

## From the Editors: Taking Action

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*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, 2019

Earlier in the spring, we wrote an introduction for this issue about working toward a new normal. We described the process of getting the journal back into its familiar rhythms as the crises in our public and personal lives gradually subside. Just as we were finalizing this issue for delivery to Parlor Press, however, events in the CWPA made it necessary to scrap that introduction and, frustratingly, to delay our work. Our earlier introduction embodied a sense of hope and optimism; still, despite the immense stress of the past several weeks for the Council and the difficult rhetorical situation this new introduction occupies, we remain on the side of hope and optimism.

In mid-April, the CWPA Executive Board met with a task force comprised primarily of BIPOC scholars who are experts in linguistic justice research and co-chaired by two experienced WPAs. This exceptional group—Beth Brunk-Chavez (co-chair), Asao Inoue (co-chair), Melvin Beavers, Neisha-Anne Green, Iris Ruiz, Tanita Saenkhum, and Vershawn Ashanti Young—was charged with reviewing the *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (3.0)* in light of advances in writing studies scholarship, with a priority on supporting antiracist pedagogy. The task

force took up this work without compensation during an extremely stressful time, and they worked for seven months to substantially revise the statement. During the April meeting, the board adhered to many Whitenorms in its response to the task force's work, and subsequently, the task force resigned from CWPA. A little less than two weeks later, Asao Inoue published a blog post providing an account of the task force's experience during the meeting, citing instances of racism-evasive rhetoric and drawing attention to the racism perpetuated by the organization as a whole. He ended his post by calling for a boycott of CWPA until the organization takes action to reckon with its structural racism. In his post, Inoue described receiving words of support from many people, but he emphasized the need for action: "I don't mind the words of support, but I'd rather see actions in support."

As the editors of *WPA*, we want to offer both words and action in support of making CWPA an inclusive, antiracist organization. In a statement the CWPA Executive Board released in response to the boycott, the organization pledged to take concrete, specific steps to dismantle structural racism within the organization. This process will take time and a lot of work, and we have no doubt that the membership will need to be involved in this work. The statement was collaboratively authored by Gabbi Kelenyi, Jim Nugent, Michael Pemberton, Patti Poblete, Julia Voss, and Shirley K Rose and it was submitted to members of the executive board for their individual endorsement.

When we applied to be journal editors, we did so fully aware of how important the journal is to the organization and to the field. We undertake this labor with humility, knowing that we are assuming obligations to care for the journal and the work of the scholars who entrust their work to our editorial term. However, we also have to acknowledge that our reading of manuscripts and our judgments of those manuscripts function within scholarly, linguistic, socioeconomic, and political systems that are steeped in racism—whether visible or not. Like the rest of CWPA, we recognize that we need to interrogate our own practices.

We will begin this work immediately, taking several steps during our summer moratorium on new submissions. Our first step in interrogating the journal's editorial practices is to undertake an audit of our editorial decisions. We have asked members of our editorial board to independently evaluate manuscripts that have received rejections following submission or following review during our time as editors. Additionally, the editors will consult with members of the journal's editorial board to revise our guidelines for reviewers and our style guide to make our editorial practices explicitly antiracist. But these are only our initial steps; much more work

lies ahead for the journal. We will also collaborate with CWPA generally as the organization decides what actions it needs to take to fulfill the stated goals of the response to the boycott of CWPA.

The epigraph above is one we have used before, and with good reason—it is from Mark Blaauw-Hara’s call for proposals for the 2019 CWPA conference, themed “More Seats at the Table.” We hope that the membership takes to heart the mission to make our organization more inclusive. Mark Blaauw-Hara’s presidency—marked by more turbulence and unrest than perhaps any other in CWPA’s history—comes to an end this summer, and we want to thank him for his leadership. He has been exemplary in his drive to make CWPA more inclusive. We look forward to the steps Susan Thomas will take as president to make CWPA a more equitable and just organization, and we hope all of our members will join us in the project of making more room at CWPA’s table.

#### IN THIS ISSUE

In “A Heuristic to Promote Inclusive and Equitable Teaching in Writing Programs,” Julia Voss, Tricia Serviss, and Meghan Sweeney note that “it is crucial that we develop methods and heuristics for WPAs to use to become more educated about the inclusiveness of their programs.” Their article offers a heuristic that grew from their multi-institutional examination of program practices through instructor interviews that led to the design of a heuristic to help WPAs and writing teachers to heed the field’s pressing calls for equity, inclusivity, and accessibility in our courses and programs.

In “Writing Program Administration and the Title IX Controversy: Disability Theory, Agency, and Mandatory Reporting,” Tara Wood calls on WPAs to fully engage with the policies regarding responses to sexual assault on college campuses and to be prepared to resist such policies when necessary to protect victims of sexual assault and to advocate for agentive control for victims. As Wood notes, “WPAs have a significant responsibility to be thinking about the ways in which our programs perpetuate or resist practices and policies that have tremendous consequence for the students in our classes.”

Laurie A. Pinkert and Kristen R. Moore argue in “Programmatic Mapping as a Problem-Solving Tool for WPAs” that WPAs can benefit from using different methods to map the complexities of writing programs, noting that programs “are often discussed, documented, and conceptualized in ways that mask the many moving parts that comprise writing program infrastructure.” Pinkert and Moore use two cases of programmatic mapping to demonstrate how moving away from linguistic to visual methods

of representing the complexity of writing programs can help WPAs to find ways to see problems from new perspectives.

Debbie Minter and Shari J. Stenberg's "Arriving with Credit: A Study of 200-Level Writers and the Question of Equivalency" shares the results of an interview-based study to find out what kinds of writing experiences students who come to college having met their first-year writing requirement via AP or dual credit bring with them. The article calls for continuing research on the kinds of writing experiences students bring with them when they do not take first-year writing on our campuses and advocates for writing programs to seek new ways for students to have robust writing experiences throughout their college careers.

This issue's book reviews examine work in the field that calls on WPAs and faculty to re-evaluate their pedagogical practices in light of calls for linguistic justice approaches to teaching writing. They also look at the idea of threshold concepts in our field and how these are enacted in different contexts. Staci Perryman-Clark's review of April Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice* asks "Does the university tilt to the side of linguistic justice? When, where, and how?" She explains how Baker-Bell draws explicit connections between violence and linguistic racism and claims this book offers "no excuses" for WPAs and writing faculty to not take up Black linguistic justice work. Norma Palomino's review of Asao Inoue's *Labor-Based Grading Contracts* focuses on Inoue's arguments that current pedagogies and practices perpetuate white language supremacy and that labor-based grading contracts are "a socially just way for students to earn grades in his classroom." These reviews examine different means by which WPAs can take up linguistic justice approaches to teaching writing in our programs. Finally, Emily Jo Schwaller's review of Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's (*Re*) *Considering What We Know* explains some of the critiques of the writing studies threshold concepts outlined in *Naming What We Know* and examines how different programs have taken up threshold concepts in various ways. As Schwaller points out, this book calls on WPAs to listen "to others and [expand] the conversation beyond our own discipline and what is already named."

#### MANY THANKS TO OUR REVIEWERS

Every spring we take a moment to thank the amazing scholars who volunteer their time to review manuscripts for the journal. This year we are especially grateful to our reviewers for taking time out of their busy schedules to provide expert feedback to our authors while also administering writing programs during a pandemic, pivoting their faculty and their own students

to online classes, providing daycare and homeschooling for their children, and generally doing their best to stay healthy and safe.

These colleagues' generous service is especially deserving of recognition this year, so please join us in thanking Chris M. Anson, Anthony Atkins, Laura Aull, Nicholas Behm, Mark Blaauw-Hara, Nicole I. Caswell, Kristi Murray Costello, Sherri Craig, Bethany Davila, Dominic F. DelliCarpini, Ann Del Principe, Elise Dixon, Dana Lynn Driscoll, William E. Duffy, Michelle Eble, Casie Fedukovich, Lauren Fitzgerald, Carolyn (Collie) Fulford, TJ Geiger II, Matt Gomes, Kay Halasek, Les Hutchinson, Asao B. Inoue, Joyce Kinkead, Jeffrey Klausman, Karen Kopelson, Patti Poblete, Pegeen Reichert Powell, Iris Ruiz, Christina Saidy, James Chase Sanchez, Sarah E. Snyder, Lisa Tremain, Christine Tulley, Sara Webb-Sunderhaus, Jennifer Wells, Carl Whithaus, Shane Wood, and Tara Wood.

#### MANY THANKS TO OUR JOURNAL MENTORS

Over the past three years, the editorial team has occasionally asked authors to revise and resubmit their work prior to external review. While we continue to offer this as an option to promising works that require additional attention before undergoing review, this year we wanted to provide opportunities for some of these authors to receive additional support from members of our editorial board. We are grateful to two of our editorial board members, Beth Brunk-Chavez and Casie Fedukovich, for agreeing to serve as mentors for two new article submissions.

#### INCOMING EDITORIAL TEAM

We are pleased to announce that the new editors of *WPA: Writing Program Administration* will be Tracy Ann Morse, Patti Poblete, and Wendy Sharer. We could not have asked for a better team of dedicated WPAs and active members of CWPA to take charge of the journal, and we are excited to work with Tracy, Patti, and Wendy to prepare them for a smooth transition into their new roles.

#### COMING IN SUMMER 2021

We are also pleased to announce a forthcoming special issue, *Black Lives Matter and Antiracist Projects in Writing Program Administration*. The issue, guest edited by Sheila Carter-Tod and Jennifer Sano-Franchini, is in process. Last summer we asked Sheila and Jen to edit a symposium for the spring 2021 issue, but they received such an overwhelming response to their call for submissions that we felt their work warranted a full issue. We are grateful to Sheila and Jen for their work and to the CWPA lead-

ership for their enthusiastic approval of a third issue for this volume. We are also grateful to the members of our editorial board, who reviewed and responded to submissions, and to our assistant editors Eric D. Brown, Emily Jo Schwaller, and Katelyn Stark, who have proven indispensable in administering the peer review and feedback processes for the special issue. This issue is important and timely, and we can't wait for you all to read it.

#### WORKS CITED

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