

WPAs in Quarantine

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In our last issue, we urged you all to take care, noting how our own health—physical and mental—inevitably has an impact on the work we do. It is April as we prepare this issue for press and most of us are working hard to complete terms that have been disrupted by COVID-19 and the subsequent shelter-in-place orders enacted around the world. Traditional end-of-semester worries like grading and scheduling have been dwarfed by an urgent concern for the well-being of our families, friends, colleagues, and students. And as program administrators, many of us are frustrated or even frightened by the crucial, unanswered questions before us: When will this end? When will we be able to return to our classrooms? How will this impact enrollments and the sustainability of our institutions? How will this affect our part-time colleagues and graduate students?

Most of us never anticipated leading our programs and our departments through a pandemic. We may not have prepared directly for these unsettling times, but what we have witnessed of this community's response over the past two months suggests that our field's belief in the vital work of mentorship in recognizing administration as intellectual work, and in treating students and colleagues with compassion is well placed. From the relative safety of quarantine, we may regularly lose track of what day of the week it is, but we never lose sight of what is important to us as professionals: our colleagues, our students, and our discipline.

Regretfully, the CWPA Conference that so many of us were looking forward to in July has been cancelled. The conference theme of "The CWPA Road Trip: Departures, Detours, and Destinations in Writing Program Work" last year strikes us as tantalizing and outlandish in these days where we rarely venture past our mailboxes. In his conference call Mark Blaau-Hara encouraged us to imagine what happens "when we step out of our comfort zones and explore new spaces." Certainly, this pandemic has forced us all out of our comfort zones, and we may find new spaces

to explore, in our online courses, in our homes (as the divisions between home and office dissolve), and in the hobbies that serve to relieve some of our anxiety. And as we continue to administer our programs under quarantine, we can be assured of a few things: our teachers are committed to giving students the best possible instruction under any circumstances and our courses will be a source of community and normalcy for faculty and students alike during this deeply troubling time. We remain unsure of the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have already been reminded of a few essential lessons: be kind to yourself, be kind to others, and wash your hands.

This pandemic will have a profound impact on higher education. We are already seeing its effect as some institutions have announced plans to return to face-to-face instruction in the fall, some are weighing multiple scenarios for online or hybrid instruction, and others are facing elimination altogether due to financial distress. The outlook from here may be grim and uncertain, but we invite you to join us in finding new paths forward. Our institutions have always depended on the vision and creativity of committed administrators in adapting to uncertain circumstances.

Finally, dear friends, it may be some time before our physical paths cross again, but we see a call for hope in Mark's conference theme as he asks us to consider "what happens when life sends us on a detour." We do not know where this detour will take us, but we wish you and your loved ones good health on this journey—even if it's a relatively stationary one.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features a symposium, five articles, and three book reviews. The symposium, which focuses on queer writing program administration, features the voices of Will Banks, Michael Faris, Collie Fulford, Timothy Oleksiak, GPat Patterson, and Trixie G. Smith. They compellingly demonstrate the tensions and reimaginings made possible through a queer approach to WPA work and they observe that "there are new worlds to build together through our programs"—an invitation that strikes as particularly timely in the midst of the present pandemic.

The five articles featured in this issue highlight many of the challenges WPAs face and offer possible strategies and theories for improving our work and increasing our capacity to have an impact on our programs and our students. In "Analyzing Student Evaluations of Teaching: A Generic Prescription," Alexis Teagarden and Michael Carlozzi advocate for WPAs to study student evaluations more thoroughly and to reassert themselves as critical voices in how these evaluations are used, treating SETs as rhetorical

opportunities. In “Troublesome Knowledge: A Study of GTA Ambivalence with Genre-Informed Pedagogy,” Aimee C. Mapes, Brad Johnson, Rachel LaMance, and Stefan M. Vogel provide a new perspective on genre in composition pedagogy by examining how graduate teaching assistants respond to genre, encouraging those of us who train new teachers to explore the ambivalence new teachers feel toward newly encountered and troublesome knowledge. Next, Christine Busser’s “Challenging the Efficiency Model: Supporting Inclusive Pathways Toward Student Success” urges readers to reconsider higher education’s drive toward efficiency in degree completion, which has the potential to close pathways for many students. In “WPAs as University Learning Space Managers: Theorizing and Guiding the Creation of Effective Writing Classrooms,” Julia Voss frames management of classroom spaces as “an as yet unrealized opportunity” for WPAs to have a pedagogical impact on the places where our students learn. And in this issue’s last article, Leigh Graziano, Kay Halasek, Susan Miller-Cochran, Frank Napolitano, and Natalie Szymanski report on data they collected on making WPA labor more visible, work that exposes the kinds of labor WPAs face at multiple kinds of institutions. Their research leads them to call to revisit the *Portland Resolution* in “A Return to Portland: Making Work Visible Through the Ecologies of Writing Program Administration.”

The book reviews for this issue push at the edges of WPA work, asking us to bring in new perspectives to our thinking about writing programs. Jackie Grutsch McKinney’s review essay of four books about writing centers situates writing center studies within larger conversations about writing and writing programs, asking readers what it means to reconceive the boundaries of the work happening in writing centers and, by extension, the work happening with writing at our institutions. Kimberly A. Turner’s review of *Composing Feminist Interventions* identifies ways that WPAs can take up the feminist interventions discussed in this collection, despite its not being aimed specifically at WPAs. And Amelia Chesley’s review of *Lean Technical Communication* explains what the authors mean by “lean programmatic work” and how the principles of this work can be enacted in different types of writing programs.

SUBMISSION POLICY CHANGE

We have made a change to our submission window: in order to respect the time and labor of our reviewers, we will not be accepting new manuscript submissions from May 15 to August 15. This journal is made possible—or more accurately, it is *made*—by the Herculean efforts of a small volunteer workforce, and the scholars we ask to review for us are generous with their

time and expertise. Please do not hesitate to contact the editorial team at any time with your queries, however.

SPECIAL ISSUE: VISIBILITY, WAYS OF KNOWING, AND
SUSTAINABILITY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAMS

We are excited about *WPA*'s forthcoming special summer issue on two-year college writing program administration guest edited by Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, Sarah K. Johnson, and Darin Jensen. We are thrilled to have this opportunity to make the work of two-year college writing program administration more visible, and we are grateful to the hard work of the editors and contributors. We can't wait for you to read it.

THANKING OUR REVIEWERS

We are deeply indebted to the following individuals for their critical insights and constructive feedback this past year: Courtney Adams Wooten, Chris M. Anson, Anthony Atkins, Laura Aull, Nicholas Behm, Tara Brown, Beth Brunk-Chavez, Michelle T. Cox, Irene Clark, Angela Clark-Oates, Kristi Murray Costello, Sherri Craig, Deborah Crusan, Laura J. Davies, Bethany Davila, Katelynn DeLuca, Christine Denecker, Bradley Dilger, Cristyn Elder, Casie Fedukovich, Lauren Fitzgerald, Collie Fulford, Bre Garrett, Heather Hill, Asao Inoue, Kristine Johnson, Laurence José, Michelle LaFrance, Cheri Lemieux Spiegel, Michael McCamley, Jessie Moore, Joddy Murray, Kate Navickas, Andrea Olinger, Margaret Price, Pegeen Reichert Powell, E. Shelley Reid, Gwendolynne Reid, Kevin Roozen, Shirley K Rose, Todd Ruecker, Iris Ruiz, Christina Saidy, James Chase Sanchez, Wendy Sharer, Sarah Snyder, Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, Kara Taczak, Darci L. Thoune, Christie Toth, Lisa Tremain, Christine Tulley, Amy Vidali, Chris Warnick, Sara Webb-Sunderhaus, Jennifer Wells, Carolyn Wisniewski, Anne-Marie Womack, and Kathleen Blake Yancey.

