

INTRODUCTION.

# RESEARCHING AND TEACHING COMMUNITY AS A FEMINIST INTERVENTION

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It is perhaps no surprise given the title of this collection that we identify as feminists. As such, each of us is committed to continuing the feminist tradition of engaging and disrupting dominant structural systems—to intervening in what *is* and to imagining *what could and ultimately must be*. Lead disciplinary feminist scholars and educators have paved a way for us to engage what is bound to disrupt established notions of writing research and/or writing pedagogy. Over four decades of feminist rhetoric and composition scholarship have devoted attention to disruption. We know disciplinary understandings of research and teaching and the ways in which prevailing philosophies and methods get translated to the work of inquiry and instruction and how those understandings of writing research and teaching translate variously to whom, how, what, and why we understand as the landscape in which we locate ourselves. Feminist disruption intervenes by asking what if? What if we approach the questions that guide our work differently? Or what if we ask different questions entirely? What if we study populations and topics beyond those the identified as sites of meaning making? *Composing Feminist Interventions: Activism, Engagement, Praxis* brings together narratives from writing studies scholars whose work represents the many ways we understand and conduct feminist community-based research and teaching from explicitly feminist theoretical positionings. The twenty-six chapter discussions in conversation in this collection articulate a constellation of self-reflexive, critical responses to these *what if* questions.

We are honored to introduce readers to the conversations of intervention assembled here. Thirty-five writing scholars and educators variously situated within rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies offer situated examples of feminist

writing research and teaching as explicitly grounded in connections to communities beyond the academy. Each chapter contribution responds to *what if?* . . . by introducing their project as an intervention designed to extend established methods and methodologies for researching or teaching writing as a form of social activism. Because contributors share a commitment to social justice and change, their work illustrates examples of praxis—productively disrupting and evolve possibilities for how we conceptualize research and teaching. What if? What if we understand writing inquiry and pedagogy as deeply collaborative, change-based, inclusive, and reciprocal practice?

*Composing Feminist Interventions* is at once responsive and forward-thinking, putting examinations of the ways we've come to know and do the work of feminist and community-based writing research and teaching in conversation with the influence of emerging technologies and literacies, the availability of new forms of collaboration, and increasingly fluid notions of writing scholarship (i.e., emerging venues, genres, audiences, and expectations of published accounts of writing research and teaching).

*Composing Feminist Interventions* also responds to the chorus of disciplinary calls for projects that privilege literate practices within a broader range of cultural and social contexts. As the editors of the collection, we understood our role as bringing together examples of rigorous, dynamic scholarship that is responsive to such calls. The collection is, in part, a response to Jackie Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch's (2012) challenge for feminist researchers to seek out new landscapes, partnerships, methods, and audiences for change-based inquiry. Contributors worked together with us and each other in order to develop twenty-one chapters and five course designs that provide situation-specific examples of feminist community-based work. We asked that our contributors have in mind as their audience rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies scholars invested in or curious about feminist and community-based teaching and research. We envisioned the audience of invested or curious colleagues to include students enrolled in graduate seminars populated by master's and/or doctoral students and that attend to either feminist or community based. But we also realize there are many colleagues in the field with experience and/or interests similar to ours—scholars interested in continuing their development as researchers, teachers, and activists.

Influences on our own engagement with community-based research and pedagogy are too numerous and many to ever attempt to provide in any comprehensive manner. Within the last decade, there has been similar growth in the areas of community literacy, service learning, and other forms of public, activist rhetorics across the undergraduate and graduate writing curriculum. This has led to a wide range of monographs and collections, such as John Ackerman and David Coogan's (2010) *The Public Work of Rhetoric: Citizen-Scholars and Civic*

*Engagement*, but none that specifically ground rhetorics of engagement within a feminist framework. However, we shared a common affinity for Linda Flower's (2008) *Community and Community Engagement*, Thomas Deans' *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition*, Jeff Grabill's (2007) *Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action*, and Thomas Deans, Barbara Roswell and Adrian Wurr's (2010) *Writing and Community Engagement: A Critical Sourcebook* all come to mind as foundational texts for each of us. We believe *Composing Feminist Interventions* will add to these conversations and contribute new understandings of and wonderments about the exigencies and implications associated with teaching, researching, and administering writing programs in the early twenty-first century.

As the complement to work on community-based and service learning scholarship and pedagogy, of course, we worked to position the collection as speaking to feminist research methods and methodologies. Historically, collections and anthologies such as Susan Jarratt and Lynn Worsham's (2008) *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words*, and Gesa Kirsch, Faye Spencer Moar, Lance Massey, Lee Nickoson-Massey, and Mary P. Sheridan's (2003) *Feminism And Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*, along with landmark treatments such as Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Jones Royster's (2012) *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons For Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies* have come to occupy canonical, yet transformative discussions within our discipline. Recent edited collections with a feminist focus include Michelle Ballif, Diane Davis, and Roxanne Mountford's (2008) *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*, Krista Ratcliffe and Rebecca Rickly's *Performing Feminism and Administration* (2010) and Lindal Buchanan and Kathleen Ryan's (2010) *Walking and Talking Feminist Rhetorics*. Also among these influential sources are Eileen Schell and K.J. Rawson's (2012) *Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods & Methodologies*, Patrick Berry, Gail Hawisher, and Cynthia L. Selfe's (2012) *Transnational Literate Lives in Digital Times*, Gesa Kirsch and Liz Rohan's (2008) *Beyond the Archives*.

One of the most recent collections relating to feminism and community action is Susan Van Deventer Iverson and Jennifer Hauver James' 2014 *Feminist Community Engagement: Achieving Praxis*, a compilation of interdisciplinary educational perspectives outside of rhetoric and composition and English studies. As feminist teacher-scholars working in the areas of community literacy, feminist methodology, and service learning, we were delighted by the response both to our collaboration on a 2014 special issue of *Feminist Teacher* on campus-community partnerships—one where the majority of submissions to this multidisciplinary compilation came from rhetoric and composition—and to the response to our call for proposals for *Composing Feminist Interventions*.

Equally important, because each of the feminist texts we mention are print based, we strongly believe there exists a need for contributors conducting community action research in online and multimodal spaces to represent their efforts and potentially those of both students and community partners in the modalities in which they have been produced, distributed, and consumed. For that reason, readers will find that contributors explore the affordances of the aural, the verbal, and the visual. Multiple contributors share their narratives through various new media: images of students, faculty, community partners working in context as well as screenshots of their online work; audio and/or video interviews available via hyperlink with campus and community stakeholders. These multimodal affordances provide readers opportunities to engage the work of the communities represented and experience the communities for themselves through multiple lenses and modalities. Finally, readers will find conversations connected across chapters, with authors and co-authors adding voice to each other's conversations. These connections are purposeful, intended to put into practice careful, critical questioning and response as forms of feminist inquiry, feminist reading, and feminist community-building through research.

Conversations are grouped into five sections: Methodologies, Partnerships, Activism, Praxis, and Course Designs. Our decision to group and organize the sections was perhaps our most difficult editorial challenge, for although there are sections, and though traditional pagination does suggest a linear trajectory, we understand these groups as co-equal points of entry: a reader could easily begin by reading from Partnerships, for example, or reading about partnerships as introduced in classroom instruction (Praxis and Course Design) or as a mode of inquiry of form of activism, as evidenced in Jessica Tess, Katie Manthey, and Trixie Smith's deployment (Chapter 19) of diverse researcher and participant voices to argue for the classroom as a safe, but activist space for coming out narratives. Another example of this productive overlap is Mary P. Sheridan's chronicle (Chapter 11) of the collaborative development and delivery of Louisville's Digital Media Academy, not only a partnership among multiple university departments and the larger community but also a form of feminist activism in its efforts to make technological literacy accessible to adolescent girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and to inevitably equalize the gender, race, and class dynamics surrounding information technology. As a result, we invite our readers to approach each chapter as representing intersectional work: work that is multiply situated and that involves multiple lived experiences. For instance, Christine Denecker and Sarah Sisser's Ohio Farm Stories project (Chapter 9) includes in multimodal form the narratives of participants and thus authenticates rather than co-opts their experiences. Such interventions invite us to engage how feminist scholars and educators can understand, study, value, and represent commu-

nity in diverse modalities and contexts. The following sections outline the ways all our contributors honor this goal.

## METHODOLOGIES

The first four chapters provide extended critical self-reflection of the whys and hows of feminist community-based research, beginning with Megan Adams's exploration of interactive-participatory documentary as a method for capturing community storytellers' efforts and the considerations involved in sustaining the advocacy of such research after the study concludes. For Adams "acknowledging the roles we play in sustaining community projects post-research, when careers, family-life, or other outside influences draw us away from the research site can assist in interrogating the infrastructures we build as well as the roles we play, leaving us better prepared to create rich and lasting impacts in communities."

In "Post-Research Engagement: An Argument for Critical Examination of Researcher Roles After Research Ends," Adams invites readers to consider the ethical complexities involved in feminist commitments to researcher/participant reciprocity and reflexivity. In addition, Mariana Grohowski's "Reciprocity as Epicenter: An 'After-Action Review'" addresses the complexity of reciprocity as an imperative in empirical, community-based writing research. Grohowski details the methods and methodology developed while working with two military veterans to stress the importance of feminist intervention and political activism as driving principles when engaging in research with participants who belong to protected populations. She discusses the process of developing reciprocal relationships with case study co-interpreters through the interrelated methods of listening, understanding, and strategic disclosure and stresses that campus-community partnerships with members of protected populations draw upon innovative approaches and modalities for fostering access and inclusion.

Emily Ronay Johnston then turns our attention to a consideration of boundaries as a form of ethical feminist activism. In "Methodology & Accountability: Tracking Our Movements as Feminist Pedagogues," Johnston narrates her experience as a white, female doctoral candidate at a predominantly white, middle-class university in Central Illinois. She conceptualizes "ethical practice" as methods that challenge students to stretch the limits of their privileged comfort zones—methods that may not be feasible, desirable, appropriate, or indeed "ethical" in other settings where feminist research happens.

Lauren Rosenberg and Emma Howes extend the focus on the ethics involved with community-based inquiry to discussion of research practices and methodological choices as opportunities to embody a feminist ethos of responsible, strategic practice. This inquiry is grounded in each co-author's experience within

their chapter “Listening to Research as a Feminist Ethos of Representation.” Here, Rosenberg applies Ratcliffe’s (2005) concepts of “rhetorical listening” and Royster and Kirsch’s (2012) ideas of “strategic contemplation” to a developing study of writing by student-veterans, while Howes explores how archival listening helps researchers reflect on representations of historical literacy sponsorship campaigns in southern mill villages.

In the final section chapter, “Funding Geography: The Legacy of Female-Run Settlement Culture for Contemporary Feminist Place-Based Pedagogy Initiatives,” Liz Rohan introduces case study, archival methods to historicize the work of contemporary feminist teachers, researchers, and administrators who develop community engagement and place-based initiatives. Rohan describes historic feminists working and writing in the U.S. progressive era in Chicago and Detroit and historical figures such as Lucy Carner and Borgchild Halvorsen to suggest that community service work among feminist academics has a history linked to the work of progressive era feminists. Rohan historicizes community-based feminist projects as a way to trace contemporary place-based pedagogical movements sponsored by Detroit educators and artists.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Keri E. Mathis and Beth A. Boehm provide the first of a series of chapters that provide explicit attention to researcher and community partnerships. In “Building Engaged Interventions in Graduate Education,” Mathis and Boehm profile the University of Louisville’s efforts at becoming a more engaged university, including receiving the Carnegie Community Engaged University classification and implementing Ideas-to-Action, a quality enhancement plan that holds community engagement as one of its core principles but one that the researchers identify as excluding graduate students. The authors describe their efforts in extending their home institution’s programs to focus on engaged scholarship and on developing a year-long academy that will lead to collaborations among graduate students on community projects.

Similar to Mathis and Boehm, Jenn Brandt and Cara Kozma share their experiences developing curricular and co-curricular initiatives at High Point University in “Learning Together Through Campus-Community Partnerships.” Brandt and Kozma introduce a series of English Department and Women Studies Program initiatives as a case study and explore the challenges and successes of university and community partnerships that involve multiple stakeholders. In “Crafting Partnerships: Exploring Student-Led Feminist Strategies for Community Literacy Projects,” Kelly Concannon and her former students Mustari Akhi, Morgan Musgrove, Kim Lopez, and Ashley Nichols continue attention to community partner-

ships and argues for a multi-layered partnership as a means of assessing community-based efforts through a focus on mentorship and reflexivity. Concannon shares her experience as a mentor in the Women of Tomorrow Program to illustrate such reflexivity and the value of feminist collaboration. The program links professional woman to a local high school, where they work to empower young, at-risk women. She advocates for such mentoring networks as enabling co-mentors to candidly discuss their attempts to enact feminism/feminist activism.

As we highlighted earlier in this introduction, Christine Denecker and Sarah Sisser’s “Ohio Farm Stories: A Feminist Approach to Collaboration, Conversation, and Engagement” reports on a campus-community and grant-funded partnership aimed at showcasing narratives from farmers to provide community members the opportunity to reflect on and discuss local agricultural and economic history. The authors contend that this research partnership with their local community demonstrates how feminist rhetorical practices can foster community engagement beyond academic borders and how their feminist framework allowed them to honor the local stories of Ohio’s farming community. Meanwhile, in “Literacy Sponsorship as a Process of Translation: Using Actor-Network Theory to Analyze Power within Emergent Relationships at Family Scholar House,” Kathryn Perry brings readers back to Louisville with her study of a local nonprofit, Family Scholar House, which provides a variety of support services to low-income single mothers as they earn college degrees. Perry relies on the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) concept of translation—along with theories of literacy sponsorship—in order to analyze how institutional and material conditions shape literacy practices as well as individual and community definitions of literacy.

Mary P. Sheridan’s “Knot-Working Collaborations: Fostering Community-Engaged Teachers and Scholars” closes the section. Sheridan draws on her experience establishing and co-facilitating University of Louisville’s Digital Media Academy (DMA) as a site of graduate student professionalization, calling attention to the invisible work of partnership, namely, the upside of following the trial of other do-ers on her campus and also the challenges of sustainability. Examining the academy’s design—both in messaging with external, public and funding audiences, and in internal programming with graduate student co-facilitators—Sheridan concludes that such collaborations represent a messy, but significant form of community and intellectual engagement for graduate students.

## ACTIVISM

The explicit activist focus of feminist community-based research unites the chapter discussion in the third section. Conversation on the relationship between

feminist work and activist aims begins with Angela Crow's "Women-Only Bicycle Rides and Freedom of Movement: How Online Communicative Practices of Local Community Managers Support Feminist Interventions." Crow profiles a group of women bicycle riders, the Staunton, Virginia's Women on Wheels, who wanted to create a safe and welcoming space for women new to cycling. Drawing on contemporary research in mobility studies and material rhetorics, Crow argues that the Staunton group illustrates an historical example of a low-stakes feminist intervention in which women can begin to bicycle within a welcoming community.

In "Literacy, Praxis and Participation in Environmental Deliberation," Barbara George continues a focus on the material, turning readers' attention to energy production policy New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, and examining the literacies of those navigating institutionalized environmental risk reporting in each state. George documents her participation with environmental activists creating alternative networks of making meaning about their local environments and includes document analysis, interviews, and think-aloud protocols to articulate how these activist literate practices rely upon digital, technical and material networks of environmental justice. Ultimately, George highlights the alternative texts participants create in response to institutional reporting mechanisms in their effort to "rewrite" policy.

Jessica Ouellette also focuses on alternative texts within online activist networks in her chapter "The Viability of Digital Spaces as Sites for Transnational Feminist Action and Engagement: Why We Need to Look at Digital Circulation." Ouellette chronicles how in April 2013, through the use of social media, the global feminist protest group FEMEN staged a "topless jihad" day in support of a Tunisian member, Amina, who was threatened with physical punishment for posting a Facebook picture of her naked breasts, covered in written messages such as, "Fuck your morals" and "My body is mine." Ouellette provides a rhetorical case study of the online FEMEN protest events—specifically the texts that circulated and the political and economic investments undergirding that circulation and argues that in order to foster transnational feminist activism within digital spaces, we need to look at the ways in which texts move and circulate, and how, in and through those movements, textual meanings and rhetorical purposes shift and change. And in her chapter "Advocating 'Active' Intersectionality Through a Comparison of Two Slutwalks," Jacqueline Schiappa reviews the different ways two groups of feminist activists organized "Slutwalk" protest marches in their local communities. Her chapter concludes by advocating for "active" intersectional organizing, as an engaged, intentional process that explicitly foregrounds and values the breadth and depth of perspectives within feminist social groups.

Overall, this section powerfully documents that feminist interventions are not contained to academic or face-to-face spaces, and include a broad range of contexts, including political arenas, as we see in Angela Zimmann's chapter "A Peek Inside the Master's House: The Tale of Feminist Rhetorician as Candidate for U.S. Congress." Zimmann reflects on her recent run for the U.S. House of Representatives, an experience she situates as "steeped in historical precedent." Moreover, she interrogates her experience through a feminist rhetorical framework and considers the material conditions and rhetorical expectations that often limit female rhetors in a variety of settings—politics, business, and the academy.

## PRAXIS

Intersectionality runs throughout the pieces organized within our section on Praxis. To begin, in "Pedagogical 'Too-Muchness': A Feminist Approach to Community-Based Learning, Multi-Modal Composition, Social Justice Education, and More," Beth Godbee shares a course titled "Writing for Social Justice," which partnered with the YWCA Southeast Wisconsin's Racial Justice Program. Godbee articulates a pedagogy of "too muchness" and argues for the need to approach feminist interventions as "instead of" rather than "on top of" more traditional approaches. She situates this pedagogical "toomuchness" within and alongside feminist and womanist pedagogies, pedagogy and theatre of the oppressed; and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. Godbee stresses that the "toomuchness" of the course and its emphasis on feminist, critical education better positioned students to become agents and actors outside the course and throughout their everyday lives.

In "Trans/feminist Practice of Collaboration in the Art Activism Classroom," Ames Hawkins and Joan Giroux reflect on their experiences collaborating together over many years on a course, *The Cradle Project and One Million Bones*, that brings together writing and art activism, thus casting composition in terms of exhibition. The authors use thick description in order to argue for three principles of effective collaboration: they shared a similar investment in creating change, each understood art as a catalyst for change, and both believed in the power of collaboration in effecting such change, and that such collaboration "needs to be practiced, and that it can be modeled and taught." Jessica Tess, Katie Manthey, Trixie Smith then argue in their chapter "Coming Out as Other in the Graduate Writing Classroom: Feminist Pedagogical Moves for Mentoring Community Activists" that 'coming out' moments of "Otherness" in the graduate writing classroom provides an opportunity to mentor students to foster social change. This commitment to activism can transfer to the many other communities to which students and instructors

alike belong. The co-authors each share critically reflective narratives of their own experience “coming out” in graduate school as lived examples from which they build arguments both on the pedagogical moves that support and also those that can prevent such moments of community engagement.

Next, in “Safely Social: User-Centered Design and Difference Feminism,” Douglas Walls, Jennifer Miller, and Brandy Dieterle discuss their experience developing and user testing Safely Social, a contextually-designed smartphone application project informed by feminist theory and developed in an effort to “decentralize and redistribute power” by allowing victims of domestic violence the ability to stay in contact with personal and support networks without compromising their safety. Walls, Miller, and Dieterle document how feminist and other social justice theories informed their design methodologies for the smartphone application.

In the final chapter conversation of the Praxis section, “The Unheard Voices of Dissatisfied Clients: Listening to Community Partners as Feminist Praxis,” Danielle Williams draws on her recent teaching experience teaching first-year digital writing to examine the benefits of community-based multimodal student projects have for community partners. Examination of their evaluation processes and narratives tell the story of how community partners used the same general understandings to assess student videos: assumptions about the evaluators’ own role as mentor for the project, assumptions about the audiences for the project, assumptions about the students’ backgrounds and educational experiences, and assumptions about the technical quality of the videos themselves.

## **COURSE DESIGNS**

The final group of conversations turns to pedagogical application of community-based engagement as feminist intervention. Florence Bacabac’s “‘We Write to Serve’: The Intersections of Service Learning, Grant Writing, and the Feminist Rhetorical Agency” features an upper-division course required for English majors emphasizing in Professional and Technical Writing. Intended as an examination of the rhetorical techniques for writing effective grant proposal documents, Bacabac discusses the course as feminist rhetorical praxis. She overviews her experience teaching an undergraduate grant writing service learning course at a regional university, focusing attention in her critical reflection to an examination of the ways in which, by linking students with community partners, the course often forges mutually-beneficial relationships.

In the second course-based project, “Making the Political Personal Again: Strategies for Addressing Student Resistance to Feminist Interventions,” Julie Myatt asserts that students often carry misconceptions of feminism and actively

resist identifying as feminist even when they agree with the movement's lead tenets. Barger annotates and situates her approach to teaching *Feminist Interventions*, a class designed to introduce students to the need for feminist interventions through a series of projects in which they encounter a series of situated examples in which women and underrepresented groups are excluded from full participation in the societal power structures that influence their lives. Stephanie Bower presents a reflective narrative of her experience in "Because Your Heart Breaks and It Moves To Action": *Digital Storytelling Beyond the Gate*." Bower focuses on an upper division course titled "For The Common Good: Writing in The Community and Visual Storytelling," with a focus on social justice and the community. Bower posits digital storytelling in the course as "a vehicle that equalizes the footing between town and gown and shifts cultural and material capital from the university to the community."

In "Feminist Activism in the Core: Student Activism in Theory and Practice," Katherine Fredlund shares her experience teaching a senior-level, writing-intensive general education course. Enrolling 45 students from majors all over campus, Fredlund's students collaborated with our community partner to plan and organize the University's Annual Take Back the Night event. Fredlund argues that instructors must negotiate student resistance to the terms "feminist" and "activist" while asking the same students to participate in explicitly feminist activism. Engaging a community partner, she posits, alleviates some of the tension inherent in requiring feminist activism in general education courses while simultaneously providing instructors an opportunity to teach students about rhetorical effectiveness and civic purposefulness.

Concluding the section is Julie Nelson's "Rhetorical Interventions: A Project Design for Composing and Editing Wikipedia Articles." Nelson shares her experiences delivering *Confronting HIStory: Stories of Female Identity and Experience*, a sophomore-level special topics general education literature course that introduces students to the diversity of women's lived experiences. Nelson examines the design for, successes, and challenges of asking students in upper-division writing courses to write and edit Wikipedia articles and describes the effort to a digital community in which white male and western histories and epistemologies are privileged. Nelson concludes with a series of suggestions for assignments that encourage students consider how knowledge emerges and is culturally situated in online community spaces.

## **CONCLUSION: FROM WHAT IF TO WHAT MUST BE**

As we put the finishing touches on this introduction and the collection as a whole, we are in the post-election rhetoric of the 2016 U.S. Presidential cam-

paign. These rhetorics continue to divide rather than unite us as nation of diverse individuals who, based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and age, experience the presumed freedoms and liberties of our society in differential ways, some empowered, some disenfranchised, some oppressed. The lesson to be learned from this ongoing discursive divide is the critical need to listen: listen to the voices of our students, our community, to those who experience the world differently than ourselves. Such listening manifests itself in the significant amount of self-reflection undertaken by our contributors as they theorize their own experience of their educational, feminist, and activist roles in the academy and beyond. It is no coincidence that numerous chapters in *Composing Feminist Interventions* deploy this concept of listening in the methodologies, the partnerships, the activism, the praxis, and the specific course designs that thematically drive the development and organization of the text itself, and contribute to our triangulated focus on praxis, engagement, and action on the part of teachers, students, and citizens.

A significant touchstone influencing numerous pieces within *Composing Feminist Interventions* is Krista Ratcliffe's 2005 book *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, and Whiteness*. Ratcliffe defines rhetorical listening as "a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in cross-cultural exchanges" (p. 1). Ratcliffe's canonical text is primarily focused on the process of her own emerging self-awareness, not to mention the field of rhetoric and composition, of how the framework of gender and race impact the ability to listen in more inclusive ways, acknowledging the need to move beyond monologue, or as Ratcliffe borrows from Jacqueline Jones Royster (1996), to move from listening to language and action. Given this emphasis, we are honored to have Krista Ratcliffe's voice as part of this collection, sharing her thoughts about listening, dialoguing, and acting, and to reflect on the way the contributors respond to her call to listen, and our own call as editors to intervene. Because we have deliberately defined feminist community engagement broadly across contexts, cultures, and communities, we believe the collection meshes with Ratcliffe's original emphasis on cross-cultural exchange and the importance of developing pedagogies that help students become local and global citizen scholars who "recognize how power dynamics haunt their daily lives and then to discern when and how to perform activism, engagement, and other needed praxes" (Afterword).

We similarly hope that through this rich compilation of successes and challenges to feminist intervention, we have documented the importance of modeling such interventions as not *what if*, but *what must be*. As our current sociopolitical climate strongly indicates, the conditional term is no longer an option, as initiatives such as the 2017 Women's March on Washington respond to competing discourses surrounding not only women's rights but also our collective civil

liberties in a democratic society. Indeed, we cannot presume that these liberties are accessible to all, a presumption our contributors challenge and negotiate on topics that range from environmental activism to political campaigns and within communities as diverse as Appalachia, the armed services, and feminist protest movements online and off. Despite this diversity, the collective emphasis on social justice as the language of action, or *what must be*, drives our contributors to intervene. As co-editors and as feminists, we have learned much from their efforts at listening and calling for future action. We sincerely hope readers of *Composing Feminist Interventions* will as well.

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