

From The Editors: Special Issue 2021

Diversity Is Not Justice: Working Toward Radical Transformation and Racial Equity in the Discipline

“to lift each other up, push each other forward, and stand together”

—Browdy, Milu, del Hierro, Gonzales

We begin with a word of thanks to Drs. Ore, Cedillo, and Wieser for the invitation to compose this short introduction. We hope this prelude does justice to their work in bringing new, vibrant voices to the journal by celebrating what the various pieces might bring to the field at large. Their hard work as editors of this special issue can be seen within the pages that follow; from compelling narratives to thought-provoking course designs and to insightful reviews, the pieces in this special issue foreground difficult questions with which the discipline continues to wrestle. In toto, the issue stages a multifaceted, multivocal exploration of how to support Black faculty, Indigenous faculty, and faculty of color (often referred to in the issue as BIPOC faculty); launches useful critiques of current practice; and provides frameworks for improving justice-oriented support for BIPOC faculty. Together, the work of the special issue editors—and of the authors they have brought together in these pages—prompts us all to further, better action.

This special issue also marks a milestone in the journal’s efforts to continue the work supporting scholars of color. Following the 2017 Outstanding Composition and Rhetoric Journal Award in Recognition of Inclusive Editorial Practices, the journal continues to be proactive in recruiting, supporting, and mentoring authors, reviewers, and advisory board members of color. In addition, and with thanks to the contributors to the Antiracist Scholarly Reviewing Practices heuristic,¹ we will soon roll out a new Heuristic Guide for Anti-Racist Editorial Practices at *Composition Studies*. This set of documents will outline our specific commitments to antiracist editing, reviewing, and publication, provide grounding rationale for those policies, and make available additional resources to help first-time authors reach the journal’s pages. The work for this special issue has been invaluable in helping us initiate this process, and we look forward to better serving our readers—and the field—through this effort.

This Issue

For the cover to this issue, we thank Marley Roppolo. It is a painting depicting a man who, all editors agreed, looks restful. In a time of widespread dif-

faculty—nay catastrophe—we appreciate the prompt this artwork provides for reflection on restfulness, repose, and care for oneself.

At a Glance: Connections & Collaborations

Emily Legg's *At A Glance* for this issue depicts a Cherokee medicine wheel thematized as a model of knowledge making, one which helps Legg think through the tensions of academic practice, find balance among her identities, and locate a methodology for research. But there is more to the story: Legg has prepared a substantial (and graphically beautiful) presentation on Indigenous research methodologies, which you can access by clicking on the medicine wheel. The presentation outlines the four parts of this rhetorical model and—as usefully—offers methods for making relations, maintaining relations, keeping wisdom, and seeking knowledge through story.

The Articles

In “From Cohort to Family,” Ronisha Browdy, Esther Milu, Victor del Hierro, Laura Gonzales lay out “what gets us to thrive (not just survive) in academia.” The answer? Unwavering support. Understanding. Solidarity. Family. Through a series of personally revelatory stories that neither elide personal difference nor lean on oversimplified formulas, these authors map out the assemblage of “strategies that [they] used to lift each other up, push each other forward, and stand together amidst institutional infrastructures.” Getting crunk, heart-to-hearts, mock interviews, and other practices of visible care have helped these authors survive graduate school, the job market, and the tenure track by collectively fighting off spirit murder, affirming collective and individual identities, and, as we see wonderfully demonstrated here, taking opportunities for collaborative scholarship.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work continues to happen across institutions nationwide; in response, José Cortez, Sonia Arellano, and Romeo García urge us not to forget the “shadow work” that happens as the result of the failures of DEI efforts. Through collaborative storytelling, the authors show how and why shadow work happens and what shadow works means. And they invite readers in as witnesses to do the work that must be done in the “shadows.”

Christine Garcia, Les Hutchinson Campos, Genevieve Garcia de Müller, and Christina V. Cedillo's article argues that BIPOC faculty experience disbelonging in whitestream academic programs, institutions, and organizations, as well as in the discipline. Sharing a collective testimonio, the authors suggest that exclusion happens through what they call “white penitence” or “a public demonstration of one's antiracist beliefs that rely on BIPOC suffering and that therefore demands a constant supply of pain in order to maintain the facade of allyship.” Throughout the article, they use dialogue as a way to remind other

BIPOC they are not alone and to remind mentors, allies, and colleagues of ways to be partners in antiracist work.

Isabel Baca's testimonio outlines her lived experience as a Latina scholar going up for promotion to full professor...and being denied. A kind of Canterbury tale for academic promotion—including a cast of gatekeepers, white allies, privileged white accomplices, and *mi gente*—Baca's story details how even the most well-meaning colleagues can create hurdles for scholars of color. We suspect that the cluster of subject positions in the story will provide readers a kind of heuristic value for thinking about how institutions support their rising faculty of color...or not.

Turn up the volume for Kathleen Tarr's "The Tone Police's Greatest Hits," because it's a text with something to say. Part fictionalized anecdote, part album review commentary, and all skewering satire, this article tracks—literally—"misgynoiracist experiences within RhetComp" in a way that is funny, serious, and eviscerating. (Think Jonathan Swift meets NWA.) It's a text that indicts and challenges the discipline and, in important but fleeting moments, gives voice to some small hopes for a better future.

The Course Designs

Cruz Medina outlines the design of an advanced writing course that weaves together comparative cultural studies, critical race theory, and composition by examining "purposes of storytelling across different rhetorical traditions." This course focalizes that inquiry by branching out from traditional expressive writing texts in composition to pay closer and more careful attention to writers of color from diverse cultural backgrounds. The result is manifold: a course with a strong epistemic foundation in CRT; a course that "normalizes writing by BIPOC writers and scholars as part of the standard curriculum"; a course that helps Medina counter local, ahem, hesitancy about including scholars of color on course syllabi; and a course that speaks back to normative assumptions about advanced writing in our discipline (even as Medina negotiates the tensions of those expectations).

Khirsten Scott's seminar, "Whose World Is This?: Explorations in Hip Hop, Writing, and Culture," centers on hip hop as a subject and method. As Scott explains, the title comes from Nas' 1994 album, "The World is Yours," and the course uses hip hop as a medium to explore the questions, "who survives the university? Who survives the US?" Taught in 5 units and using 16 major assignments, the seminar revolves around "cyclic engagement with self, community, and world." Scott states that hip hop cyphers allow the opportunity to use hip hop as both content and method in the course because the "cypher encourages intentional reflexivity with/in community."

The Book Reviews

Rounding things out, we have two individual reviews taking up timely issues in the field. The first is by Kristiana L. Báez who reviews *Beyond Civility: The Competing Obligations of Citizenship*, by Robert Danisch and William Keith. The book addresses our need for civility in public discourse even among continued tensions and deep divides by asking the question, “how do we move forward when we have significant disagreements about what we value?” The second review, written by Loretta Ramirez, focuses on the edited collection by *Surviving Becky(s): Pedagogies for Deconstructing Whiteness and Gender* by Cheryl E. Matias. This collection, which includes contributions from twenty-six authors, applies counterstory methods to the problematic white women in academia—otherwise known as “Beckys.” The various chapters expose Becky as “colonizer, as weaponized emotion, as entitlement, as terror, as presumed expert, as ally, as violence, and as manipulator and gaslighter in education.” In similar ways, the reviews ask the readers to challenge the type of future of which they hope to be a part.

We conclude in the same way we began—with a note of thanks: to our Advisory Board for helping us review submissions, to our copyeditors for helping to get the issue ready for print, and to our editorial managers, Megan Busch and Mike Haen, for making sure everything and everyone stayed on task. And again, we thank the special issue editors, Drs. Ore, Cedillo, and Wieser, for their tireless work on bringing this issue to life. We thank you for inviting us into this space to have the conversations that are vital for moving the field forward.

KT and MD
Denver and Boston
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Note

1. Contributors to that document include: Lauren E. Cagle, Michelle F. Eble, Laura Gonzales, Meredith A. Johnson, Nathan R. Johnson, Natasha N. Jones, Liz Lane, Temptaous McKoy, Kristen R. Moore, Ricky Reynoso, Emma J. Rose, GPat Patterson, Fernando Sánchez, Ann Shivers-McNair, Michele Simmons, Erica M. Stone, Jason Tham, Rebecca Walton, Miriam F. Williams. It is available at <https://tinyurl.com/reviewheuristic>