

From the Editor

## Reflections on *Across the Disciplines*

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The big news over the last two years, the news that has had, perhaps, the most significant impact on curricular initiatives such as WAC, has been the imploding economy. This implosion, affecting educational funding on national, regional, state, and local levels, has resulted in budgetary cutbacks, cancelled programs, terminated searches, reduced or eliminated travel funds, expanded class sizes, and mandatory unpaid furloughs. In a climate such as this, where keeping one's teaching job is counted a victory of sorts, the fate of WAC programs has to be considered uncertain at best. "Hard" money, previously committed long-term to WAC/WID, is now under scrutiny, and new "soft" money is almost nowhere to be found. As Karen Lunsford noted in the introduction to her *ATD* special issue last October, over the last several years "funding for WAC/WID programs per se has softened. WAC and WID are no longer the Next New Things that draw grants."

Two factors, at least, may ameliorate the extent to which WAC programs are threatened by budgetary exigencies, so the situation may not be completely hopeless. First of all, because many WAC programs have integrated themselves thoroughly into core curricula, often via systemwide WID requirements, they are extremely difficult to excise, even if institutions should be inclined to try. Enhanced connections to first year composition programs (via themed or linked courses) and writing centers (via writing fellows programs, for example) can only further cement WAC's curricular status. Secondly, WAC's focus on communication skills, writing proficiency, and information literacy still make for strong political currency, particularly in an era that promotes concrete, assessable learning outcomes in virtually every course. This is not to say that WAC programs are safe, by any means. The budgetary stasis that most programs will have to endure over the next five years will make innovation difficult, and as we all know, a lack of innovation often leads to stagnation, and stagnation often leads to ... well, let's just say it leads to even more difficult times.

That said, both the last year and the year to come are demonstrating that innovation can take place during even the most stressful times (necessity being a mother, and all that), and that WAC/WID is continuing its expansion to all parts of the globe. For *Across the Disciplines*, this has meant an increasing number of manuscript submissions by international scholars as well as an assortment of guest-edited special issues that have generated widespread attention.

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## International Submissions

In my Editor's Note in 2007, I wrote that I was "quite pleased to receive submissions from the wider international community, reminding me — and the rest of us — both that WAC's origins are not to be found solely in the United States and that American perspectives on communication across the curriculum can hardly be considered universal or monolithic." The intervening years have only borne out the truth of this remark. In the last year, I have received manuscripts about WAC initiatives in a wide array of countries, including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Iran, and Australia. Within the month, *ATD* will be publishing John Harbord's article on "Writing in Central and Eastern Europe — Translation and Transplantation," an expanded version of a paper he presented at the 2008 International WAC Conference. My reviewers and I are thrilled to see manuscripts such as these, many of which provide snapshots of pedagogies and practices that are completely unfamiliar to us, and we encourage our readers to send us more of this interesting, valuable work.

## Special Issues

*Across the Disciplines* published two special issues in 2009. The first, by Karen Lunsford on "[Writing Technologies and WAC](#)," focused on the ECAC (Electronic Communication Across the Curriculum) movement and the effect it has had, institutionally and curricularly, on WAC pedagogy and research, and the second, by The Florida State University Editorial Collective (Kathleen Blake Yancey; Emily Baker; Scott Gage; Ruth Kistler; Rory Lee; Natalie Syzmanski; Kara Taczak; and Jill Taylor), addressed issues related to "[WAC and Assessment](#)." As an editor, I have to admit that the incredible response to the CFPs for these issues surprised me. Karen and I had several telephone conferences about the proposals for her issue, trying to decide which of the many excellent proposals we would have to turn down because there was simply no way we could accommodate them all. Even so, the issue contained ten articles, the most ever published at one time in a single issue.

When I first approached Kathy about guest editing an issue on WAC assessment, she was a bit skeptical and wondered whether there would be enough interest or a sufficient number of proposals to fill a whole issue. In the weeks that followed the CFP, we were inundated by proposals, easily enough to fill *several* special issues. I believe Kathy's remark to me was "you could have knocked me over with a feather"; she and the collective are, I believe, considering plans to publish a follow-up edited collection that will showcase more of the exciting WAC assessment work being conducted by our colleagues.

Several upcoming special issues for *ATD* are already in production. The next issue in the queue is "WAC Programs in the Community Colleges" (edited by Clint Gardner, exp. Fall 2010), followed by "WAC and Second Language Writing," (edited by Michelle Cox and Terry Zawacki, exp. 2011; the CFP can be found at <https://wac.colostate.edu/atd/special.cfm>), and, tentatively, "Anti-Racism and WAC," (edited by Frankie Condon, exp. 2012).

I want to end this issue's Note with a few heartfelt thanks. First of all, I want to thank Michael Cripps for his dedicated, uncomplaining hard work as assistant editor. He makes the journal look great, and authors are uniform in their praise about his professionalism, friendly demeanor, and meticulous attention to detail. Thanks also to Mike Palmquist for generously hosting *ATD* year after year at the WAC Clearinghouse, to my guest editors for their superb contributions to the journal and the profession, to my editorial board for their willingness to read manuscripts on demand and not shy away when they see me at conferences, and lastly to my many contributors: *ATD* would not exist

without you, and it's the quality of your contributions that make it shine. I look forward to working with you all for another exceptional year.