

From the Editors

The new *Farmer's Almanac* has come up with predictions for the upcoming winter season. Keeping in mind that last year the *Almanac* forecasted much cold and snow, and the country as a whole had the warmest winter ever, this year's forecast is once again for colder and snowier than normal. Climate change naysayers will point to this forecast as evidence that global warming is some kind of fiction. But neither the *Almanac* nor the warming deniers look much at the larger picture for evidence of what is happening on a long-term basis. In a similar way, WPAs are likely to get caught up in local problems without being able to draw on broader statewide, national or international trends that can provide insights and strategies for improving programs and helping students become better writers and thinkers. This issue of the journal, like all our issues, tries to provide this kind of perspective.

In my own experience, I can think of any number of examples of how a broader view can help to make a local case for change. For instance, at my institution, when we started working on re-creating our free-standing writing center, I checked the websites of every one of Michigan's twelve regional universities, considered similar to mine, and checked the websites of our "peer group" nationally, as established by our Office of Institutional Research. The results allowed me to send a two line email to the president and the provost, indicating that we were the only school in each of these groups lacking a free-standing writing center. As if by magic, funding and support quickly became available for our now wildly-successful center. I mention this example not to toot my own horn, but to illustrate the usefulness of a broad perspective. The insights now coming from scholars Rebecca Moore Howard and Sandra Jamieson in their *Citation Project* offer a similar kind of broad data set that might be useful for making a local case for new programs or approaches.

There are plenty of other examples. The key point for WPAs is that it is easy to get caught up in local problems and local solutions without the broad perspective. Our goal in the journal is to help our readers keep the broad view in mind and to provide access to the research and scholarship

that can inform proposals for change and improvement. As the climate on campuses around the country continues to change, the wider view offered in these pages may be of use.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We say farewell to assistant editor Lori Ostergaard, now officially Director of First-Year Writing at Oakland University. As Director, she's a front line WPA, with more to do than allows for providing editorial assistance to the journal. And, with this issue, farewell also to Janae Greene, our highly organized student assistant, who has looked after Contributors' bios and permission forms for the last few issues. Both will be much missed.

We welcome Donna Scheidt back to the journal's staff as an assistant editor. Donna handled ads and calls for a time but now will be assisting with copyediting and other editorial work for the journal. She is an assistant professor at High Point University in North Carolina.

OVERSIGHTS

We are grateful to Larry Beason for completing a review of one of the articles within our spring issue. From time to time, we ask non-editorial board members with specific expertise to review articles for the journal.

In addition, we neglected to thank and acknowledge the work of then-assistant editors Greg Giberson, Jim Nugent and Lori Ostergaard for assembling and editing the Symposium on mentoring in the Fall 2011 issue of the journal, and the follow-up comments in the Spring 2012 issue. We apologize for these oversights and appreciate the work of one and all.

IN THIS ISSUE

The articles in this issue offer examples designed to meet our goal, and we hope you will find them of more use than the *Farmer's Almanac* weather predictions. We offer four research articles and all of the plenary addresses from this year's WPA Conference in Albuquerque, a symposium on the *WPA Outcomes Statement* as that document undergoes revision and rethinking, as well as our book reviews.

Holly Middleton's article offers a broad perspective on the role of reading in the teaching of writing. Her research shows how explicit integration of reading instruction and specific outcomes can help students succeed.

In their detailed study of the impact of writing pedagogy studies on graduate students teaching composition, Shelley Reid, Heidi Estrem, and Marcia Belcheir show that a wide and long perspective on teaching and

the insights of work at different institutions can be helpful in supporting teacher education and training.

Yet another broad perspective arises in Kate Ryan’s “Thinking Ecologically,” where she argues thoughtfully for the relevance of ecology, feminism and the concept of place in developing effective administrative strategies.

And in the fourth of the research articles in this issue, Steve Simpson sheds light on the need for writing support for graduate students. He details the needs of graduate students across many campuses and across many departments, offering yet another angle on the work WPAs need to do.

In addition to these research articles, we are happy to be able to offer texts derived from the plenary talks delivered at this year’s WPA conference in Albuquerque. Linda Adler-Kassner provided an array of strategies for working on program development in various contexts. Paul Matsuda discussed the need to pay more attention to our increasingly diverse student body in terms of the language backgrounds students bring to their writing classes. And Marilyn Valentino presented a thought-provoking discussion of the challenges of working with the growing population of veterans coming to college after their military service. If you were in Albuquerque, you know how these presentations stimulated many important discussions of the day-to-day work of running writing programs across the country. If you were not able to attend the conference, you have these plenary perspectives to read and consider in light of your own program’s situation.

Our fall / winter Symposium rereads and remixes the WPA Outcomes Statement as the CWPA Task Force undertakes a review of it. We invited six contributors—Anne Beaufort, Barbara Little Liu, Deborah Mutnick, Cynthia R.Haller, Martha Marinara, and Will Banks—to remix Sid Dobrin’s WPA-L query to the CWPA organization: “[S]houldn’t the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition include some acknowledgement of the role of the visual in writing?” (“Visual Rhetoric.” 17 Dec. 2011).

And finally, we have three book review essays, looking at new books in the field. Shane Borrowman examines a book that looks at the WPA Outcomes Statement; Anne Gere explores three books on brain research and makes clear their relevance for WPAs and the teaching and learning of writing; and David Schwalm “takes care” of a book on the myriad ways that students can now get credit for college writing other than through coursework in our programs.

Happy reading.

