rubrics that may emerge from such negotiations. In "Transgressing Unstable Ground: Contradictions in Representations of Writing Program Administrative Work," Kate Pantelides uses WPA job advertisements to demonstrate how WPA work is often invisible or managerial. She argues that to make our work visible and more valued by the institutions in which we serve, we must do more than just assert that WPA work is intellectual; we must also construct it as intellectual work. Finally, Annie S. Mendenhall's "Representing Pedagogical Change: Genre, Expertise, and the Modes of Discourse in Writing Program History" demonstrates how genre pedagogies can help WPAs both promote knowledge transfer and contend with inexperienced instructors' knowledge of the modes of discourse. Mendenhall suggests ways that genre theory can bridge gaps in expertise and assist WPAs in shifting programs toward pedagogical best practices.

We conclude this issue with three reviews of interest to WPAs. Lizzie Hutton's review of *Deep Reading* (edited by Patrick Sullivan, Howard Tinberg, and Sheridan Blau) discusses some of the contradictory ideas about reading in our field and calls on us to consider what a more coherent theory of college reading might offer writing programs and the students in them. In her review of Patrick Berry's *Doing Time, Writing Lives: Refiguring Literacy and Higher Education in Prison*, Sherry Rankins-Robertson focuses on scholarship about prison writing programs and discusses the kairotic moment WPAs are currently in to engage in literacy education that moves outside of the college classroom and inside prison walls. Her review challenges us to consider what we can do to expand our engagement in teaching reading and writing to individuals who might not otherwise have these educational opportunities. And drawing attention to scholarship about the labor issues composition faces, Krista Speicher Sarraf's review of *Contingency, Exploitation, Solidarity: Labor and Action in English Composition* (edited by Seth Kahn, William Lalicker, and Amy Lynch-Binieck) offers an overview of the types of changes that can be made to address these concerns and asks what it might look like to develop a common terminology when speaking about labor across different contexts.

 FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE JOURNAL

When we began editing WPA two years ago, we recognized the value of including more, and more diverse, voices in writing program administration scholarship. Edited symposia have been used successfully by past editors of this journal to bring more seats to the table, and we hope to make these symposia a regular feature of the journal. In future spring issues, we plan to invite guest editors to work with contributors to produce provocative work that will advance crucial conversations in the scholarship of writing program administration. Future symposium editors will facilitate discussions at the intersections of WPA work and LGBTQ issues, race, and disability studies.

Additionally, we plan to publish several special issues. This summer, we will publish a special issue celebrating the fortieth anniversary of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* as a peer-reviewed journal. The issue will include bibliographic overviews, author retrospectives, and interviews with past editors and authors. We have been privileged to work with two dozen authors to produce this historical retrospective, and we look forward to sharing it with you this summer.

Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, Sarah Z. Johnson, and Darin Jensen have agreed to edit a special issue on writing program administration in two-year colleges, and we are excited to feature their work in summer 2020. This issue will focus on issues of visibility, sustainability, and resilience in two-year college writing programs, offering a sustained examination of what the WPA community at large might learn from the ways of knowing and creative innovation of “change agents” (McLeod) situated at two-year institutions. This issue hopes to frame and expand the field’s understanding of program administration within access-intensive institutions.

We hope that each of these special issues and symposia will aid in creating the kind of radical inclusion that Mark Blaauw-Hara invoked in his conference call for proposals for the 2019 CWPA conference. If you have been a member of CWPA for any time at all, you know how valuable this professional community is and you know that we are stronger as a community when we include more voices and make room for more seats at the table. We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore this July.

REVIEWERS

We are indebted to our reviewers for their careful reading and constructive critiques of submitted manuscripts. It is little surprise that in a field dedicated to the teaching of writing, our external reviewers are generous with their time, energy, and advice, and we are grateful to these scholars for their

service to the journal: Courtney Adams Wooten, Kara Poe Alexander, Chris Anson, Kristin L. Arola, Anthony Atkins, Laura Aull, William P. Banks, Christopher Basgier, Heather Bastian, Mark Blaauw-Hara, Beth Brunk-Chavez, Russell Carpenter, Allison Carr, Nicole I. Caswell, Amy Dayton, William DeGenaro, Christine Denecker, Dànielle Nicole DeVoss, Suellynn Duffey, Catherine Gabor, Jane Greer, Heidi Skurat Harris, Heather Hill, Melissa Joan Ianetta, Sandra Jamieson, Joseph Janangelo, Joyce Kinkead, Sonya J. Lancaster, Carrie Leverenz, Rita Malenczyk, David Martins, Miles McCrimmon, Sharon McGee, Jackie Grutsch McKinney, Lilian Mina, Lee Nickoson, Kate L. Pantelides, Paula Patch, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, Brian Ray, Jessica Restaino, Kelly Ritter, Liane Robertson, Kevin Roozen, Shirley K Rose, Dan Royer, Megan Schoen, Trish Serviss, Jennifer Sheppard, Mary Soliday, Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, Megan Titus, Darci L. Thoun, Nicole B. Wallack, Scott Warnock, Sara Webb-Sunderhaus, Jennifer Wells, Caroline Wilkinson, and Kathleen Blake Yancey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 2019 CWPA conference will be hosted by Goucher College with local arrangements coordinated by Phaye Poliakoff-Chen. The *WPA* travelogue highlighting Goucher College and the Baltimore area will be published online in early June. We are grateful to Shirley Rose for facilitating a discussion with Phaye and composing the travelogue.

We are also thrilled to announce that Christine Saidy's article "Inez in Transition: Using Case Study to Explore the Experiences of Underrepresented Students in First-Year Composition" (vol. 41, no. 2) has been selected for inclusion in the *Best of the Journals in Rhetoric and Composition 2019* (forthcoming from Parlor Press).

WORKS CITED

- Blaauw-Hara, Mark. "2019 Conference Call for Proposals: More Seats at the Table: Radical Inclusion in Writing Programs." CWPA, wpacouncil.org/2019-conference-cfp. Call for proposals.
- Hesse, Douglas. "The Function of *WPA* at the Present Time" *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 18, nos. 1–2, 1994, pp. 6–7.
- McLeod, Susan. "Translating Enthusiasm into Curricular Change." *Strengthening Programs for Writing across the Curriculum*, edited by Susan H. McLeod, Jossey-Bass, 1998, pp. 5–12.



Extending an invitation to join the Council of Writing Program Administrators

The Council of Writing Program Administrators offers a national network of scholarship and support for leaders of college and university writing programs.

Membership benefits include the following:

- A subscription to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, a semi-annual refereed journal
- Invitations to the annual WPA Summer Workshops and Conferences
- Invitations to submit papers for sessions that WPA sponsors at MLA and CCCC
- Participation in the WPA Research Grant Program, which distributes several awards, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- Invitations to the annual WPA breakfast at CCCC and the annual WPA party at MLA
- Information about the WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service

ANNUAL DUES

Graduate Student Memberships: \$20

Regular Membership for Non-Tenure Track Faculty: \$20

Regular Membership for Tenure Track Faculty: \$50

Sustaining Membership (voluntary): \$100

Library: \$80

To JOIN

Visit us online at <http://wpacouncil.org/membership> or send your name, address, email address, and institutional affiliation to

Jennifer Clary-Lemon, CWPA Secretary
University of Waterloo

Department of English Language and Literature, HH 368

200 University Ave W

Waterloo, ON Canada N2L 3G1

jclarylemon@uwaterloo.ca