

From the Editors

If you did not have a chance to attend this year's WPA conference in Savannah, you will enjoy reading the conference plenaries, two of which appear in this issue. The theme of the program was "Queering the Writing Program" and in case you want to review the call for proposals, it appears as an Appendix to Karen Kopelson's plenary text. The theme invited all of us to think, in a variety of ways, about the nature of difference and how it might inform our work as program administrators. Using queer theory as a base, the program encouraged participants not only to "think outside the box," but also to think beyond boxes of any and all kinds.

In particular, we need to be thinking about all the various directions and constituencies we work with and how we can work with them more effectively. For example, half of all first year writing instruction is now delivered in two-year institutions. CWPA had a "cup of coffee" initiative for a while to encourage conversations among leaders at two-year and four-year schools. We've also encouraged and supported CWPA members who are willing to attend local or regional meetings of colleagues at two-year institutions, where we can discuss the *Framework for Success* document and make friends in order to support one another's work. With state-wide initiatives on transfer and other matters springing up in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and other states, such points of contact will provide opportunities for useful dialogue and support. While there may be a host of differences between two-year and four-year courses and programs, there is plenty of common ground and much need for communication and contact.

The conference also encouraged attendees to think about graduate programs and the job market. The energy and enthusiasm of the WPA-GO organization is driven by its members who were present in large numbers at the conference. The growth of graduate programs attests to the interest of younger people in entering the profession. However, there is a difference between the number of students who may earn graduate degrees and the number of full-time tenure-track positions that may be available for them when they finish. Here is a difference that warrants thinking beyond all current boxes, queer and otherwise.

One very well-attended session dealt with the coming of MOOCs, including MOOCs for writing. MOOCs are an entirely different way of thinking about the delivery of education; they are already making a difference in the landscape of education. Reports at the conference suggest that they will make more and more of a difference to our field and many others. Their impact is being felt in a way that led to a recent front-page article (above the fold in the printed version, space reserved for the most newsworthy items) in the Sunday *New York Times* on new MOOCs at the graduate level (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/education/masters-degree-is-new-frontier-of-study-online.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). We will all need to think carefully about how different the landscape may look in a few years as MOOCs continue to develop. Their impact will make our work different in ways that may be positive or negative, but not the same old same old in either case.

These issues all bear on the labor conditions in which we work in different ways. How many jobs, what kinds of jobs, under what conditions, with what expectations? Higher education as a whole is changing and the differences are in our institutions, in our first-year programs, in our majors and minors in writing/rhetoric/composition, in our WAC/WID courses, in everything we do. The landscape for collective bargaining is changing as well. Writing program administrators, thinking differently and beyond any kind of box, are in an especially good place to explore these changes. Our talents as readers, writers and thinkers put us in the best position to take leadership and ownership of the ways these changes may play out. The conference presentations, conversations, plenaries and culminating riverboat ride gave us much to think about.

On a different matter, we want to thank Cynthia Haller of York College, CUNY and Sandra Jamieson of Drew University for ad hoc reviews of articles in this issue. From time to time, we ask readers who are not members of the editorial board to read submissions in areas in which they have particular expertise.

One final note: In alternating years, CWPA presents an award for the best article in the last two years of the journal. This year, that award went to Lori Salem and Peter Jones of Temple University for their article, "Undaunted, Self-Critical, and Resentful: Investigating Faculty Attitudes Toward Teaching Writing in a Large University Writing-Intensive Course Program." Lori Salem was at the conference to accept the award. The article appeared in *WPA* in the Fall/Winter issue of 2010 (34.1). If you are a member of CWPA, you can log in to the website and access the article through the journal archives under the journal tab, at this link: <http://wpacouncil.org/wpa34n1>. Enjoy!

IN THIS ISSUE

The articles in this issue continue the general theme of difference and queer approaches in a variety of ways.

Brad Benz, Denise Comer, Erik Juergensmeyer, and Margaret Lowry analyze their experiences as WPAs whose writing programs have been, to varying degrees, impacted by community book programs in “WPAs, Writing Programs and the Common Reading Experience.” Their article raises issues of writing program autonomy and visibility, as well as the potential benefits and unintended consequences of integrating campus-wide common reading experiences into writing programs.

Doug Brent helps us better understand why the activity of writing from sources (research-infused writing) deserves a central rather than peripheral place in writing programs.

In “When the Writing Requirements Went Away,” Duncan Carter, Christie Toth, and Hildy Miller provide a follow up on Sherrie Gradin’s 1997 *WPA* article “What Happens to the Writing Program Administrator When the Writing Requirements Go Away?” on the early years of a first-year composition decentralization experiment at Portland State University. The authors extend Gradin’s analytic narrative of PSU’s long-term experiment in decentralization.

Within her historical study, Laura J. Davies urges WPAs to take a long-range perspective when they assess the effectiveness of administrative systems and design administrative structures that can evolve in changing contexts.

In “WPA as Tempered Radical: Lessons from Occupy Wall Street” Casie Fedukovich reframes writing program administration, and specifically over-reliance on contingent labor, through prefiguration, a tactic that seeks to “build a new society in the shell of the old.” The article concludes with recommendations for occupying writing programs through tempered radicalism.

Tina S. Kazan and Catherine Gabor help us understand rhetorical agency as a means to enact power, influence, and authority by drawing upon scholarship in leadership studies and writing program administration from a feminist perspective to argue for an expanded and more fluid conception of the WPA as a leader.

Fernando Sánchez studied eight OWL websites in universities with large international student populations to gauge how well these sites took into account criteria pertinent to ESL students: intercultural needs, writing resource needs, plagiarism resource needs, and readability.

PLENARIES FROM SAVANNAH

In “A Queer Eye for the WPA,” Harry Denny invited us at the Savannah conference to meditate on ways that writing programs and writing centers can support and address differences. His ideas apply not only to campuses like his own that have obvious diversity of race, ethnicity and gender, but also to campuses where diversity may be much less obvious. Similarly, Karen Kopelson’s plenary “Queering the Writing Program: Why Now? How? And Other Contentious Questions” looked at the ways in which “queer” and “normal” can be provocatively useful for WPAs.

WPAs IN DIALOGUE

We have a lively exchange between Andrea Scott commenting on Halpern’s “Preceptor Problem” and Faye Halpern’s response.

REVIEW ESSAYS

Richard Colby reviews two “born-digital” online writing textbooks, *Writing Commons: The Home for Writers* and *Rhetoric and Composition WikiBook*. His analysis in “In the Internet Age, Who Needs Textbooks?” addresses the complex rhetorical challenges of authorship, audience, and purpose that complicate the unified approach to writing instruction that these non-traditional resources seek to provide. In “Multimodality in Local and Disciplinary Praxes,” Randall Monty reviews three recently published books on multimodality and the composition classroom. Through his review, Monty argues that the books suggest that composition studies has shifted its focus from defining multimodality to its pedagogical implications for the teaching of writing. We hope you enjoy this issue.

