EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Laurie Grobman and Candace Spigelman

We are pleased to present the first volume of *Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric*, an academic journal written for and by college students involved in rhetoric and composition scholarship.

In recent years, increasing numbers of students across the nation have engaged in undergraduate research. Each year, several thousand students participate in the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) or attend smaller undergraduate research conferences, like those held at Penn State Berks in Pennsylvania and SUNY at Stony Brook. Others students attend conventions like the International Writing Centers Association/ National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, where undergraduate writing tutors present their research alongside distinguished faculty. Students say that they enjoy such occasions to present their projects to audiences of initiate and advanced scholars.

As composition faculty and co-coordinators of a Professional Writing program, we believe that research can and should be a crucial component of rhetorical education. We also believe that undergraduates engaged in research about writing and rhetoric should have opportunities to publish their work as well as to present it and, in this way, to share it with a broader audience of students, scholars, and teachers. We hope that *Young Scholars in Writing* will

encourage students to write about their investigations in such arenas as rhetoric, composition, professional writing, technical writing, business writing, discourse analysis, writing technologies, peer tutoring in writing, writing process, writing in the disciplines, and related topics.

In their article, "When Peer Tutors Write About Writing," in this volume, Heather Bastian and Lindsey Harkness write, "students need to be allowed the opportunity to engage the rhetoric of the composition field, so that they can create more accurate representations of themselves." Bastian and Harkness remind us that students learn to define themselves through the discourses that they shape and that, simultaneously, shape them. Students become scholars as they confront, engage, and scrutinize the discourses of their discipline. For these reasons, we chose "young scholars" for our title, not as a marker of a scholar's age but rather of his or her experience with such discursive inquiry.

As founders and senior editors of this journal, launching *Young Scholars in Writing* proved a wonderful learning experience. We came to recognize and celebrate the special challenges in publishing undergraduate work. We discovered bright and talented students from around the country. While we never met any of our contributors face-to-face, our email conversations nonetheless enabled us to get to know them on some level. Along the way, we became convinced that *Young Scholars in Writing* should publish undergraduates' interpretations of research in the field. We acknowledge that new scholars must struggle to make sense of the meanings of texts and theory. Thus, we have honored students' practices and ideas, even when they differed from our own. While we encouraged students to re-think their assertions or readings when appropriate, we did not insist they do so. Rather, we tried to encourage contributors to work their way through the discipline.

One of the goals of *Young Scholars in Writing* is to enable

emerging writing and rhetoric scholars to experience the process of scholarly journal review and publication. Students who submit their work receive reports from reviewers and editors; they experience first-hand the joys and challenges of manuscript submission, revision, and editing that are part and parcel of scholarly publishing. In this volume, all of our contributors have revised their articles based on reviewers' and editors' feedback. Some manuscripts have gone through two or more revision cycles; every writer has consulted with copyeditors. We were at first uncertain how students would respond when asked to substantially revise writing projects in which they had obviously already put a great deal of effort. Yet, time and again they revealed their enthusiasm for learning and their understanding of how feedback and revision improved their manuscripts. For example, in an email message, Andrea Ruiz, one of the authors of "Discursive Bridges: Collaborative Learning in a Workshop Space," wrote that she and her co-writers "are in awe of how far [they've] come with [their article]."

We hope that *Young Scholars in Writing* will offer new insights to undergraduate students of writing and rhetoric and that they will find in these published articles new ways of making sense of the field. We hope too that this research by fellow students will become a basis for their own research, for the articles may serve as credible sources to consult and as invitations for further investigation. Ultimately, we hope that the prospect of publication will inspire other young scholars to pursue serious research projects. Likewise, we hope that teachers will turn to these articles in their teaching. We hope that *Young Scholars in Writing* will initiate lively and engaged classroom conversations and written responses by students engaged in similar kinds of work. To this end, we invite "Comments & Responses" letters for future volumes. Finally, we hope the work published here will inspire teachers to encourage their students to likewise engage in serious undergraduate scholarship.

The articles in the current issue and the body of submissions from around the country testify that students in writing, rhetoric, and related fields are pursuing quality undergraduate scholarship. In this volume, Kate Stuart studies archived records of the Beta Phi Theta Rho Society of Joplin, MO. Analyzing the of minutes kept by club secretary, Jeanne Rataczak, from 1946 through 1950, she argues that formal documents, such as minutes books, from girls' societies and clubs can help us to understand how young females define themselves, conform, and resist gendered roles at specific historical moments. Jennifer Corroy's "Institutional Change and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Fellows Program" examines the claims and goals of the Writing Fellows Program at her college to determine the extent that Writing Fellows are agents of institutional change. She gathers her data through extensive interviews with two faculty members who are involved in the program. In "A New Deal for the American People: A Marxist Analysis of FDR's First Inaugural Address," Lindy Hockersmith applies a Marxist approach to Franklin Delanor Roosevelt's first inaugural address to explore the power of political rhetoric. As a literacy tutor in her community, Mara Anne Brecht problematizes her efforts to mediate felt gaps between herself and her tutees resulting from educational and social inequities. Her essay, "Basic Literacy: Mediating Between Power Constructs," describes her "Literacy Letters" project, modeled on the work of Linda Brodkey, to encourage one adult student's writing. Carl Yost's "Social Constructionism, Adventure Education, and the Role of Facilitator in Collaborative Learning" applies the principles and practices of adventure education leaders to classroom contexts, urging instructors to take a more active role in orchestrating peer writing groups and other forms of student collaboration. In "When Peer Tutors Write About Writing: Literacy Narratives and Self-Reflection," Heather Bastian and Lindsey Harkness discuss the need for

research that focuses on proficient writers. They demonstrate the value of such information by examining student tutors' changing perspectives in their literacy narratives.

Matthew Bunce conducts extensive secondary research on web page authoring constraints in "Online Texts, Online Identities: Designated Free Space or a Space Constrained?" He applies the theoretical frameworks of cultural studies, cultural literacy, and classical rhetoric to study constructions of personal and community identity in two students' home pages developed for Computer Problem Solving in Computer Science class (COSC 1301) at St. Edward's University. Amber Carini, Sarah Haufrect, Bina Patel, Andrea Ruiz, and Nithan Sannappa, peer tutors and workshop leaders at University of California, Berkeley's Student Learning Center, explore their discourse choices in the workshop. "Discursive Bridges: Collaborative Learning in a Workshop Space" draws on work by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford to argue that the workshop becomes a collaborative space, introducing students to the language and knowledge-making practices of the university. Finally, Zachary McMahon uses stasis theory to explore the controversy over the continued tenure of Amiri Baraka as New Jersey's Poet Laureate, in the aftermath of Baraka's expressions of anti-Semitism in his poem, "Somebody Blew Up America." McMahon's "Definition Rhetoric in the Amiri Baraka Controversy" analyzes several editorials and opinion pieces written by Baraka's supporters and detractors to argue that the power to change the law rests with the citizenry and, hence, that writers and critics must define the parameters of a contested issue to gather the public's support.

In this inaugural volume, we want to acknowledge everyone who helped get *Young Scholars in Writing* off the ground. Our Founding Student Co-Editors, Meredith Pharaoh and Adam Yerger, took on myriad roles, including communicating with student sub-

mitters and contributors, synthesizing and explaining reviewers' reports, and promoting and advertising the journal itself. They approached their founding editorships with enthusiasm and patience, understanding and accepting that the entire process was new to all of us. The Editorial Review Board, comprised of students enrolled in Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley's English 417, The Editorial Process, did an excellent job reviewing manuscripts. They were guided by their instructor, Dr. Mary Hutchinson, who ensured that reviews were done well and promptly. Much thanks to Kimberly Murphy, Director of Development & Alumni Relations, Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley, and Francine Scoboria, Coordinator, Proposals and Grants, Penn State Berks, for providing funds from Undesignated Gifts to help support the publishing of Volume 1. Finally, for their support and encouragement in getting this project underway, we thank Associate Academic Dean, Dr. Carl Lovitt, and Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Division Head, Dr. Ken Fifer.

Young Scholars in Writing will continue to develop and change over time. What will remain constant, however, is our commitment to and celebration of undergraduates engaged in scholarship in writing, rhetoric, and related disciplines. Just as students' voices are crucial to the work of composition and rhetoric, student research may significantly contribute to the scholarship, learning, and on-going formation of this disciplinary community.

Laurie Grobman and Candace Spigelman, Senior Editors