

Letter from the Editors

We welcome you to the journal's Spring 2017 issue. In our final issue, we present to you a variety of work: articles, the annual Travelogue, a WPA in Action piece, and a major policy review of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Some of the articles included in this issue respond to newer disciplinary questions—what does it mean to be socially just in a university/program/classroom—and some return to older questions to provide more support for our disciplinary claims: What is the definitive class size? Do writing intensive classes work? What happens when a new WPA is appointed?

We open the issue with In Memoriam to three of our colleagues: Lloyd Bitzer, Carol Berkenkotter, and Theresa Jarnigan Enos. All three had tremendous impact on our discipline, and their presence (and wisdom) will be missed. We thank Kathi Yancey, Thomas Wright, and Tracy Ann Morse for contributing their memories of working with (indirectly or directly) these stalwarts of the field.

Bookending the articles section of the issue are two pieces that examine teachers' perceptions: one looks at perceptions of support for students at their school and one looks at teachers' perceptions of papers they are evaluating. None of us will be surprised to learn that there remains much work—both within ourselves and within our organizations—that needs to be done before our programs, our universities, and our society are socially just, as Poe and Inoue describe in their introduction to the *College English* special issue on writing assessment as social justice.

"Race, Silence, and Writing Program Administration: A Qualitative Study of US College Writing Programs" by Genevieve García de Müeller and Iris Ruiz presents a study that helps us understand how writing instructors and administrators perceive the function of race in writing programs and how WPAs are positioned to help combat racism within the institution and curriculum.

In "Grief and the New WPA," Laura Davies explores the experience of replacing the long-time WPA through the lens of grief theory. Exploring the ways that the loss of a previous WPA can affect both the new WPA and

the department, Davies concludes with advice and practical strategies for creating new relationships.

Amy A. Lannin, Jonathan Cisco, Jes Philbrook, and Maxwell Philbrook's "How Do You Know That Works?: A Mixed Methods Approach to Writing Program Assessment" examines student perceptions and writing growth in writing-intensive courses. This mixed-methods study demonstrated both quantitatively and qualitatively positive writing growth and positive student attitudes towards writing intensive courses. The study also revealed how teachers changed their pedagogy as a result of teaching these courses.

Joyce Malek and Laura Micciche describe their efforts to work with a state-mandated policy that requires them to evaluate student work for pre-college credit. Working to both assuage the policy and maintain consistency with the goals of their own writing program, Malek and Micciche describe adapting to external pressure in a tale too many WPAs will recognize.

Bradley Queen's essay "Class Size for a Multilingual Mainstream: Empirical Explorations" adds to the decades-long discussion of what the optimal class size might be for writing classrooms. Building on the NCTE/CCCC statement that class sizes should be limited to fewer than 20 (15 for remedial classes), Queen investigates the use of portfolio pedagogy with multilingual students. Queen's empirical study shows, once again, how complex the connection between class size and writing instruction can be.

Last fall, when we received E. Shelley Reid's "On Learning to Teach: Letter to a New TA," we knew it would be useful to TAs and the WPAs who train them. While its epistolary form does not fit the format traditionally published in this journal, its value as a working document and its sweeping knowledge of disciplinary research struck us immediately. We asked Dr. Reid to engage in conversation with two other scholars, Dr. Katie Ryan and Dr. Jason Palmeri, about the piece and revision possibilities. The results were not only a strengthened piece, but also a response by Elizabeth Saur and Jason Palmeri to the invitation implicit in the epistolary format chosen by Dr. Reid. "Letter to a New TA: Affect Addendum" reminds us that teaching—and learning—is not just a cognitive task but also an emotional endeavor.

Bethany Davila's "Standard English and Colorblindness in Composition Studies" examines student writing and the ways that readers impose racialized identities onto the texts. Particularly, Davila examines the ways that Standard English codes writing as white (and errors may code writing as other). Davila also offers possibilities for disrupting those readings to promote more colorblind assessments of student texts.

This issue also contains a WPAs in Action piece by Peggy O'Neill. In "U-Turns, Pivots, and Gradual Arrivals: Navigating Midlife and Mid-Career in Academe's Changing Landscape," O'Neill explores the midlife academic crisis that many in the field face. Offering reassurance that many are also in this situation as well as concrete suggestions for how to move beyond it, O'Neill's piece looks at both the literature in the field as well as some academic and non-academic research on midlife. Finally, O'Neill explores the ideas of pivoting and hypermiling in order to regain a sense of composure and reduce job ennui.

As has been the tradition, Shirley K Rose interviewed Kirsten Benson, the local host for the upcoming 2017 WPA conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, for the Travelogue. The 2017 conference theme is "Solving Problems Together: Agency and Advocacy in the Age of Austerity." In the Travelogue, Benson shares some of the local circumstances around her writing program, as well as places of interest for conference participants. We hope you enjoy the Travelogue.

Whereas a book review section generally closes the journal, this time Norbert Elliot and Jacob Babb offer a substantial policy review of the Common Core State Standards Initiative as they affect writing program administrators. Diane Kelly-Riley moves through the history of the policy, some of its major points, and the ways in which they will affect our profession should it continue to be the standard that remains in place.

Our work on the journal—3 years for Barb and 2 years for Lisa—has reminded us that hard work is always easier when you work with someone whose strengths shore up your weaknesses, that most writing can be tightened, that a good fact-checker is worth their weight in gold, and that our discipline remains, first and foremost, a teaching discipline.

Our reviewers have given generously of their time and expertise, offering encouragement, support, and suggestion in their reviews to those submitting manuscripts, and we offer them our deepest thanks. Many made themselves known, and some offered to work with authors. We are certain that no one will be surprised to know that Norbert Elliot has mentored many of the authors published in these pages.

Like the reviewers, members of the Editorial Board have generously given time, expertise, support, and encouragement to us. They have answered random, out-of-the-blue questions, have stewarded the Special Issue from start to finish, and have served as emergency reviewers. They were our ace-in-the-hole; we are grateful to them and have learned much from them, and we hope the new editors will be as lucky with their Editorial Board as we were with ours.

Others we owe thanks to include Sarah Ricard, fact-checker and MLA 8 citation guru; Joel Wingard, who has provided volunteer copyediting for each issue at the proof stage; Kelsie Walker, ad manager; and Linda Adler-Kassner, Rita Malenczyk, and Susan Miller-Cochran, for their CWPA leadership and support. David Blakesley has been unfailingly patient with our questions and our missed deadlines. We thank Sherry Rankins-Robertson for her year as editor. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock has been exceedingly generous with its support.

Having worked in various capacities with them over the years, we know that the new editorial team of Lori Østergaard, Jim Nugent, and Jacob Babb, with Courtney Adams Wooten as book review editor, will do a marvelous job, and we look forward to reading the journal as it develops under their purview. We wish you strong submissions, speedy and kind reviewers, a good editorial board, easy copy-editing, and clean proofs. These last three years have been humbling, educational, and inspiring for us; may you have the same experience.

As always, don't hesitate to contact us—or rather, the new editors—with ideas or concerns. The journal's email is (and will remain) journal@wpa-council.org or wpaeditors@gmail.com.

—Barb and Lisa