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From the Editors

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From the Editors

In their editorial for the inaugural issue of *The Writing Center Journal* in 1980, Lil Brannon & Stephen North articulated the importance of writing centers within the broader field of composition: “As scholars, as teachers and researchers in composition, we recognize in writing center teaching the absolute frontier of our discipline” (1). In writing centers, they said, “the two seminal ideas of our reborn profession operate most freely: the student-centered curriculum, and a central concern for composing as a process” (1). Brannon & North declared that in writing centers “great new discoveries will be, are being, made” and affirmed that “*The Writing Center Journal* fills the need for a forum that can report on and stimulate such work” (1). Finally, they conclude that “if *The Writing Center Journal* does nothing else, let it offer the not insignificant comfort of company: None of us is in this alone” (3).

We are struck by the first editors’ vision for writing center research, and their emphasis on community especially resonates for us. As the eighth editorial team of *The Writing Center Journal*, we also share an editorial vision committed to both research and community. We greatly appreciate the hospitable collegiality of the writing center community, where newcomers to our field are welcomed and valued, regardless of experience or background. But we critique our community on one key point: we haven’t yet established sustainable ways to scaffold novice

researchers' entry into advanced writing center research. While it's true that "none of us is in this alone," many remain outsiders to the writing center research community. One of our main goals is to increase the number of people comfortable with and engaged in the range of research methods necessary to make knowledge for our community.

We understand the importance of rigorous, substantial research and scholarship to help move our practice-based field toward research-based practice. We are glad to see evidence that the long history of calls for more and better writing center research has been heard. As editors, we will publish manuscripts that meet the highest standards and serve as exemplary models for other researchers and scholars in our community. We also pledge to guide and mentor less experienced authors. Our desire is to maintain the scholarly integrity of the journal while promoting a stronger, inclusive community for all who are interested in reading scholarship or conducting research. In short, we would like *WCJ* to become the hub of a thriving, diverse, and interactive assembly that includes researchers and scholars ranging from interested beginner to established expert.

Our sense is that to build such a community, we need to stretch the boundaries of the journal—to create participatory experiences that move beyond static text on static pages. To that end, we have initiated *WCJ* Live, an online professional development event that offers our readership opportunities to interact with recently published authors in real time forums. We are also happy to travel to regional conferences and other gatherings, such as the IWCA Collaborative, to offer workshops and feedback sessions on research-in-progress.

The intersection of research and community was revealed at our inaugural *WCJ* Research and Writing Retreat in August 2013. There, ten participants, ranging from graduate students to experienced researchers with doctoral degrees, spent three days workshopping projects, reading and discussing manuscripts and published articles, and debating future trends in writing center research. Our time spent sharing and building knowledge together was meaningful and productive, and we look forward to hosting similar retreats in the future—as well as virtual events accessible to all, without travel or expense.

The most recent editors, Lauren Fitzgerald & Melissa Ianetta, welcomed us at a kind of threshold. While our names are listed as this issue's editors, they selected and handed off most of this issue's content for us to compile. To their selections, we added Daniel Sanford's review of a recently published and important book, Jackie Grutsch McKinney's *Peripheral Visions for Writing Centers*. We also invited Lauren to share the manuscript of her 2012 IWCA keynote address, "Undergraduate

Writing Tutors as Researchers: Redrawing Boundaries.” Issue 33.2 is a collaborative effort, and we thank Lauren and Melissa for their guidance and the authors for their patience during the transition. We are especially grateful to Carolyn Clark, the journal’s production coordinator at the University of Delaware, who generously provided us with exceptional support during the transition.

With any transition comes change. In this issue, you will notice a variety of new components. The new look and logo reflect our desire to brand *WCJ* more strongly. The condensed front and back matter enables us to open up more space for articles and reviews and dedicate less space to information easily accessed at IWCA’s website, writingcenters.org, and at our new website, writingcenterjournal.org. Additionally, we have introduced abstracts to help professionalize the presentation of each article and create a more reader-friendly experience.

You may also notice some stylistic changes, which we hope readers will recognize as intentional and reflective of our commitment to collaboration, inclusivity, and diversity. For example, to honor each contributor to a collaborative work, we avoid the abbreviation *et al.* and we name each author or editor. In addition, rather than joining names with “and,” we incorporate the ampersand, a punctuation mark that signifies relationship and collaboration. The “&” also lends clarity when multiple groups of collaborators are mentioned alongside one another, a fact noted by Evan Chambers, our associate editor, who proposed this change. We also adopt the singular “they” as a gender neutral term. Accordingly, we do not find a pronoun-antecedent agreement error in a sentence such as “Each tutor identified their own strategies”; rather, we recognize that the phrase “his or her strategies” reflects a problematic, exclusive binary. While we are dedicated to a professional look and style for the journal, we recognize the benefits (and the inevitability) of hybridizing traditional documentation styles and the necessity of embracing gender neutral language.

A final change we’d like to highlight is our inclusion in the front matter of the past editors’ names and years of service. We do this to honor the former editors and acknowledge the time and talent they have dedicated to promoting our scholarly community. We are grateful to all of the previous editors for sustaining the quality and the scope of the journal, continually growing the subscriber numbers, and discerning the direction of writing center scholarship. Due to the dedication of past editors, *The Writing Center Journal* remains the primary peer-reviewed journal representing writing center research.

As the new editorial team, we three represent a variety of career experiences and of writing, publishing, and editing experiences. We partner our diverse institutions: the University of Oklahoma, a public Research I university with 25,000 students, and Mississippi College, a private, religious-affiliated university with 5,000 students. We share, however, a long-standing connection to writing centers and writing center organizations. We share a desire to develop more researchers and writers for our field. And we share an understanding of the power of mentoring—and of the important community-building role *WCJ* can play. You will see more about our vision and plans in future issues. In the meantime, we tip our collective hat to all the editors who came before us and invite you to join us in growing our writing center research community.

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